

**CITY OF SALEM
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES**
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom
and
Recorded by SATV
April 13, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Jeremy Schiller, Paul Kirby, Geraldine Yuhas, Sara Moore, Datanis Elias

OTHERS PRESENT: David Greenbaum, Health Agent, Maureen Davis, Clerk of the Board, Patricia Morsillo, City Council Liaison

ATTENDEES ADDRESSED: Alan Hanscom, SATV and resident

TOPIC

DISCUSSION/ACTION

J. Schiller read aloud that, pursuant to Governor Baker's orders, there exists COVID-19 Emergency Open Meeting Law Guidance regarding the implementation of virtual public meetings, etc.

1. Call to Order

7:02pm

**2. Approval of Minutes
(March 9, 2021)**

G. Yuhas motioned to approve the minutes. P. Kirby 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

3. Updates on COVID-19

D. Greenbaum said case counts are averaging in the 10-15 case per day range. For the most part we are in a good position at this point. Johnson & Johnson vaccine is on hold, so homebound vaccinations are on hold.

We are working with the State to get our regional vaccination site at Salem State University approved. We are in the final stages of approval and planning. Hopefully, we will have that large-scale vaccination site up and running by the end of April or early May.

Vaccinations have gone very well. We have done about 25 vaccination clinics so far. We will be doing second dose clinics for Fairweather Apartments in Salem, Peabody, Danvers, and Beverly next week. Suzanne Darmody will be helping out with a second dose clinic at low-income senior housing in Marblehead as well, so we will be busy next week.

J. Schiller asked what percentage of Salem residents have been vaccinated. D. Greenbaum said 34% have had at least one dose and about 20% are fully vaccinated.

J. Schiller said that is pretty good considering vaccinations will be ramping up. He said the situation report showed that 80% of seniors 75 years and older have been vaccinated.

D. Greenbaum said we did a really good job with the seniors in that age group in our community and we are at that 75-85% range where we want to be for herd immunity, so that is great. Hopefully, we can move forward and get the rest of the community at that percentage and be in really good shape by June, July, or August.

J. Schiller asked if there have been any major challenges or issues the Board needs to know about.

D. Greenbaum said the major issue is just vaccine availability. It seems

like that is going to start to loosen up a little bit, especially if the federal government has the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines that they say they are distributing. It does not seem like Massachusetts is being impacted by the J&J shortages that are taking place. It sounds like we are going to be able to get plenty of the other two vaccines, so it is going to be good.

P. Morsillo asked if we are waiting for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for the homebound patients instead of switching over to one of the other vaccines.

D. Greenbaum said Cataldo Ambulance, the vaccination provider for the homebound program for the City, had the J&J vaccine in hand and were ready to go door-to-door to administer them when it went on hold. The State is waiting for the report on the federal government's study on data so we will have to wait and see.

P. Morsillo asked if there is a timeline for the report.

D. Greenbaum said they are saying in the next few days.

4. Review of Public Health COVID-19 Emergency Orders to determine if they should remain in place, be modified, or be rescinded

D. Greenbaum said throughout the year the Board has issued five significant public health emergency orders. They encompassed quite a bit. He shared his screen to show summaries of each order.

J. Schiller said besides the mask order, the only other orders we need to discuss are the street performers and the local contact tracing form because the other orders have expired.

D. Greenbaum said we are currently in line with the State, except for Salem-specific items like street performers and the local contact tracing form for businesses that the State does not require. He said the Board needs to officially rescind some of the orders for clarity.

Discussion took place of each bullet point within the orders.

S. Moore thinks all face coverings need to stay in place to avoid confusion.

D. Greenbaum said as reopening happens, some people have requested to relax the mask mandate to only indoors. He totally disagrees with that and feels the only real way out of this is going to be face coverings, vaccinations, and all the other mitigation strategies that we have employed throughout. He thinks face coverings should stay in place at this point.

J. Schiller said it is also in compliance with the CDC. They are recommending face coverings because we know it works.

D. Greenbaum said the CDC is recommending it and the State is requiring it.

G. Yuhas said we could possibly keep the street performers off of Essex Street for the summer so they can come in October when everyone is vaccinated.

D. Greenbaum said if the Board chooses to prohibit them from the pedestrian mall area, it will most likely continue into October when it is even more crowded.

S. Moore said keeping street performers away from downtown worked well in October.

D. Greenbaum said they were allowed in other areas so as not to draw crowds in the pedestrian mall and surrounding areas.

D. Greenbaum said the order has expired, so the performers are allowed to be downtown at this time. He said if the Board wants to put something in place, he can talk with the City Solicitor about street performers and what the administration's thoughts are about it. We may be able to create a joint order from the administration and the Board.

J. Schiller said he believes the State is allowing performers in indoor venues.

D. Greenbaum said the State does allow performances indoors, but for music only. There is no singing and no wind instruments allowed indoors. Singing and wind instruments are discouraged outdoors, but if it happens there are requirements that have to be met. The performers would need to be 25 feet away from the first row of spectators, and band members would need to be 10 feet apart. It is pretty restrictive in an area like downtown Salem. If the Board allowed street performers, the question for both the Board and the City would be who is going to be responsible for making sure those distances are maintained.

J. Schiller asked if we are still doing contact tracing.

D. Greenbaum said at this point we are sending all of the cases to the Contact Tracing Collaborative at the State, but we are talking to a lot of businesses that have been identified as having cases. He heard today during a State call that the Contact Tracing Collaborative contract will be extended through at least the end of June. We are pivoting toward vaccination efforts, so we will need that resource because we are not going to be able to do contact tracing at the local level.

D. Elias said rescind means to cancel, and from a legal standpoint you cannot rescind something that has expired. Both of the October orders have expired, so there is no need to rescind them.

D. Greenbaum said if the Board decides to rescind some orders tonight, we can always issue a new order based on the circumstances at the time.

J. Schiller asked if people are still complying with the contact tracing form.

D. Greenbaum said we did get a lot of pushback on that order, but initially the compliance rate was very high. He said for the past six weeks we have been focusing on vaccinations, so he is not certain about the compliance rate at this time. He said the contact tracing information is required under the safety standards for each specific sector, so our form is repetitive.

P. Kirby asked if there is a State form and a local form.

D. Greenbaum said the State does not have a form but maintaining contact information for patrons is either a recommendation or a requirement depending on the sector. The form is repetitive because they are already required by the State to gather the information. The only difference is our form brought the information directly to the Health Department rather than the State maintaining it on their site. When we had the surge in the fall and early winter around the holidays, he felt it was very important to have as much information in-house as we could because of the number of cases we were seeing.

J. Schiller said we do not need to complicate things if the State is already requiring it.

D. Greenbaum repeated that at this point all the contact tracing is being done through the State's Contact Tracing Collaborative because we just do not have the time for it now that we are focused on vaccinations. As long as that resource is there, we will take advantage of it. They are doing a good job.

D. Elias said she supports S. Moore's argument that if we are not using the forms being submitted to the Department right now it is almost pointless to obligate them to do so. All agreed.

D. Elias motioned to amend the order dated 4/12/20 to remove the following bullets:

- **Limit the number of people in essential retail business to maintain social distance**
- **Designate an employee to insure occupancy and social distance**
- **Close non-essential parts of the business**
- **Prohibit reusable shopping bags**
- **Prohibit use of ice cream trucks**

and

a second motion to rescind the order issued on 11/20/20 which requires all establishments to provide a local contact tracing form to all patrons and staff.

P. Kirby 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

5. Budget Update

D. Greenbaum had his budget meeting with Mayor Driscoll last Tuesday. He requested a salary increase for himself and other non-union employees. He also requested an increase in some line-items, in particular rodent control and Household Hazardous Waste Day. He also requested a part-time employee be made full-time since an inspector will be out on maternity leave starting next month and will be out for most of the summer. It will be really important for us to have the additional inspectional staff to pick up the slack. He said it is important for the Board to support the budget. J. Schiller said the Board is happy to support a raise for D. Greenbaum after all the extra work he has put in this past year. They are happy to write a letter of support for pay raises for people in the Department. G. Yuhas asked if there could be bonuses for all the extra work that has been put in. D. Greenbaum said he wishes that were possible, however on a State call today they were talking about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and there is some funding in that bill that would allow for certain employees to get some “premium” or extra pay.

6. Discussion on Health Disparities and Race Equity

P. Morsillo reported there will be a Black Lives Matter vigil through the Race Equities Task Force group on the Salem Common on Sunday, 4/18/21 at 7:00pm to honor those lives lost to police violence, including the most recent Dante Wright.

7. Chairperson Communications

Nothing that has not already been discussed.

8. Monthly Reports-Updates

a. Public Health Nurse’s Report

Report not available.

b. Health Agent’s Report

Weekly situation reports were sent to the Board.

c. Administrative Report

Copy available at BOH office.

d. Council Liaison Updates

P. Morsillo said the affordable Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance is being brought to the Office of Licensing and Legal Affairs (OLLA). The hope is that they can get all the outstanding questions answered so it can go back to the Council next week. The Planning Board discussed it last week and wanted to see a few changes.

The gun shop was continued again last month because they want to make sure they have all the right people who are supposed to be at the meeting there, so they have the best possible attempt at a vote. She thinks they are a little nervous. They are supposed to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting next week.

G. Yuhas asked how many gun shops are in Salem now.

D. Greenbaum said, to his knowledge, there is one on Boston Street.

G. Yuhas asked when Household Hazardous Waste Day will be.

D. Greenbaum said he has it tentatively scheduled for August 21st. It is usually in September, but September was booked, and he did not want to push it too close to October, so it will be a little earlier this year. There is a Household Hazardous Waste Day in Beverly on April 24th that Salem residents can go to.

G. Yuhas motioned to accept the reports and updates. P. Kirby 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

9. New Business/Scheduling of Future Agenda Items

J. Schiller asked if the budget is usually approved by the Council in June. D. Greenbaum said departments are usually before the Council in June to talk about their budget requests. The Council also discusses the Mayor's proposed budget. The Council cannot add anything in, but they can cut things if they see fit. They seemed comfortable with the budgets that he has presented over the last couple of years.

J. Schiller invited interested members to contribute to the letter of support for the budget.

D. Greenbaum wanted the Board to know that Kerry Murphy, our Health and Wellness Coordinator, has been working with Beth Rennard, the City Solicitor, and Councilor Dibble on zoning around an Urban Agriculture ordinance. Kerry drew some information from a Board of Health regulation from Somerville. He is meeting with them tomorrow to talk about the difference between an ordinance and a regulation and whether it should be a Board of Health regulation or a city ordinance. It may be something that is coming to the Board if the City decides it should be a Board regulation as opposed to a City ordinance.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

S. Moore motioned to adjourn. G. Yuhas 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

8:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Davis
Clerk of the Board

*Next regularly scheduled meeting is
Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:00pm
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom*