

**Newburyport Board of Health Meeting  
April 15, 2021**

**Date of Approval: 5/20/2021**

**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 April 15, 2021 was made by Dr. Rob Slocum; seconded by Dr. Sam Merabi. Votes to approve - 3; votes to oppose - 0. Minutes were approved as submitted.

**COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics: Director Giacalone** – The vaccine clinics offered by the Lower Merrimac Valley Regional Collaborative (LMVRC) continue to go very well with approximately 1,500 – 2,000 doses administered at each of the clinics held on Saturdays and Sundays at the Amesbury High School. The pause in approval to administer Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine has caused the LMVRC to reduce the number of persons vaccinated at the April Clinics. Director Giacalone was informed today that beginning in May the LMVRC Clinics will be relocated to the Nock Middle School in Newburyport. Amesbury will continue to be the lead community since the vaccine is ordered through their vaccine National Provider Identification number.

**Vaccine Clinics for Residents of Newburyport Senior and Low Income Housing:** The Newburyport Health Department held a vaccine clinic on April 6 to administer second dose vaccines to residents of Newburyport low income and senior housing programs. The clinic went well and just over 200 doses were administered.

**COVID-19 Case and Vaccination Reporting:** Director Giacalone shared the state's vaccination report that illustrated the proportion of the State's population that has received COVID-19 vaccine. As of today, April 15, Newburyport's data showed that 38 % of the total population (which was stated as 17, 759) have been fully vaccinated and an additional 21% have received their first dose.

The Massachusetts' COVID-19 Data Dashboard is now interactive and can provide information about each town's risk level, etc. Newburyport's current Average Daily Incident Rate is 8.0 and the Percent Positivity for the last two weeks is 1.56%. Director Giacalone informed the Board that there was a recent outbreak of COVID-19 cases involving Newburyport high school students who had attended a bon fire last Friday night that affected a total of 9 students from the football team, soccer and volleyball team. A few of these students are also employees of a local restaurant. All identified sources and contacts have been notified and isolation and quarantine guidelines have been issued. As a result of the outbreak, the high school will operate remotely for the remainder of this week; students will be out of school on vacation next week. Full, in-person learning is expected to resume following vacation.

The High School Principal has provided information to Director Giacalone concerning plans for alternative prom/graduation events. Director Giacalone noted that the plans discussed so far appear to comply with current COVID guidelines. Further information and planning is anticipated.

**Homebound Vaccination Program:** Homebound vaccinations will be administered through the City firefighting staff. The Council on Aging Director, Paula Burke, provided the roster of individuals who qualify for a homebound vaccine and has coordinated scheduling of the vaccines with the Fire Department. The program is expected to commence once the pause in administration of Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been revoked.

**Food Establishment Updates:**

- Joy's Nest has now opened up at the Tannery
- The Candy Man has opened on Pleasant Street
- The Cookie Jar Kitchen on Green Street is expected to submit their application to open soon.

**Prescription Medication Disposal/Drop-Off:** The Police Marshal, Mark Murray, informed Director Giacalone that he would like to discontinue the program that allows residents to drop off unused prescription drugs in a collection kiosk located in the lobby of the police department. The Marshall explained that storage of the medications is problematic since final disposition is an involved process that only takes place twice each year. The Mayor announced in the Department Head meeting that she would like to see the program continued. Further discussion on this subject is anticipated.

**New Building Department Staff:** Director Giacalone informed the Board that the Building Department has hired a new Building Commissioner, Gregory Earls and a new Building Inspector, Dennis Morel.

**Re-Opening City Hall:** City Hall has re-opened to the public, however, general entry is limited to the upstairs front door. Anyone wishing to enter at the lower level must ring a doorbell for either the Building Department or for the Health Department which allows each department to maintain social distancing by admitting only one or two people at a time into the area outside of each department. The majority of in-person visits to the Health Department was for purchase of bulk trash stickers or Yard Waste Permits; both of these items are now purchased online and the stickers are mailed to residents' homes.

**Next Board Meeting:** The next Board Meeting will be held remotely on Thursday, May 20 at 7:00 pm.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.**