



TOWN OF NORTH READING
Massachusetts

Board of Health

**'North Reading Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2022
Teleconference/Virtual**

Members Present: Gary Hunt, Chairman
Karen Martin
Pam Vath

Others Present:
Robert Bracey, Health Agent
Steve O'Leary
Abigail Hurlburt
Christine Doolin
Suresh Rao

RECEIVED
2022 SEP 29 AM 8:11
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
NORTH READING, MASS.

7:00 PM

Mr. Gary Hunt opened the meeting.

Minutes

Previous minutes being reviewed, and will be signed and posted to the Board of Health/Health website.

Public Health Nurse Report:

July 1 to June 1, 2022 COVID - 19 Data

Total Number of non-nursing home related cases: 1614

Complete total of cases as of 6/1/2022 1776

41 # of new cases at Nursing Homes (staff)

21 # of new cases residents at nursing home

873 # of new cases of unvaccinated residents

725 # of cases of vaccinated residents-Breakthrough cases

- 507 # of Pfizer

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TOWN OF NORTH READING

Massachusetts

Board of Health

- 219 # of Moderna
- 31 # of Janssen

| Ages - Years | Unvaccinated | Vaccinated | | Comments |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--|------------|
| < 11 | 201 | 32 | | |
| 12 - 15 | 155 | 22 | | |
| 16 - 19 | 43 | 38 | | |
| 20 - 29 | 127 | 114 | | |
| 30 - 49 | 184 | 257 | | |
| 50 - 64 | 92 | 86 | | |
| 65 - 74 | 34 | 38 | | |
| 75 and older | 20 | 34 | | |
| | | | | |
| Total | 919 | 635 | | 1605 Cases |

Pam stated that in her Maven Report we are averaging about 48 patients a week for the month of May. Pam also reports that lot of residents are doing home testing which is not being recorded in Maven.

Mr. O'Leary stated that the schools average about 15 to 20 percent or more of the student population tested positive in less than a month. It appears that DESE is relaxing the testing and guidelines and leaving it up to the local communities to decide what they want to do.

Mr. O'Leary asked what the board's position is going to be moving forward.

Pam stated that Dr. Daly explained that they are going to continue to do their pool testing in school until the end of the school year.

Pam stated that in the last two months she is getting the impression that the state has backed off the public messaging, contact tracing, and having to wear a mask outdoors. Pam stated that we are not as aggressive with trying to prevent this as we were a year ago, but we also can't go along forever staying inside and staying 6 feet apart, the community is not going to tolerate it.

Mr. Hunt asked as the local Board of Health and Health Department how can we address the states more relaxed position.

Mr. Bracey stated if DESE is going to do away with testing it will come down to a financial situation to be able to provide the schools with that funding. Having discussions about it will be beneficial whichever way we decide to go.

Karen Martin stated that we as a board have to walk a fine line because from day one this is going back to the fall of 2020. We always said we are following DESE guidelines and we've gone on record at a number of public meetings saying that. Karen thinks we need to start with a lot of public education and outreach and keep getting the message out there in terms of what we

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TOWN OF NORTH READING *Massachusetts*

Board of Health

recommend, what guidelines we're going to follow and at the same time work on what our thresholds are going to be and at what point are we going to step in and provide further support however that might be to the schools in the fall.

Mr. O'Leary stated as to what thresholds are they going to be tolerable in the absence of DESE guidance. He thinks that it's important to have the discussions and educating the public and school administration.

Gary Hunt asked what is the action item for our board?

Mr. Bracey stated that he would reach out to his colleagues to see what their mind set is going into the fall. Having these conversations is good and Karen's idea is good to continue with public messaging.

Mr. Hunt proposed that the board hold a special meeting to discuss this COVID situation. That way we can all get our collected individual thoughts together and bring those to the meeting and maybe work up an agenda. He stated that we should do this quickly because the school year is ending soon.

Mr. O'Leary stated he would like to know what the board's actions will be.

Abigail Hurlbut stated that she thinks it up to the community to decide how they wish to protect their residents.

Mr. O'Leary stated for the record that his comments for the evening are in no way indicative or consensus or a position of the Select Board. He is asking the board to consider these comments and the input that you're getting from me this evening and make some determinations. Whatever the Board of Health is going to decide to do make those decisions public.

Health Director Report:

Mr. Bracey report for the week of May 27, the positivity was at 12%, the state average right now is at 9%. Seems things are starting to spike up again with more cases and less hospitalizations.

Vaccination rates on individuals with one dose are at 83%, residents in the community fully vaccinated are at 76% and fully vaccinated booster residents are at 48%.

Mr. Bracey reports that the Health Department has scheduled additional COVID-19 clinics, The Health Department had a clinic on May 25, and had a good showing of about 50 people there. Additional clinics scheduled for June 13, July 11, and August 15 at the Town Hall from 5-6pm. We also have the Shriners Auditorium still up and running for a testing site Monday through Friday from 8:30-4:00pm and Saturdays from 8:30pm to 1:00pm.

There will be free home rapid COVID-19 test available soon and will be distributed throughout the community.



TOWN OF NORTH READING *Massachusetts*

Board of Health

Policy & Administration Updates:

Health Department fy23 budget:

Mr. Bracey reports that the Health Department tried to get additional support staff and unfortunately we were unable to do that but with the help of our liaison Steve O'Leary the health department was able to obtain an additional \$25,000.00 that will be put into the service line item. After talking with the Town Administrator, Michael Gilberto, and Director of Public Safety, Michael Murphy on that matter, the additional funds will help with the support staff during the title-5 season between April and November. Mr. Bracey reports that Alex Parker has committed to a year as the consultant for the title-5 soil season.

Environmental Health Updates:

Tobacco Control:

Mr. Bracey states the he has been in contact with Ron Beauregard who represents Healthy Communities. In April Ron had gone out and did his compliance checks. All the establishments in Town have passed their compliance check and no one sold to under age kids.

Mosquito & Lyme Disease Control-MAVEN:

Mr. Bracey reports that the Briquettes have been purchased and have been given to the DPW and they have cleaned all the catch basin in town. Brian Farless who we contract out to East Middlesex Control have baited all the catch basins in town. June first they had about 1700. catch basins done and had about 36 left to do and will be completed at the end of the week.

On June 14, 7:00pm at the Flint Memorial the Health Department is working with the library to do the annual Lyme disease and Mosquito program, which is a community outreach program the Health Department does every year.

Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems updates:

Mr. Bracey reports that things are little slow right now

Community Sanitation Updates:

Annual Licensing & Inspections of Recreational Camps:

Camp applications are being reviewed now and the town will have some camps running

Annual Licensing & Inspections of Swimming Pools:

Last week the annual pool inspections were done, all pools are in compliance with the exception of one pool that hasn't requested an inspection yet.

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Board of Health

Food Protection Program

China Cuisine has scheduled change of ownership next week.

Community Health Update:

Pam reports the nursing home has a new administrator and director now and both are experienced and have been around during the pandemic and they are very interested in continuing to have good results.

Pam and Mr. Bracey had a meeting with the director and administrator and brought up the orders that were written about 18 months ago that included before a patient is transferred back from the hospital, originally we thought that you could go with just one PCR test if the patient had been there for more than 36hrs or less.

Pam would like to recommend that we go back to having two negative PCR test before we accept a patient into the facility if the patient has been gone for more than 36hrs. Pam states that they will continue to meet on a routine basis.

Mr. Bracey stated back in March of 2018 we amended the order that we had in effect from April 2020 which Pam had made a motion

Mr. Bracey stated that we are amending the order back to the existing order, which was that you need to have two negative PCR test before we accept a patient into the nursing home facility.

Gary Hunt motioned to change the language regarding the number of PCR test required to admit a patient back into the nursing home from one PCR test to the original which was two PCR test.

Motion seconded by Karen Martin.

All members voted unanimously in favor.

GeoMat System

Mr. Bracey stated that the GeoMat System got introduced to us through myself and the plan reviewer. One system had been installed and didn't draw any red flags because of the size of the soil absorption field was 600sf. Which is consistent with the other innovative technology systems that have been approved by the board. The Health Department had two plans that came in, that the soil absorption systems were around 200-300 hundred feet with the depth to ground water being 1ft. Our conventional systems are generally 4-5ft separation, you can request a local variance upgrade to 3ft which has to be approved by the board.

The design criteria for these new systems didn't call for that and that's what drew a red flag to myself and the plan reviewer to report this to the board.

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The GeoMat representative was at the October 20, 2021 meeting, at that meeting the board members had asked specific questions regarding the performance data of this system. The representative had informed the board that he would get us that information in time for the next meeting, which would have been November. The Health Department never received that information, in turn the Health Department received a phone call from the GeoMat Systems attorney questioning the board's authority and right to ask for such information. Mr. Bracey reached out to the State, Department of Public Health and Innovative Technology Systems and spoke to director MaryBeth and found that there was no performance data. Mr. Hunt asked the board what they think about some sort of Board of Health regulation that we could vote on, that would apply to all alternative systems moving forward and asked the board to come up with some basic criteria that we can present to GeoMat and that criteria should be part of the rule that the board is going to write.

Karen Martin Motioned to lift the moratorium for the GeoMat system with the following criteria, 1. That the minimum leach field area be no less than 600ft. 2. That the ground water be between four/five ft. 3. The GeoMat System be used strictly for remedial use only.

Motioned seconded by Pam Vath

All members voted unanimously in favor.

Public Comment:

Suresh Rao and Abigal Hurlburt both expressed concerns regarding COVID protocols.

Gary Hunt asked those that are willing to send their action items about COVID protocols to the Board of Health and we will set up a separate meeting to discuss this topic.

Covid topic discussion June 14, at 7:00 PM.

Next Board of Health Meeting is to be scheduled for July 28, at 7:00 PM.

Gary Hunt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Motion seconded by Karen Martin

All members voted unanimously in favor

DocuSigned by:

51642395BEFC348B
Gary Hunt

DocuSigned by:

6A9AF14FEB4148B
Pamela Vath

DocuSigned by:

6A98CAE38FC216D
Karen Martin

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