

Newburyport Board of Health Meeting
March 25, 2021

Date of Approval: 4/15/2021

Attendees

Dr. Robin Blair, Chairman
Dr. Sam Merabi, Board Member
Dr. Robert Slocum, Board Member
Frank Giacalone, Health Director
Patricia McAlarney, Note Taker

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the Minutes of the Board of Health Meeting from February 25, 2021 was made by Dr. Sam Merabi; seconded by Dr. Rob Slocum. Votes to approve - 3; votes to oppose - 0. Minutes were approved as submitted.

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics: Director Giacalone –

Director Giacalone explained that the State allows for 25% of the weekly doses allocated to the Lower Merrimack Valley Collaborative Clinics to be made available for private clinics for residents/workers from the communities affiliated with the Collaborative. Appointments for these clinics tend to be scheduled within 10 – 15 minutes of the registration link being shared. Registration for the clinics that are open to the general public (ie those who work or reside in Massachusetts) are posted on Newburyport's website (and websites of other communities in the collaborative) as well as on the State "Vax Finder" website. The State has also continues to offer assistance for those that are unable to register for a vaccination appointment online by having them call "2-1-1." These public clinics that are offered by the LMVRC typically run on Saturday and Sunday and administer approximately 1,300 doses per day. At the clinics held over the next several weekends the doses administered will be predominantly second doses.

Director Giacalone informed the Board that he has informed the State that Newburyport will utilize the State's services to administer vaccines to the City's homebound individuals. The Council on Aging provided an estimate of 90 individuals that may be eligible for to be vaccinated at their home; however, this estimate may include some individuals who reside outside of Newburyport. Paula Burke, Director of Council on Aging, has provided the information about how to register with the State for a Homebound Vaccination Appointment to the senior housing directors and to the drivers for Meals on Wheels for distribution to residents.

Newburyport will be holding a second-dose Clinic for approximately 200 residents and staff of the Housing Authority and low income housing on April 6 at the Hope Church in Newburyport.

COVID-19 Risk Factor – For the third consecutive week, Newburyport has qualified as 'green' risk category for COVID-19. The positive case count for the past fourteen days has consistently been in the single digits, frequently with only one to five positive cases reported each day.

Public Schools –

COVID Testing – Director Giacalone noted that pool testing continues to be performed at the Newburyport public schools.

ReOpening of Schools – Students in the public schools, grades kindergarten to eighth grade, are resuming in person learning. The date for high school students to return to classrooms has not yet been released. There may be a reduction of space required between tables (from 6’ to 3’) for student’s lunch time.

Re-Opening of City Hall – The Mayor has announced that City Hall will re-open to the public on April 5 and staff will no longer be permitted to work remotely. Director Giacalone stated that City Hall is well prepared for the opening. Plexiglass barriers have been installed at locations that frequently require face-to-face contact with the public and air purifiers have been placed within each office. In the Health Department it is the selling of “bulk item” and yard waste stickers that promote the most in person contact with the public and that both of these transactions are now available online.

Food Establishment Updates:

- Director Giacalone stated that Brine restaurant is relocating to the space that bears the sign and was originally occupied by Fowle’s store. Ceia, which was owned by the same person that owns Brine, has sold the restaurant. The new establishment will be named Bar 25.
- Grand Trunk anticipates moving from their current location on Pleasant Street to 3 ½ Central Street (opposite Brick and Ash.)

Next Board Meeting: The next Board Meeting will be held remotely on Thursday, April 15 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.