

Meeting Minutes

Manchester Board of Health

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Virtual Meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Members present:

Paula Filias, Peter Colarusso, Joan Cottler, Dr. Martin Hahn, Dr. Tonya Colpitts

Members absent:

None

COVID Update

Public Health Nurse Mary Higgins informed the Board that the January 13, 2021 COVID case count for Manchester is 148 cases, 3 active cases. Nurse Higgins added that the Town had been holding at 13 or 14 cases each week with 17 cases this past week. She noted that the State is reporting Manchester to have a positivity rate of 2.29%. In response to a question from Mr. Colarusso she reported that there were no current COVID clusters in Manchester.

COVID Complaint Update

Ellen Lufkin provided the Board of Health with a summary of COVID complaints that have been reviewed and addressed by the Board of Health staff since the last Board of Health meeting. She noted that some of the complaints were cases where people thought the gathering limits applied to recreational facilities that have youth and adult amateur sports. Those youth sports sites are specifically under the guidance of the Mass Executive Office for Environmental Affairs.

School Reopening, Dr. Hahn and Dr. Colpitts

Dr. Hahn reported that he had no update to report. Dr. Colpitts reported that the School was set to begin Ginkgo Covid-19 voluntary pool testing in the middle and high school next week. She reported that the testing is free for the month of January and that the testing would include pools of 25 tested 2 times per week. She informed the Board that the State Education Department had released a new program for COVID testing in schools and that the school would now be reviewing that new available testing information. Nurse Higgins asked if the Ginkgo testing was self-administered, to which Dr. Colpitts answered yes. Mr. Colarusso asked if the pool were found to be COVID positive, would the individual testing be at the student's expense? Dr. Colpitts replied that the student would be required to provide a negative pcr test for return to school, but that insurance should cover the cost as the test

was the result of positive pool testing. She explained that the testing is surveillance based, hoping to identify the asymptomatic carriers. Mr. Colarusso asked if positive pool testing would show that the schools were not safe, to which Dr. Colpitts replied that school is safe, extremely safe, due to the precautions the school is taking. And further that the pool testing would make it even more safe.

COVID Testing Update

Ms. Lufkin provided the following update on Town sponsored COVID-19 testing:

Beaumont Testing (12/15/20)

228 tests completed

1 positive test

Veritas/Allen's Testing (12/21 – 12/30)

420 tests completed

5 positive tests

COVID Clinic Set Up

Ms. Filias asked that the Board discuss planning for upcoming Covid-19 vaccination clinics.

Ms. Lufkin reviewed the State Phase One and Phase Two chart for Covid-19 Vaccination delivery with the Board.

Nurse Higgins was concerned with several demands and issues related to local Covid-19 vaccination clinics including the following: expectations, available resources, commitment to completion of all items in phase two and three of the State chart, and State compliance related to inventory, storage, and MIIS vaccine delivery reporting. Dr. Hahn agreed that there were obstacles to overcome with vaccine delivery and that the Board may wish to pursue options for partnerships for vaccine delivery. The Board discussed the possibility of having the first responders from the Fire Department assist with vaccinations, as Ms. Lufkin reported was done with the H1N1 vaccine delivery. Ms. Filias stressed the importance of the Town providing some COVID vaccinations, especially providing those vaccinations to the elderly residents of Manchester.

Town Manager Greg Federspiel informed the Board that Allen's Pharmacy and Connolly's Pharmacy had advised him that they were partnering together hoping to provide Covid-19 vaccinations at the Manchester Community Center and that the Board may wish to pursue a partnership with those business. Members, noting there were several issues to be discussed regarding vaccine delivery, agreed to form a committee to review and plan covid-19 vaccine delivery for Manchester. Members agreed to

have resident Mary Cody Kenney serve on the group, which would also include Nurse Higgins, Members Cottler and Hahn, Ellen Lufkin and Greg Federspiel.

Governor Baker's Current Covid-19 Orders & Restrictions

Ms. Filias informed the Board members that she had been asked if Board of Health felt that the current Covid-19 restrictions, put in place by Governor Baker, were sufficient for the Town of Manchester. Mr. Colarusso said that the Manchester businesses are trying hard to comply with the Governor's rules. Further, that he observed an increase in mask wearing in Town. Ms. Colpitts said she was concerned about the lack of hand sanitizers at the entrance and check out of local businesses. She also questioned how often the bank card machines at the food stores were being cleaned between customers. Staff will follow up on these two matters. Members agreed they will not recommend any further COVID related restrictions be put in place in Manchester.

Mr. Federspiel asked the Board to have representation at next Tuesday's Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Dr. Hahn confirmed that he would be participating in that meeting. Mr. Federspiel said that a question may come up regarding the Board of Health reporting additional Covid-19 case information, beyond the number of cases and the number of active cases. Dr. Hahn replied while there may be some information that could be shared but that it is a sticky issue regarding patient confidentiality. Nurse Higgins read the following statement:

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has instructed all local boards of health with populations less than 10,000 to only report total positive cases.

In order to protect privacy and confidentiality of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 We understand that many boards of health find value in sharing community-specific data as part of a risk communication plan and to keep the public informed about the scope of the local public health effort. If you choose to share numbers of cases for these purposes, please do so with the highest regard for privacy and confidentiality by not including any information other than the case count.

Mr. Colarusso asked Nurse Higgins if the State tracked the asymptomatic coronavirus cases. Nurse Higgins replied that the State does not separate out the asymptomatic and that those who are asymptomatic can turn symptomatic, that all cases are fluid.

1 King's Way, Manchester

Members reviewed septic system plans, submitted by Randy Burley, P.E. for the property at 1 King's Way in Manchester. Ms. Lufkin stated that the site has an approved septic system plan on file but that the purchaser of the lot wanted to relocate the proposed house foundation and septic system tank.

Ms. Filias shared the review letter of Board of Health Consultant Gerry McDonald, who wrote that he had reviewed the plan, received his requested revisions and was recommending Board of Health plan approval. By roll call vote, in favor of a motion by Mr. Colarusso and seconded by Ms. Cottler to approve the Randy Burley septic system plan for 1 King's Way, last revised on 11/16/20 as presented:

Ms. Filias, yes

Mr. Colarusso, yes

Ms. Cottler, yes

Dr. Hahn, yes

Dr. Colpitts, yes

Minutes for Approval

Members, on a motion by Ms. Filias and seconded by Ms. Cottler to approve the minutes of November 19, 2020 and December 4, 2020 as presented voted by roll call vote:

Ms. Filias, yes

Mr. Colarusso, yes

Ms. Cottler, yes

Dr. Hahn, yes

Dr. Colpitts, yes

Their being no further business to come before the Board, members on a motion by Ms. Filias and seconded by Mr. Colarusso voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 a.m.

As submitted,

Ellen D. Lufkin