

Leanne Jasset, Chair
Kathy Reda, Vice Chair
Mary Ellard, Member

Kylee Sullivan, Director
Renee Johnson,
Administrator



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TOWN OF DEDHAM BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes March 25, 2021

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and given the current prohibitions on gatherings imposed by Governor Baker's March 23, 2020 "Order Assuring Continued Operation of Essential Services in the Commonwealth, Closing Workplaces, and Prohibiting Gatherings of More than 10 People," this public hearing was conducted virtually, as allowed by Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20.

The following Board of Health Members were present:

Leanne Jasset, Chair
Kathy Reda, Vice Chair
Mary Ellard, Member

The following staff were also present:

Kylee Sullivan, Health Director

The following members of the public were present:

Gail Kelley, Dedham Public Schools
Monica DeWinter
Dedham TV

Leanne Jasset called the Board of Health meeting of Thursday, March 25, 2021 to order at 5:30pm.

Dedham Public Schools

The Chair introduced Gail Kelley, the Director of Health Services for the Dedham Public Schools (DPS). Ms. Kelley stated that currently DPS follows guidelines that are stricter than the MA state travel advisory. Currently, DPS requires students and staff traveling out of state to test 5 days after returning to MA. Ms. Kelley asked the Board of Health to consider her request on behalf of DPS to change the school guidelines to align with the state travel advisory, which encourages individuals to quarantine for 10 days after returning to MA or encourages a person get tested for COVID-19 within 72 hours after returning to the state, unless an individual qualifies for exemption. She stated that because the state changed the travel order to a travel advisory, along with the hardships the current DPS policy may cause for DPS students and staff, it would be in the best interest of the community to align with the state's travel advisory.

Ms. Kelley shared that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have indicated that 3 feet of separation between students in a classroom setting is similarly effective as 6 feet of separation, where other preventive measures are observed. She further stated that if school-based transmission occurs, DPS will reevaluate school policies.

Ms. Reda made a motion to approve the updated DPS travel policy and the recent recommendation from the CDC have a 3-foot distance between students in a classroom where preventive measures are observed. Member Mary Ellard and Chair Leanne Jasset seconded the motion. All were in a favor.

Chair Update

Madam Chair introduced the new Health Director, Kylee Sullivan. She shared that Director Sullivan worked in the town of Arlington for the Health and Human Services Department, where she served for five years as a health compliance officer. Since the start of the pandemic, Director Sullivan supervised Arlington's contact tracing program consisting of six contact tracers, and she worked with various sectors to ensure compliance with COVID-19 safety standards. She received her Master's in Public Health from Boston University with a concentration in environmental health. Director Sullivan brings with her education, experience, an amazing work ethic that the Board recognized already, and a bright, positive attitude. Director Sullivan shared that she is excited to work in the town of Dedham.

Director's Report and General Updates

Temporary Outdoor Dining: The Select Board voted to approve temporary outdoor dining starting on Thursday, April 1. The Health Department met with the Assistant Town Manager, the Building Commissioner, the DPW Director, Community Development Director, and the Public Information Officer to discuss procedures moving forward. Specifically, the temporary outdoor dining inspection process was discussed with regards to compliance with current COVID-19 safety standards, the food code, ADA accessibility, and building codes. Director Sullivan reported there are a few food establishments who currently have not completed the annual permitting process for a Permit to Operate a Food Establishment with the Health Department. Director Sullivan stated that, if these establishments are interested in outdoor dining, they would not be permitted to do so until they complete the necessary permitting process.

Vice Chair, Katy Reda responded to this update with concern that when restaurants create outdoor seating, it may lessen the amount of available ADA accessibility parking spaces. She wanted to make it a priority that this would not be a recurring issue. Additionally, she shared with the Town Employee's utilizing the public parking lot it may only exaggerate the lack of ADA parking.

Tobacco Regulations: The Health Department received an anonymous complaint reporting that tobacco retailers are selling blunt wrappers and/or cigar wrappers in Town. The Town's current regulation on smoking and the sale and distribution of tobacco and nicotine delivery products

prohibits the sale of blunt wrappers and cigar wrappers. As a result, the Health Department sent out a memo to all tobacco retailers, reminding them that these products are prohibited. As a follow up, the Health Department will conduct compliance checks to make sure all tobacco retailers are in compliance with the regulations.

COVID-19: Director Sullivan stated that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) notified the Health Department that Dedham currently has two COVID-19 cases that are identified as the B.1.1.7. variant, that had originated in the United Kingdom. MDPH did not recommend informing the residents of the variant because it has no clinical relevance to them, and it does not change isolation procedures. This information is relevant to be noted for public health awareness as this variant is becoming more prevalent across the Commonwealth. Currently, there are about 500 confirmed cases of the B.1.1.7. variant across the State. MDPH will no longer notify local health departments if this variant is circulating in their community. However, the MDPH will notify health departments if there are other variants of concern in their community.

Public Health Nurse Jessica Tracy has organized and ran several COVID-19 vaccine clinics in town. To date, 297 first responders have been fully vaccinated and 968 seniors in Dedham have been fully vaccinated through these local clinics. administered. In total, 1265 residents have been fully vaccinated by the Health Department.

Dedham has partnered with the State to take advantage of their in-home vaccination program. Homebound residents interested in getting a COVID-19 vaccination can call the state intake's line to be connected to in-home vaccination services.

The first round of vaccine clinics with the Dedham Housing Authority has been completed. The second dose clinics are scheduled for April 2 and April 3. During the first dose clinics, 138 residents were vaccinated. The state is still not providing local health departments with vaccine to administer first doses to eligible residents and instead encourages residents to receive their vaccine at the mass vaccination sites or at retail pharmacies.

Vice Chair, Mary Ellard stated that there were several seniors who were unable to attend the local clinics. Director Sullivan encouraged these residents call the Health Department for information about registering for the vaccine through the state.

Member Kathy Reda additionally shared her disappointment with the state regarding the vaccine supply. She also expressed appreciation on behalf of her uncle, who received the vaccine at one of the local clinics.

Madam Chair echoed these statements and felt that Dedham was very lucky to have such hard-working staff and volunteers.

On Monday, March 22, the state advanced to Phase IV, Step 1 of the reopening plan. Gathering limits for event venues and in public settings increased to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards remain at 25 people while indoor house gathering limits remain at 10 people maximum.

The state's new travel advisory urges all persons entering MA, including returning residents, to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival, or to get COVID-19 tested up to 72 hours prior to their arrival, if they have been out of the state for over 24 hours.

MA residents 60 years and older, and certain workers became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine on March 22. On April 5, people ages 55 and older, as well as people with one certain health condition, become eligible for vaccination. The MA homebound vaccination program is slated to begin on March 26. As stated, Dedham is partnering with the state to vaccinate homebound residents. The department will connect homebound residents to the intake call line at 1-833-983-0485 to schedule appointments. The intake call line is available in different languages, and supplies translators for anyone who may have language difficulties.

Madam Chair shared that, since the beginning of the pandemic, 2233 Dedham residents have tested positive for COVID-19. She stated that the numbers are procured in real time from the state's online epidemiological network called MAVEN. As a result, oftentimes, what is reported on a weekly basis by MDPH, may be different than local case number reports.

Madam Cahir reported that communities in Essex County and Barnstable County recently had cluster outbreaks, and the school districts in both communities had to go completely remote. These communities are examples of how it remains important to observe preventive measures such as abiding by gathering limits, social distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands.

All members of the Board reiterated that hand washing, social distancing and wearing masks are still of the utmost importance. They asked that the public remain vigilant, even when fully vaccinated.

Drug Free Communities: Public Health Nurse Jessica Tracy and the Drug Free Communities Director, Kristina King, are conducting interviews this week to fill the part time Program Coordinator role.

Housing Cases:

14 Arbor lane: Director Sullivan shared that Assistant Health Director Leontia Flanagan has been working with this property owner to monitor and inspect the property for excess clutter or debris. In a recently conducted inspection, Assistant Director Flanagan observed that the property owner is working towards improving the property, but more progress must be made before compliance with the state sanitary code is achieved.

66 Norwell Road: This property is working towards achieving compliance with the state sanitary code. In the past week, three dumpsters of debris have been removed from the property and a tree company removed old tree limbs. A hearing scheduled with Housing Court regarding this property has been postponed as the property owner is in the hospital. A new date for this hearing has not been set.

Vice Chair Cathy Reda made a motion to adjourn. Member Mary Ellard and Chair Leanne Jasset Seconded. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 PM.

This is to certify that the above is a true and accurate record of the minutes of the Board of Health's Meeting held on March 25, 2021 which minutes were approved on May 18, 2021.

Leanne Jasset – Chairman