

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting October 13, 2020

Attendees: Carol Bradford-Board Chair, Susan Sama-Board Member, Bill Murphy-Health Director, Bethany Hadvab-Social Worker, Beth Porter Admin, Patty Moran-Public Health Nurse, Janie Dretler-Select Board Chair, Jen Roberts-Select Board Member, Kay Bell-Council on Disabilities, Scott Smigler-Finance Committee, Ellie Gottlieb-Resident, Susan Berry, Sylvia Neksessian, Rachel Hecker, Maia Pazansky, Deanna Bisson, Mo Carty, Kearen Checkete, Ann Rettman, Mark Tatro

Carol Bradford – Motion to start meeting at 4:02 PM

Ann Rettman-Resident – Lead discussion about Police officers not wearing masks during routine traffic stops.

Ms. Rettman has a parent that was involved in a Sudbury traffic stop where the officer approached the car without a mask. Her father is elderly, and she was concerned about the possibility of the spread of COVID. The current policy by the Sudbury police allows an officer to approach a car during an initial assessment without a mask. Upon return to the car, the officer would be masked. It was explained to Ms. Rettman that the Board of Health does not write sector specific policies and there are occupational exemptions to mask wearing.

The Board chose to take the matter under advisement.

Patty Moran-Public Health Nurse – COVID Update:

COVID Positive Cases: Sudbury numbers are currently at 1.99% but are trending up quickly with the state easing of restrictions. Each case has been a challenge. Sama noted that positive cases and contacts who work in Sudbury are not counted among the cases.

Contact Tracing: Example, Soccer team with one positive had 30 contacts. Each case needs to be contact traced. Negative tests do not mean that the kids can immediately go back to sports and school. Patty pointed out that for each case that needs contact tracing, it takes 2 -3 hours to complete one tracing. Each case, on average, consists of 6 – 7 contacts. One case can be an all-day project. (these numbers do not include follow-up/community updates and paperwork).

Travel: Sudbury had a COVID positive case for an international traveler. The first since May of this year.

Sudbury has revised reporting format: New report shows COVID activity for communities surrounding Sudbury. Many of these communities are high risk which should inform the public about regional activity.

Flu Clinics: The first two, of four, drive-thru flu clinics went smoothly. Garrett Simonsen, PHEP Regional Planner for Region 4AB, attended and gave positive feedback. He will be sending out an after action report soon.

Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker Update:

Resource updates: Ms. Hadvab and interns continue to service the community and provide necessary resources that are available to residents. She is also maintaining a current updated website. This is a challenge as resources are constantly changing and evolving.

Referrals: There have been 721 referrals this month. This number normally reflects one year of referrals.

Case Management: Has become difficult. Bethany stresses that COVID stress handicaps residents from functionality and many people need to be walked through the process to get them to a place of resolution.

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Halloween:

Discussion: The CDC guidelines for Halloween encourage moderate to low risk activities. Sudbury's COVID positive numbers have been steadily increasing. Mr. Murphy stated in taking all of the factors into consideration, feels that Board of Health should make recommendation for low risk and moderate risk Halloween activities according to the guidelines.

Bradford suggested that families that go out with their children should conduct themselves with restraint. **Dretler** and **Sama** believe that in order to keep the community moving in the right direction, low risk would be the best approach.

Advisory Statement to residents: **Sama** wants a collaborative statement from the Board of Health, Select Board and the Schools. It is believed that this type of unified messaging would carry more weight. Mr. Murphy will draft a Low Risk advisory message.

Messaging includes:

Strong message in the statement would be to avoid traditional Trick or Treating.

Cite CDC guidelines/reasons for limiting activities (ex: shutting down the schools)

Messaging must be strong and specific

Best practices – for low risk activities

Avoid groupings of children and groupings descending on large neighborhoods and discourage out-of-town participation.

Gatherings must be 100 or smaller with social distancing in mind

Bill Murphy – Health Director - Update

Department Admin/Inspections: 153 record requests were processed in September. There is still an upward trend in Title 5 Inspections, preparing for the sale of homes. Bob Landry (Contracted Health inspector) has been doing food inspections (COVID modified), septic inspections, and COVID follow-up. He is making headway in the first round of bi-annual food inspections.

Nurses Meetings: Mr. Murphy has been attending the nurse's meetings to keep updated on issues, trends and problems.

Mosquito Control: We are now past peak season for mosquito borne illnesses. Temperature drops and frost reduce or eliminate risk.

Ticks: Risk is not affected by the weather like EEE and WNV same weather. It is important that residents remain diligent in protecting themselves while in high risk areas.

COVID's affect on the functionality of Local Health departments: COVID exposed deficiencies and vulnerabilities in local, state and federal health specific sectors. Massachusetts specifically does not have dedicated funding for local Boards of Health. Regionalization, credentialing, unified reporting and funding is being proposed in the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Act. Board members are encouraged to support the legislation.

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Sudbury Crossing Variance: In order for Sudbury Crossing to accommodate additional higher wastewater flow businesses including schools, restaurants and medical offices, the septic system capacity must be increased. The property located within a ZONE II, a protective zone around a town well, will require and Innovative Alternative septic system. The owners will need Board of Health approval to advance the project to the Department of Environmental Protection. The applicant will attend next meeting to inform the Board.

Public Comment:

Scott Smigler – Finance Committee. Scott and Susan Berry have been selected to be the liaisons to the Board of health. This will facilitate better communication and understanding of financial impacts and needs through COVID.

Surges: Scott asked what can Sudbury do as a town to keep up with a surge? Mr. Murphy emphasized that support for nurses is paramount. Bradford thinks that personal accountability would help to keep spread in check. Mr. Murphy is sure that Phased openings will be rolled back as we see surges.

Backward Contact Tracing: Traces back to the source of infection. Best tracing method used to mitigate spread. Does the CTC have plans to upgrade procedures to include backward tracing? Because the State CTC is not reliable, Scott Smigler inquired if the Sudbury nurses are ready for an uptick in COVID. Mr. Murphy would request school nurses support if the schools close. There are no guarantees that there will be nurses available for an uptick in COVID. Public Health Nurses are currently in high demand. Mr. Murphy would like to state that the school nurses are doing an incredible job. The fallback is utilizing the Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC).

Cares Act: must be used by the end of December before funds are no longer available. Some concerns are that there are budgeting restraints and unknowns post December 31st.

Holidays: Issues – Potential travel and gatherings will contribute enormously to spread of the virus. People who travel are on the honor system. Mr. Murphy will create messaging for the holidays. He will have a draft ready for the next Board of Health Meeting for discussion.

Sama: Motion to approve Meeting minutes, as edited, from 9/8/2020 and 9/22/2020. Bradford seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0-0.

November meetings: November 10th and November 24th.

Carol Bradford motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:39. Sama seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0-0.