



City of Nashua

Division of Public Health & Community Services
142 Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

November 24, 2020

10:00 AM

Minutes

Attendees:

Board of Health: Dr. Anthony Storage, Dr. Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum, Dr. Charles Cappetta

Call to Order:

By Board Chair – Dr. Storage

In continued compliance with the Governor's Safe at Home Order, announcement made of the meeting held via Zoom. Phone numbers provided to call and for support. Meeting ID and number shared with attendees. Zoom meeting recorded.

Role call made by Director- Bobbie D Bagley

Nashua City Mask Mandate:

- Nashua City Mask Mandate is in conflict with the NH mandate. City mask mandate state's that children from 2-10 years of age are encouraged to wear masks while the new State's mandate requires children above the age of 5 to wear masks if they are not able to socially distance.
- Steve Bolton pointed out thst any change has to be adopted by both BOH and Board of Alderman. There is no urgency but may make less confusing to re word the City's statement.
- Dr. Rosenblum suggested adopting State's wording. It can be said that the City of Nashua will comply with state requirements. If restrictions by the State are loosened in the future then the City will go back to its original mandate.
- Steve Bolton can redraft the City's recommendations and will bring them back to the next meeting.
- Under section 5 of the State's regulations it says that the mask mandate does not apply to the following three:
 - Staff and students of K-12 schools.
 - Persons engaging in physical strenuous activity.
 - Any persons giving a speech or a performance.
- Steve Bolton pointed out that this does not mean that schools are exempted from wearing masks. It means that it is up to individual school districts to decide whether staff and students will wear masks or not. In regards to performers in lounges and

restaurants, they are covered by other mandates e.g. guitar players are required to wear masks and keep distance while playing in restaurants etc.

- BOH expressed concerns about the above things.
- Steve Bolton pointed out that we cannot dis allow something that the State has allowed. We can make the restrictions stricter than the State's regulations.

Discussion on 9:30 PM Curfew:

- Q: Can we impose a 9:30 PM curfew on restaurants and bars as people from the neighboring State flock to Nashua after 9:30.
A: yes we can impose a curfew as we have an understanding on scientific basis that virus spreads at crowded places.
- Tim Cummings shared a memo. He had reached out to the retail and restaurant industry to assess their thoughts on the possibility of a 9:30 curfew. They want to work collaboratively but raised a few points. Some of the main points raised are:
 - Why single out restaurant industry while parks and fields are open.
 - How are hospitals doing? The previous shut down was due to the diminishing capacity at the hospitals which is not the case right now.
 - How long will be the curfew?
 - Will this be city wide and will the retail industry, social clubs, hotels, gathering of any sort included in this?
 - Will the State or City give any kind of assistance?
 - Will the essential services be exempted?

In essence the businesses want to make sure that the decision will be made strategically with data and other matrixes in mind.

- Report by epidemiologist-In regards to community-level transmission, the entire state is experiencing substantial community-level transmission and is considered "in the red". In Nashua, we have 540.5 new cases per 100k over 14 days, 4.5 new hospitalizations per 100k over 14 days, and a percent positivity rate of 6.7%. Our heightened case activity continues in both Nashua and New Hampshire, last week in Nashua we had 241 new cases and 271 new contacts, for an average of 34 new cases a day and 39 new contacts a day. There has been a cumulative total of 1800 cases in the city of Nashua and 341 of those cases are active. Our deaths in Nashua are still at 40, for a death rate of 2.2%. Our hospitalization rate in Nashua is at 5.1%, compared to the states rate of 4.7%.
- Dr. Rosenblum pointed out that the trajectory of new cases has spiked sharply so we need to maintain vigilance. We should enforce stricter rules around masking and indoor entertaining rather than a 9:30 curfew which does not have a scientific basis. Percent positivity rate in NH is higher than MA. Hospitals have activated their plans to prepare for a spike in cases.
- Alderman Laws pointed out that restaurants and businesses make their bread and butter after 9:30 with alcohol sales. 10:30 curfew will work better. He voiced concern that bars will be very crowded on November 25th so it is better to shut them down just for the weekend rather than impose a curfew for a longer period.
- Alderman Klee said that she is a proponent of masking and social distancing but 9:30 curfew will only drive people to places where there are lesser restrictions.

- Alderman Lopez said that he appreciates guidance and input by BOH and will bring this issue for debate at the Aldermanic meeting that night.
 - Environmental Health: we should not penalize all the businesses but should focus on the problem areas like club/bar settings. Imposing a blanket curfew is not an answer. We should allow safer options.
 - Bobbie agreed with Alderman Law that it is better to shut down bars and clubs for the weekend rather than impose a longer curfew.
 - Dr. Rosenblum recommended not considering a 9:30 curfew and in lieu of that reinvigorating safety measures like masking and social distancing. She suggested sending out an urgent plea to the community to follow the existing mandate.
 - It was discussed that it is important to establish communication with the businesses and that the messaging is not getting out to as many people as we want to.
 - If we shut down bars and restaurants for 3-4 days on such a short notice then all the food they have bought will be wasted. This will be huge disservice to the business community.
 - We need to acknowledge that we are doing what needs to be done. Focus should be on enforcing the measures that are proven scientifically to work.
 - BOH members were encouraged to attend Board of Alderman meeting that night so that they can support the discussion.
 - Businesses voiced concerns that if Board imposes an immediate curfew then the word will not get out to all the businesses in time and will create confusion and chaos
 - It was discussed that if we want to avoid shut down then we need to educate people before holidays. We need to send out an urgent and clear message to the business community.
- Q: what is being proposed?
- A: The acknowledgement of the seriousness of the situation. The intention is not to put anyone out of business but to educate people and businesses.
- An emergency alert can be sent out to all the smart phone users in a very short amount of time. The system is used only for critical emergencies.
 - Another idea is to convene a mandatory meeting with the businesses, The Mayor and The BOH where businesses sign that they have listened to the message and that they are responsible for putting people's lives, health and finances in jeopardy if they break the law.
 - Board of Aldermen can pass the above but will not be able to enforce it.
 - Bobbie and Justin to connect with each other to discuss the emergency alert message.

Schools Winter Sports: this agenda item will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:56. Motion to adjourn by Dr. Cappetta- 2nd by Dr. Wolf-Rosenblum.

Next Meeting: December 9, 2020