

**BOARD OF HEALTH  
MINUTES  
September 13, 2021**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Health of the Township of Mahwah was held via Zoom video conference. The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM by Board of Health President, George Cimis.

The Opening Statement was read according to the Sunshine Law and was followed by Roll Call:

**PRESENT:** Mr. Cimis  
Dr. DeMaria  
Mrs. DeSilva  
Ms. Esty  
Mr. Harris  
Mr. Matysiak

**ABSENT:** Mrs. Varrato

**PROFESSIONALS:** Mrs. Gina Behre, Health Officer  
Mr. Maas, REHS  
Mr. Jeffrey Mason, Attorney  
Mrs. Kathryn Hagan, Recording Secretary

**REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE**

Mrs. Wendolowski reported that the Senior Center has reopened, and HARP is once again offering blood pressure screenings. Clinics at Norfolk Village have not yet resumed. HARP is coordinating with the on-site Manager to assist in safely offering a program to interested residents.

Schools and childcare centers have reopened, and HARP participates in bi-monthly Zoom calls with the school nurses regarding updates to COVID protocols.

During July and August, Brandywine Senior Living and Fox Trail Memory Care each incurred one active outbreak. Brandywine has just reported a second outbreak and will remain in outbreak status for an additional 21 days.

Since August 14<sup>th</sup>, statistics indicate a total of 124 positive COVID cases among Mahwah residents and fewer than 10 deaths. Twenty-five percent of the positive cases were diagnosed in those 18 years of age or younger.

The current immunization rate for residents over age 65 is approximately 93%.

Ramapo College has resumed in-person classes with approximately 2,000 students residing on campus. A vigorous program is in place to monitor vaccine status and conduct contact tracing. A COVID Generalist has been hired by the college to manage all COVID-related issues. HARP communicates with the College several times weekly. There have been some reported cases; all from individuals whom have been fully immunized.

The annual flu clinic at the Mahwah Senior Center will be held on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. HARP will once again provide staff to administer flu vaccines to Mahwah's seniors age 65 and over.

Mrs. DeSilva queried whether the individuals who succumbed to COVID were immunized; Mrs. Wendolowski replied affirmatively.

Mr. Matysiak inquired as to the success of the vaccine clinic held at Ramapo College on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Although she reached out to both the College and the Bergen County Health Department, Mrs. Wendolowski has not received specific data relating to this clinic.

Regarding the need for a booster vaccine, Mrs. Wendolowski indicated that the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is expected to issue guidance pertaining to this on September 20<sup>th</sup>. There is currently no specific data indicating when this booster dose would need to be administered and to whom.

Mrs. Behre stated that there is discussion as to whether the booster will be a half-dose. Mrs. Wendolowski stated that historical studies of other vaccines utilizing the half-dose format have not proven successful; therefore, she does not think this will be the case with COVID. Based on current studies underway, she does not believe Moderna will be issuing a booster vaccine in the near future.

Mr. Matysiak queried whether the vaccines are interchangeable. Mrs. Wendolowski replied that at this time it would be recommended that individuals receive a booster from the same manufacturer as their first round, i.e. Pfizer, Moderna or J&J.

Mr. Cimis requested copies of the studies to which Mrs. Wendolowski has referred. Mrs. Wendolowski will forward the information; however, these published studies will not be the most up-to-date information as studies are ongoing.

Mrs. Wendolowski encouraged the Board Members to peruse the New Jersey COVID-19 Dashboard at <https://www.covid19.nj.gov>.

This site provides the latest news, guidance, resources and support as well as more specific data pertaining to immunization rates, variant cases and breakthrough cases.

Mr. Cimis queried Mrs. Wendolowski on her knowledge of a recent Israeli study which indicates natural antibodies to be 27 times more effective in preventing COVID than the vaccine-generated antibodies. Mrs. Wendolowski stated that similar studies are underway in the United States and that herd immunity data is currently being analyzed. She also noted that approximately 16% - 20% of breakthrough cases stem from the B-17 variant, and vaccine efficacy against this new variant is yet to be determined.

Mr. Cimis requested Mrs. Wendolowski inquire with the State Health Department as to the data pertaining to herd immunity. Mrs. Wendolowski has read some documentation regarding this and stated that most of these studies are conducted by academia and the pharmaceutical companies. She will forward whatever information she has regarding herd immunity to the Board members.

Mrs. Wendolowski informed the Board that the window for receiving monoclonal antibody therapy is within ten days of symptoms or within five days of receiving a positive test result. Adults should consult with their healthcare provider to determine whether antibody therapy is indicated. Mrs. Wendolowski will forward flyers with information on this topic to the Health Officer.

Mrs. Behre added that last week's COVID numbers indicated approximately 12,000 new cases statewide. She also stated that on the weekly Health Officer's calls, the concerns of residents are discussed, and she will address the topic of herd immunity data at that time.

#### **APPROVAL OF JULY 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Dr. DeMaria and, unanimously agreed by all present to approve the July 2021 Meeting Minutes.

#### **APPROVAL OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR JULY/AUGUST 2021**

Moved by Mr. Harris and, seconded by Mr. Matysiak to approve the Health Activities Report for July/August 2021.

Mrs. DeSilva requested an update on the dog, Alamo, being held at Eleventh Hour Rescue (EHR). Mrs. Behre replied that the court case

has been postponed until October 5<sup>th</sup>. Per the Township Attorney, a letter has been sent to EHR confirming that the dog is not to leave their facility until the court case is resolved.

Mr. Matysiak queried the nature of the potable water complaint on page 7. Mr. Maas stated that an apartment complex located on Stag Hill utilizes well water, and the well pump system had failed. A truck containing potable water was brought in to fill the tanks, and repairs to the pump system were completed within 24 hours.

In querying the complaint on page 12 regarding dogs running at large, Mrs. DeSilva wished to know if Mahwah has an Ordinance limiting the number of dogs permitted per household. Mr. Maas stated there is no such Ordinance existing in the Township.

Mr. Cimis queried the seriousness of the dog-to-human bite on page 4. This complaint was investigated by Mrs. Homler, and Mrs. Hagan stated she believed this was an incident where the dog accidentally bit its owner.

There being no further questions or a comment, the Health Activities Report for July/August 2021 was unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORTS FOR JULY/AUGUST 2021**

Moved by Mr. Matysiak and, seconded by Mrs. DeSilva to accept the Health Officer's Reports for July/August 2021.

Mrs. Behre summarized her report indicating that classes are back in session for in-person instruction at all public and private schools. Masks are required to be worn indoors by all students, staff and visitors regardless of vaccine status. Exceptions to the mask mandate include excessive heat, breathing issues, those younger than 2 years of age and a medical exemption indicated via a doctor's note.

All school employees will be required to be vaccinated by October 18<sup>th</sup> or will be subjected to weekly testing. NJDOH is allowing school districts to determine the preferred testing methods for their individual schools. One option is to complete a survey and a state-approved vaccine vendor will be assigned to the school where staff members and students can be tested on an as-needed basis. The second option would consist of the school district locating a state-approved lab and negotiating services directly with that facility. As of this date, over 700 school districts statewide have signed up for the first option as this proves to be the most convenient and cost effective.

Mrs. Behre indicated an average of 2,000 positive cases are reported

daily Statewide. Now that schools are back in session and extracurricular activities are taking place, an uptick in cases is expected.

The Health Department will have a booth at Mahwah Day on September 25th. The Health Educator from NWBRHC will be available to answer residents' questions and will have timely health-related literature available. A game and prizes will be offered as an incentive to stop by and meet staff members.

Mrs. Behre commended the inspectors and office staff on their diligence during the summer months. Mahwah traditionally has three large-scaled events which take place during August, i.e. Mahwah Food Truck Festival, Deadman's Curve and Mahwah Day. Approving the licensing packet for each vendor is a time-consuming process and involves multiple steps to include receipting payment, logging and issuing license numbers, conducting a preliminary phone consultation, verifying food handler certifications and performing the on-site inspections.

Mrs. Behre confirmed that the annual seasonal flu clinic is scheduled for Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> in the Mahwah Senior Center. Appointments for Mahwah seniors will be scheduled between 1:30 - 3:30 pm. Nurses from HARP will be on hand to provide vaccines.

There being no further questions or comments, the Health Officer's Reports for July 2021 and August 2021 were unanimously approved.

#### PAYMENT OF BILLS

Moved by Dr. DeMaria and, seconded by Mr. Matysiak and, unanimously agreed to by all to pay the bills for July/August 2021.

#### REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None presented.

#### REPORT OF ATTORNEY

Mr. Mason did not have an official report to present; however, the Board members acknowledged receipt of an article received from Mr. Mason relating to CDC data. The article was found to contain useful and informative information.

Mr. Maas requested the attorney's recommendation regarding an inquiry

he received pertaining to a temporary tattoo booth at Deadman's Curve 2022. Mr. Maas conducted a phone consultation with a vendor who would like to set up a booth at next year's event. The vendor plans to sell t-shirts as well as gift certificates to be used at his Oakland storefront facility. He is seeking permission from the Health Department to provide tattoos at the event; however, Mr. Maas did inform him that tattoo parlors are prohibited in the Township. Mr. Mason will review the application as well as the current Ordinance and will inform Mr. Maas and the Board of his findings at the next scheduled meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence to present.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public present.

**OTHER BUSINESS - REHS POSITION**

On a motion by Mrs. DeSilva, which motion was seconded by Mr. Cimis and, unanimously agreed to by all present to move to Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter at 8:34pm.

A motion to return to Regular Session and adjourn the meeting was not obtained, but occurred at 8:42pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2021, and will be conducted via Zoom videoconference at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hagan  
Recording Secretary