



CITY OF GARDNER
OFFICE OF THE
BOARD OF HEALTH
95 PLEASANT ST, ROOM 29
GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS 01440



Members Present: Lauren Saunders – Health Director
Susan Avallone, RN - Member
Atty. Geoffrey Tobia – Member
Michele Parker, MD - Member

Minutes for Board of Health meeting held Monday September 27, 2021

4:40 Meeting called to order.

4:41 Minutes from the July 26, 2021 and October 19, 2020 Board of Health meeting were reviewed, discussed and approved.

4:44 Old Business:

Keep Gardner Beautiful: The date for this city-wide trash clean up and “nip hunt” was changed to 10/9/21 from 9am to 12pm.

Staffing: The Transfer Station is still short-staffed as the full-time person is still out on medical leave. The License Commission Administrative Assistant resigned, this position was a split position with the Police Department. Each department is hoping to add a full-time administrative position and is awaiting approval with the union.

National Night Out: This event was organized by GCAT and our Prevention Coordinator, and was held on 8/3/21 at Monument Park. There were approximately 30 resource tables and community attendance was good.

Prevention Coordinator: Assisted organizing International Overdose Awareness on 8/31/21 in Monument Park. Also assisted organizing a Recovery Month Kick-Off event at City Hall on 9/8/21. She has been doing presentations, and was recently asked to do additional presentations in the Winchendon Public Schools. It is the hope that she will be a resource for Greater Gardner area for prevention in-services.

Licensing & Permitting Season: The License Commission has 134 license renewals upcoming, which includes Liquor, Common Victualler, and Auto-Amusement Devise licenses. The Health Department has 206 permit renewals upcoming, including food, tobacco, and all the other health-related permits. Renewal notices were sent out at the beginning of the month. This year all License Commission applications will be done online with the software that we implemented last year with the Health Department permits.

Curbside Municipal Trash/Recycling Contract: Things have been going well with EL Harvey, they picked up trash at a recent community clean-up event on Fredette Street. They are also will be donating the dumpster for the Keep Gardner Beautiful litter clean-up next month.

Mosquito Control: We have been at moderate risk for EEE & West Nile; spraying and testing are still underway.

4:50 New Business:

Community COVID Safety Protocol Discussion: As of 9/20/21 there are 68 break-thru-vaccinated cases. Last year from 9/1 to 9/27/20 there were 6 cases; this year during the same time period there are 164 cases. There have been 57 new cases since 9/19/21. As of 9/24/21 there were 6 identified patients at Heywood Hospital and 1 patient under investigation. Available ICU beds are limited. Largely, the unvaccinated are occupying the ICU beds. There are different community protocols, Fitchburg has a mask mandate for municipal buildings, Worcester has a public mask mandate, and masks are mandated in schools statewide through at least 10/1/21. Locally we have a 3.67% positivity rate as of last Friday.

COVID Booster Shots: Pfizer booster shots have been approved by the CDC for individuals who are over 65 years of age, those with certain health conditions, and those with increased risk due to occupational or institutional status. These booster shot are for Pfizer vaccine recipients who completed their initial series at least 6 months ago. Moderna and J&J have not yet been approved for booster shots. The MPHN will be having a call to discuss regional vaccine clinics later this week. CHC and Heywood are considering doing clinics, the State has been promoting doing flu and Covid clinics together. Over the past few years MPHN has not been doing flu clinics as many pharmacies now do flu shots. Pharmacies also have been doing flu clinics at nursing homes and for the Housing Authority.

DESE Test & Stay: This is program for the schools, which is supposed to test in-school exposures and not community-based exposures. The Health Director and School Nurse Lead had a conversation today as the school would like to test all exposures, and believes it has the resources to do so. The guidelines of the DESE program are discussed; per the guidelines, if the exposure is outside of the school, they are not eligible for “Test & Stay”. This is a State program and any requests for deviance from the program should be directed to DESE.

COVID Education: Mayor does weekly updates, Heywood Hospital has weekly updates, Dr. Havlin put out a good message. Gardner Health Department can use its social media and website. The Board suggests that the Health Department put out a mailer to residents with precautions and other information.

Other COVID Issues: Daycare cases have increased significantly over the past week. There have been 3 separate daycares and 17 other cluster-exposures. One daycare in Gardner had 4 different classrooms closed.

AED Foundation: Michelle Dunn, President of Alyssa’s Place in Gardner approached the Health Director with a request to receive Naloxone in bulk through a partnership with the City. For municipality to order, we would need a medical director. Susan Avalone discloses that she is on the Board of Directors for the AED Foundations. Dr. Parker will review and consider.

5:37 Next meeting set Monday October 25, 2021 at 4:30 pm, Adjourn.

Susan Avallone RN, Chair Person

Atty. Geoffrey Tobia, Member

Michele C. Parker MD, Member

All conversations are documented on recordings identified as B.O.H September 27, 2021 Meeting