

Lincoln Board of Health
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Members Presents: Frederick Mansfield, MD
Steven Kanner, MD
Patricia Miller, MD

Others Present: Trish McGean, Town Nurse; Melanie Deneen, Director, Concord Board of Health; Victoria Benalfew Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting is on February 8, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Update on COVID-19/flu cases and vaccines:

Tricia McGean RN shares that there is a new COVID variant- omicron subvariant XB 1.1.5. It is very contagious and spreads quickly but there is no evidence to suggest that this variant will produce a more severe reaction or symptoms. It is also not producing the same surge of cases as Omicron did when it first came out. This variant produces GI symptoms, extreme fatigue, severe sore throat, and loss of taste and smell. Boosters are still being encouraged to protect against serious disease. Lincoln will be having another vaccine clinic on Friday January 27th for flu and COVID vaccines for anyone 6 months and up. Monday night the same clinic was held in Carlisle and 90 people showed up, 29 of whom were looking for a flu vaccine. She reports that Massachusetts cases this week number 1700 cases per day. That is an increase of 10% by 10% from two weeks ago, with deaths increasing 43%. Wastewater numbers are on the downtrend.

Nurse McGean also shares that in Massachusetts, January 2022 was the month with the highest average number of cases while April 2020 was the month with the highest average of deaths in Massachusetts. In 2022 Lincoln had 602 positive cases of COVID. This number does not include positive home tests, only lab PCR and antigen tests. She estimates that there were at least a couple hundred who tested positive with home tests. The schools, Town Hall and public safety have been given new antigen test kits with an expiration date of June. She shares that we have had 16 cases in the Lincoln Hanscom School district in the past two weeks. Magic Garden has had several cases in kids and staff members so they have been closed all of this week. Nurse McGean also shared that we have had 30 flu cases in Lincoln, mostly flu A.

Melanie Dineen from Concord Board of Health reports that things are good in Concord and that they have seen more flu cases than COVID. She notes that Concord is not as well vaccinated as Lincoln. Dr. Kanner shares that people who have gotten the flu have gotten seriously ill.

Update on Radon Testing and Publicity:

Ms. Dineen has been working with Melissa Roderick, assistant director at the Lincoln Library, with regards to a radon information event that will be happening on Thursday January 26th at 6:30. Michael Feeney who is the director of indoor air quality at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will be the speaker. He has worked there for 30 years and has a lot of experience. He's worked in over 1800 indoor air quality investigations with buildings, schools, Town Halls, courthouses, etc. in Massachusetts. He graduated from Northeastern and will be speaking on the health effects of radon, exposure and provide information regarding the mitigation and testing program that the state is piloting this year. The room that it is being held in has a capacity of fifty people, and the library is willing to host it as an in-person or hybrid meeting. Discussion was held regarding how the event would be advertised and a preference for hosting the event in a hybrid fashion was expressed to provide the lowest barrier to entry for people interested.

A discussion was had between Dr. Kanner and Ms. Dineen regarding whether the information gleaned from the radon testing should be made public. Dr. Kanner stated that radon is a public health issue, that many homes have not been adequately tested and that mitigation is neither difficult nor expensive. Ms. Dineen stated her concerns regarding radon testing results being subject to a records request, therefore becoming public knowledge which could have consequences such as lowering property values. She wants to ensure that people who have a high reading use the state website to get information and ensure that Mr. Rodman's agenda is not being fulfilled as this is not the purpose of a public health entity. Ms. Dineen states that if there is not a good turnout at this event, she may want to do more outreach such as a mailing to encourage people to test for radon. Dr. Kanner believes there is a real likelihood that many homes in Lincoln harbor dangerous levels of radon and likely have never been tested since the owners have lived there for 20-40 years, well before radon testing was required, and that actively facilitating testing by our residents will uncover this. He feels that the board of health has it in its purview to investigate this hypothesis for the public benefit, which will require receiving data about the test results. and can be anonymous for this purpose. There is agreement that there is a need for awareness, testing and mitigation. There was discussion regarding the type of testing that is going to be used to test the radon levels and how the testing would work as well as how the results would be recorded. There was also discussion as to how the library would be loaning out the devices and how they would be tracked as well as how it should be used.

Minuteman Commons on Virginia Rd septic system & school inspection update:

Ms. Dineen reports that Minuteman Commons septic system has been under failure for some time. There have been a couple of inspections done on the septic system, the last one being 12/22. Residents have been calling in looking for their certificate of compliance and she wants to let everyone know that the work is not complete, inspections have not been finished and certificates of compliances are not issued until there's an as built from the design engineer and the installer. There are a number of residents looking to sell who cannot do so until they have a passing title 5. The permit was issued this summer and the owner has two years to get the work done. Residents with complaints should talk to the condo association and the installer, not the Board of Health because they do not have any control over the process.

Ms. Dineen also shares that the middle school and high school food inspections have been done and that they did great.

Minutes & Town Report Review:

Dr. Mansfield asked if the previous minutes have been reviewed. Dr. Mansfield commented that at the end of the first paragraph in regard to the big rise in hospitalization among older adults, the last word is logging and should be lagging. Patricia Miller motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Dr. Mansfield seconded the motion and by roll call the members of the Board of Health voted: Frederick Mansfield- aye, Dr. Kanner- aye, Patricia Miller-aye.

Dr. Mansfield asked if the Board of Health blurb for the annual town report has been received. Ms. Dineen responded that yes, she had received the blurb and had edited it. Nurse McGean stated that she had sent out her updated numbers to Victoria who had edited them. It was noted that the Board of Health usually meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Dr. Mansfield stated that the Board of Health meets by zoom on the first or second Wednesday of each month.

Dr. Mansfield notes that the second paragraph states that the board is charged with overseeing the on-site wastewater septic system program enforcing the state's sanitary code for food establishments, summer camps, swimming pools, beaches and private water wells. He would have it say that the board is charged with overseeing the on-site wastewater system program and enforcing the state sanitary code for

food establishments inspecting summer camps, swimming pools, beaches and private water wells for health and safety issues as well as overseeing the mosquito control programs. Dr. Miller added supporting mental health services for Lincoln residents through Elliot. Dr. Mansfield would also like to note that the board discussed the problem of radon in homes and that they are arranging an informational meeting on January 27th at 6:30 p.m. as well as a plan to facilitate homeowners testing their own homes.

Motion to pay bills and Ajourn:

Dr. Mansfield asked Victoria Benalfew for the bills that she needs permission to pay. She asked for blanket permission to pay bills for services that the Board of Health provides, to which Dr. Mansfield responded that he would like specific amounts and to know what bills they are. Victoria Benalfew then asked for permission to pay one for the East Middlesex mosquito control project for \$2,694.25 as well as one for Elliot for \$1,500. Dr. Kanner made a motion to accept these expenditures and Dr. Mansfield seconded. By roll call the members of the Board of Health voted: Frederick Mansfield- aye, Dr. Kanner- aye, Patricia Miller-aye.

At 8:30p.m, Dr. Mansfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Dr. Miller seconded. By roll call the members of the Board of Health voted: Frederick Mansfield- aye, Dr. Kanner- aye, Patricia Miller- aye.

Submitted by Victoria Benalfew