



MEETING POSTING

City of Melrose
City Hall
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176

Committee/Board: Melrose Board of Health Joint Meeting with Wakefield Board of Health

Meeting Day/Date/Time: August 11, 2021 Location: Remote

Call to Order: Melrose – Frank Brincheiro, 2nd by Wakefield – Candace Linehan
Time Called: 7:07 PM

In Attendance/Roll Call:

Melrose Board Members: Maurine Garipay, Carol Ann Licitra, Frank Brincheiro

Wakefield Board Members: Candace Linehan, Laurel Gourville

Health Department: Interim Director, Elaine Silva; Public Health Nurse, Melissa Lowry and
Health Department Administrative Assistants – Melrose, Denise Slane and Wakefield, Cindy Luongo

Other: Steve Mayo (Wakefield Town Manager), Tom Walsh, Douglas Lyons, Ann McGonigle-Santo, Michael Carraggi, Christine Kresirer, Mark Sardella

Absent: N/A

Director's Report:

Elaine Silva (Interim Health Director) reported that this meeting was called to address the recent rise in COVID cases in the City of Melrose and Town of Wakefield.

- We are starting to see a steady rise in cases from 1 to 6 cases per day
- There has been a rise in break-through cases most as a result of people traveling, children exposed at camps or daycare facilities. Also, some people not even knowing where they may have been exposed or aware that they were exposed
- Most break-through cases are experiencing mild cold symptoms
- There have been no hospitalization at this time that the department is aware of
- Ages of the positive cases vary, most are in children that are not yet eligible for the vaccine

Elaine S. discussed that for the City of Melrose Mayor Brouder will be issuing a mandate that masks must be worn in all municipal buildings as of August 16th. This is being done to be proactive in protecting the public and the employees in municipal buildings. He is not issuing a city wide mandate at this time.

Elaine S. recommended Wakefield discuss if this is a mandate they want to put into place. Steve Mayo (Wakefield Town Manager) does not see a need to mandate the requirement of masks for employees at this time, but if situations change will discuss in the future. Tom W. (Wakefield Emergency Management) agrees that a mandate is probably not needed at this time. Laurel G. recommended that if Wakefield does not put a mandate in place that signage could be re-worded to say “Kindly Wear a Mask” when you enter the Wakefield municipal building and that everyone would need to be treated the same vaccinated or not. Laurel G. also stated that the municipality would need to be the ones to set the standard if they were to move forward with a mandate. Candace L. also hesitates to put a mandate into place but stated there is more discussion needed.

Frank B. stated that he had just gotten off a Zoom call with Tufts and that the CDC is currently recommending that masks be worn indoors, due to rising cases. The CDC is also recommending students attend school in person and wear masks when indoors. They are not mandating it at this time they are only recommending. Carol L. discussed that more conversations should take place in the coming weeks to see where we stand as we get closed to the start date of school.

Candace L. asked what other surrounding communities doing. Elaine S. stated that so far Salem and Belmont were the only two town mandating masks indoors citywide. Most surrounding cities and towns are currently just requiring masks for municipal building and the public that enter them. Elaine also stated with numbers on the rise again you will probably see more cities and towns doing this.

Melissa L. presented a few issues with rising number in camps for school age children. One camp had to quarantine approximately 30 children due to an exposure. The children were all wearing masks while indoors and this is being done as a precautionary measure. She discussed that for the previous week of August 5th – 11th the number in Wakefield were 14 cases and Melrose 29 cases.

Elaine S. discussed the CTC that does contact tracing has started turning cases away due to staff shortages so this now falls to the local Health Department to do. Wakefield is already in the process of bringing back staff the had previously done contact tracing and that Melrose is in the process of securing funding to also hire staff for contact tracing. Elaine S. also stated that each case can take anywhere from 1-1 ½ hours depending upon exposure.

Tom W. discussed that schools should be our priority right now. Members discussed that they would highly recommend masks for school age children ages Pre-K to 12 wear masks when indoors and properly social distance.

Public Comment Opened by Frank B. – Second by Laurel G.

Melrose resident Ryan Bagwell expressed his frustration with the wearing of masks for children in the school system. He believes that there should be an exit strategy in place for the wearing of masks and asked why there has been no discussion on this. If cases are low he asked if there is a need to wear masks. Elaine S. stated that numbers are rising and that the Delta variant is

high and shows that it can linger in the air for up to two hours. The Board is trying to protect the most vulnerable age group which are school aged children not yet eligible to receive the vaccine. Ryan B. also stated that he feels proper ventilation should be a higher priority than the wearing of masks among the students. He also recommends that a deadline be placed for student to stop wearing masks. Laurel G. stated that the Boards will take his concerns and suggestions under advisement as the CDC updates recommendations pertaining to schools.

Public comment Closed by Frank B. – Second by Laurel G.

Laurel G. suggested that as more knowledge and information becomes available on the COVID variants that the Boards meet and continue the conversation on recommendations and/or mandates to help keep both communities ahead of the curve.

It was discussed to make a recommendation for the wearing of masks in the schools for both communities.

Maurine G., Melrose Board of Health, made a motion to suggest/recommend that all school age children Pre-K through 12, teachers, staff and visitors wear a mask while indoors per the recommended CDC guidelines.

Frank B. second the motion

Further Discussion: None

Vote to accept: Maurine G. –YES
 Frank B. – YES
 Carol L. – YES
 PASSED 3-0-0

Laurel G., Wakefield Board of Health, made a motion to suggest/recommend that all school age children Pre-K through 12, teachers, staff and visitors wear a mask while indoors per the recommended CDC guidelines.

Candace L. second the motion

Further Discussion: None

Vote to accept: Laurel G. –YES
 Candace L. – YES
 PASSED 2-0-0

Elaine S. also discussed that a new system is being put in place for Flu Clinic called COLOR. People will be able to go online and register ahead of time and book an appointment for the clinic hours. Both communities are in the process of scheduling their flu clinics and getting training for the new COLOR system.

Elaine S. discussed that a joint meeting will probably not be needed before the September meetings of the Boards, but that if one was needed the Boards will be contacted.

Frank B. motioned for Melrose Board of Health to adjourn, Maurine G. second the motion.

Vote to adjourn: Maurine G. –YES
Frank B. – YES
Carol L. – YES
PASSED 3-0-0

Laurel G. motioned for Wakefield Board of Health to adjourn, Candace L. second the motion.

Vote to adjourn: Laurel G. –YES
Candace L. – YES
PASSED 2-0-0

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:12 P.M.