

**Newburyport Board of Health Meeting
July 2, 2020
Webinar Meeting Held Remotely due to COVID-19**

Date of Approval: 8/18/2020

Attendees

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

Call to Order: Dr. Blair called the meeting to order at 7:22 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Health Meeting on June 18, by Dr. Sam Merabi and seconded by Dr. Rob Slocum. Votes to approve: 3; Votes to oppose: 0. Motion passed.

Recap of State Street Closure – Director Giacalone

Overall the closure of State Street to accommodate outdoor seating at restaurants went well and according to feedback from food establishments was a benefit to the restaurants that participated; retail stores on State Street, however, had mixed reactions with some stores indicating that their business suffered as a result of the street closure/expansion of the outdoor eating area. Director Giacalone informed the Board that he had shared his concerns with the City Council Task Force and subsequently a decision was made that State Street will not be closed for the upcoming holiday weekend.

In Phase 2, recreational boating is allowed with a maximum of ten people, required face coverings and social distancing in place. On July 6, Phase 3 will begin and recreational boats for excursions and whale watching will be allowed to operate at 25% of the boat's permitted capacity (facial coverings will be required if social distancing cannot be maintained.) Phase 3 will also allow indoor gatherings of 8 people per 1,000 square feet with a maximum of 25 persons allowed; outdoor gatherings in an enclosed outdoor space are limited to a maximum of 100 people. There appears to be no limit applied to gatherings held in unenclosed outdoor spaces (as long as social distancing is maintained.) Director Giacalone expressed concern with the lack of a limit on gatherings in outdoor unenclosed spaces and informed the Board that he will be seeking clarification from the state. Director Giacalone anticipates that the Governor will allow live music and entertainment in food establishments during Phase 3, which he feels may present an increased risk. Drive in movies will also be allowed, provided that patrons remain in their vehicles. The Board discussed whether the proposed high school graduation ceremony conforms with the Phase 3 guidelines for an outdoor gathering in an enclosed space. Further discussion concerning the graduation ceremony is scheduled for the next Board meeting.

Day Cares will also be re-opening in Phase 3, however, there are restrictions that may continue to cause challenges for parents seeking child care.

Director Giacalone noted that Newburyport is in the lower third of positive cases in the state with a percentage rate of 4.5. He also expressed concern regarding the current trend of younger persons testing positive for COVID-19.

Contact Tracing – Patricia McAlarney

The cumulative number of positive COVID-19 cases for Newburyport is 93 and five cases are currently being monitored; there have been five COVID related deaths. There are currently no active cases at any of the long term care facilities in the City. It was estimated that approximately 10% of Newburyport's positive cases were

associated a cluster from a long term care facility; however, collectively the long-term care facilities have done a good job at preventing COVID-19 transmission. Ms. McAlarney explained to the Board that at this time the majority of the City's confirmed positive cases are referred to the state-run Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC.) The CTC interviews and issues isolation guidelines to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and identifies individuals with whom they have had direct contact. The CTC "Tracers" attempt to call the 'Direct Contacts' to issue quarantine guidelines and will then follow both the Direct Contacts and the Confirmed Cases until they are released from Isolation or Quarantine. Although the CTC computer program does not allow for sharing of anecdotal case information with the Health Department, the program seems to be running well and the quarantines and isolations appear to be effective in stopping further transmission. The Newburyport Health Department retains control over any confirmed positive COVID-19 cases that involve healthcare workers, residents of long-term care facilities or cases from an existing 'cluster' (such as a workplace), as well as any cases that are specifically chosen to be followed by the Department. An integral part of the Community Tracing Collaborative is a social service outreach program that uses local resources to provide basic necessities to individuals while they are in quarantine/isolation.

Food Establishments – Frank Giacalone

New Establishments in Newburyport

- **Vera Ristorante** is now in operation on Market Square
- **Olive's Coffee and Bake House** has submitted an application to open on High Street (at the prior location of Eva's Organic Butchery)
- **Lin's Little Kitchen** is now open on Pleasant Street (at the prior location of Dos Amigos)
- **Tuscan Sea Grille** should be open within the next two weeks
- **Chipotle** is planning to open on Storey Ave.
- **Cacao** is a high-end chocolate has taken over the prior location of Thai Lily on Pleasant Street

Food Establishment – Complaints

- **Stone Crust Pizza and Famous Pizza** – Multiple complaints were received by the Health Department from customers that reported staff at Stone Crust Pizza were not wearing masks. Director Giacalone made an onsite visit and informed the owner that continued disregard of the face covering order will result in a \$300 fine for the establishment. It was noted that the owner also owns Famous Pizza; and a similar complaint about face coverings not being worn by employees was previously presented to the Health Department about this establishment, as well.

Mosquito Control – Director Giacalone

Director Giacalone informed the Board that he has been invited to attend a (remote) meeting to discuss the need/importance of continued mosquito surveillance and integrated pest management. The Board discussed the cyclic nature of mosquito-borne diseases, such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis and agreed that based on last year's heightened level of mosquito activity and illnesses and the proximity of cases of mosquito borne illnesses in other communities last year, it is advisable to continue the management program for the current year.

Board Meetings – The Board decided that following the next meeting, they would resume meeting on a monthly basis (emergency meetings can be scheduled as needed.) The next meeting will be held remotely on Thursday, July 16 at 7 pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Merabi; seconded by Dr. Slocum. Votes in favor: three; Votes to oppose: 0. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.