

Board of Health Virtual Meeting

June 16, 2020

Attendees: Carol Bradford – Board Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton –Board Member, Susan Sama – Board Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Phyllis Schilp – Public Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter- Admin. Dennis Mannone – Park and Rec Director, Jennifer Roberts – Select Board, Elaine Taranto – Resident, Ellie Gottlieb – Resident, Scott Smigler – Resident, Charles Russo – Resident

Meeting called to order at 4:02PM:

Phyllis Schilp – Public Health Nurse COVID-19 Update:

Basic Stats: Town has had to date a little more than 1500 tests.

FREE TESTING: Governor Baker announced that free testing was being offered to those who had gathered to protest in recent weeks. Tests will be offered at 52 sites in the Commonwealth on June 17th and 18th. Phyllis pointed out that CVS also offers free testing for those who feel that they have compromised themselves. Both testing opportunities have been posted to the Health Website. Because many young people are attending these protests with limited social distancing, it is important that we pay close attention to COVID results in this demographic.

State Dashboard: All public health indicators are showing downward progression. The State is trending in the right direction. For all tested in the state, less than 5% are testing positive.

Country Wide Testing: TX, AZ, CA and FL (more states) are experiencing a surge in positive cases. This makes the curve stay at a plateau for the country. We are seeing COVID-19 decrease sharply in other countries.

Long Term Care Update: The LTC facilities in Sudbury reported no new cases as of June 15, 2020. There were however some cases reported today (June 16th, 2020). These facilities are starting to test employees twice a week. The Health Department fully supports this effort. Today was the last day for National Guard testing units in LTC facilities.

Residents inquiring about Sudbury Numbers: There are a handful of communities that post specific numbers. Most communities link residents to the state website. Phyllis and Bill Murphy frequently discuss the availability and reliability of COVID information and feel a reluctance to publish incomplete data. Staff will assess information weekly and determine if publishing COVID numbers is reliable. Sudbury will continue to use the state website and staff will report next meeting on whether to post numbers.

Marlborough Testing Site: Has offered to set up a drive-thru site in Sudbury. The testing is not free and the process is long. It is best to send residents to the free testing sites and CVS (also free) instead of using town funds to do this.

Testing Guidelines: Re-testing may be recommended for people who were COVID positive after 6 weeks post recovery "if they become symptomatic again".

Patty Moran: Contracted nurse has been selected to represent public health nurses by assessing the CTC (Community Tracing Collaborative) serving in an advisory capacity. The CTC is still trying to effectively assist local BoH with contact tracing.

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CTC: (Community Tracing Collaborative) Laid off 500 employees last week. There are concerns that not all of the problems have been worked out with this organization and if we have a surge of COVID-19 positive cases in the fall, they may not serve the needs of our community.

School Nurses: 6 School Nurses will work thru the summer until the start of the school year.

The Board commended Phyllis Schilp: The Board expressed appreciation for her tireless efforts in assembling and training her contact tracing team of 11 nurses. Phyllis worked with Patty Moran and the Sudbury Public School nurses. This training will help the school nurses when school reopens.

Camps: Phyllis is still in the process of collecting manuals and documentation. Friday June 12th the Health Department met with the contracted camp inspector, Maureen Lee of Mojin Solutions. Inspections will be done for 5 Summer Camps.

Lyme and EEE: In the process of finding current information to post on the website. Phyllis is seeing cases of tick borne illness increase in Sudbury.

Dennis Mannone Sudbury Park and Recreation Director:

Playgrounds: The Commission wanted input from the Board of Health on how to open playgrounds and current restricted recreational areas. Obstacles are cleaning high touch surfaces, social distancing and no bathroom facilities. Town Counsel has maintained that signage should be posted in areas that will make it clear that residents are using these public spaces at their own risk. The Board expressed that the signage should make it clear that the Town is not responsible for cleaning surfaces, symptomatic people should not use public spaces, face coverings should be worn at all times and to social distance. This information should be posted on town websites, Facebook and Twitter. Susan Sama suggested that signs be checked to be sure that they remain in place so residents remain aware. Linda Huet-Clayton suggested hand sanitizer stations be available but the consensus was that it would most likely be taken and it is difficult to maintain.

Haskell Field: The plan is to re-open first and then address the restrooms.

Kay Bell: Asked how many people can use the playgrounds at one time? Will there be a limit posted? Mr. Murphy stated as many as social distancing will allow.

Tennis Courts: The courts in town are experiencing significant usage since reopening. The courts at LSRHS are closed (as are all of the school grounds) so people are using the remainder of the town courts.

Permits for Organized Sports: Dennis is starting to get requests for Field Permits for organized sports. Everyone is patiently waiting for Phase 3 to open up.

Rest Rooms: Town Council has stated that the rest rooms do not have to be open. Dennis is assessing how to keep these high-risk, high contact public spaces clean and reduce the risk of infection.

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Bethany Hadvab Town Social Worker Update:

Food Insecurity: Many new people have surfaced to take advantage of the resources.

Social and Racial Inequities: Bethany is involved in a commission to address these issues. Bethany will participate on a panel for discussion. Boston officials have stated that this racial inequity issues be considered a public health crisis.

- How do we identify people who don't have equal access to health care and programs?
- How do we go about making sustainable systematic changes?

Social and Racial Inequities Continued:

- How do we educate and fill in where there are overt gaps in knowledge?
- Will the state take a leading role in this endeavor?

Students involvement in Inequities and other Social Issues: Bethany reached out to Ellie Gottlieb (a Sophomore at LSRHS) and another student to get some input as to how to communicate to their critical age group about all that is going on in the world, the country, the state and the Sudbury Community? Students provided ideas about effective communication.

Bill Murphy – Health Director Update:

Reopening Schools: LSRHS Superintendent Bella Wong, is waiting to see what the state plan is for reopening. The School Committee has been polling residents to get an idea of how comfortable kids are with returning to school as opposed to how they feel about changes to the current conventional way of learning? The involvement of students is important to this process.

Challenges to Reopening School: Purchasing PPE. Carol Bradford has been tasked with ordering PPE supplies. What will school look like? Half days? 2 ½ days per week? How do we handle immune compromised kids? Would it make sense to teach high school kids virtually and have grade school kids taught in classrooms? Busing? Local mandates vs state mandates. There are many questions and critical obstacles to overcome before September.

Sudbury Public Schools are working with teachers, parents and the health advisory group to get the school ready for the fall. State guidance will be announced soon.

Reopening Establishments: Various businesses have been complying with the state mandates. The office has received some complaints, but most businesses are self-monitoring and doing a decent job. Initial complaints were from residents visiting establishments immediately upon phase reopened. Many of the initial issues have been addressed. Phase 3 will bring additional challenges with compliance.

Personnel: Six school nurses from the contact tracing team have committed to work thru the summer. All nurses will be back to work in the fall. There are concerns that if we have a COVID surge in the fall we will not have the manpower to handle the outbreak.

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Mosquito/EEE: Mosquito surveillance is revealing low mosquito numbers. A video by Dr. Catherine Brown (State Epidemiologist) about best measures to protect yourself from mosquito borne illnesses was posted to Sudbury TV. Health Department will be continually messaging risk reduction throughout the season.

Increase in outdoor activities is contributing to tick borne illnesses. Residents are encouraged to use precautions while outdoors. Cover exposed skin, use insect repellents and be sure to check for ticks when you get home on yourself, family members and pets.

Bill Murphy thanked Susan Sama: for giving the opportunity to Sudbury Department Heads to take part in a comprehensive COVID-19 seminar (offered by UMass Lowell) that took place last week.

VOTE: to publish the Board of Health Meeting Minutes dated June 9th as amended. Motion to vote made by Carol Bradford. Seconded by Linda Huet-Clayton. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Meeting Adjourned 5:35pm.