

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Public Safety Committee**  
**Zoom # 817 4200 6393**  
**February 2, 2021, Tuesday**

Present: Fred Happel, Chairman  
Ed Harrington, Vice Chairman  
Pascale Burga, Councilor  
Brian Dwyer, Councilor  
Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Also Present: Dan McCormack, Director of Public Health  
Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Happel called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The chair called the roll with all members present.

**COVID 19 Vaccine Process and Update**

Chair Happel reported that he requested this meeting after fielding phone calls from many constituents who expressed their confusion with the information that has been provided to the public on how to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination, and to learn if Council can assist in the process. He invited Dan McCormack, Director of Public Health, to share the steps the town has taken to prepare and administer vaccines.

Director McCormack agreed that navigating the information has been confusing. He acknowledged everyone wants to be vaccinated quickly; however, there are restrictions to accessing vaccine. The greatest barrier right now is allocation to vaccine clinics by the federal and state government. Discussion began a few months ago on how the Department of Health would be involved in the program, which the MA DPH suggested may not happen until March or April. He presented the following chronology and accompanied it with a narrative.

*COVID VACCINE/CLINIC CHRONOLOGY*

*Dec 15<sup>th</sup>: Local BOH's were asked by DPH if they would be willing to vaccinate 1<sup>st</sup> responders. At least 200 eligible patients required. Inquired with Weymouth Police and Fire and they agreed*

*December 23<sup>rd</sup>: We informed DPH that we would like to hold clinics for 1<sup>st</sup> responders and other eligible patients in Phase 1 (clinic workers, healthcare workers)*

*Dec 23-31: Contract Agreements & Trainings*

- *Completed the Mass Covid Vaccine Program Agreement*
- *Received new Standing Orders from our Medical Advisor*
- *Trained on vaccine handling and storage*

- Completed the PrepMod Software agreement and trained on its usage (Brand New State Software Program)

January 5<sup>th</sup>: Received 200 doses of Moderna to vaccinate 1<sup>st</sup> responders

January 5-11<sup>th</sup>: Worked with Police and Fire to register all patient in the PrepMod Software System

January 11-14: Held 4 clinics at the Senior Center to vaccinate 1<sup>st</sup> responders, clinic workers (including school nurses) and a few other health care workers

January 25<sup>th</sup>: Informed by DPH that given the limited supply of vaccine in the State, our office can only request 100 doses per week.

January 25<sup>th</sup>: Ordered 100 doses to be used for Phase 2 patients (75+ years of age), shipping takes 7-10ish days. Orders are requested via a weekly DPH vaccine survey

January 27<sup>th</sup>: Received the second shipment of 200 doses for the second dose of 1<sup>st</sup> responder patients.

February 1<sup>st</sup>: Ordered 100 doses to be used for Phase 2 patients (75+)

February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Received 100 doses to be used on 2/16 or 2/17

February 8-11: 4 clinics scheduled at the Senior Center for 2<sup>nd</sup> dose 1<sup>st</sup> responder patients

February 16/17?: Plan to have a clinic at the Senior Center for 100 Phase 2 eligible patients (75+). We are working with Senior Center Employees to establish a call list and call center to reach out to residents age 75+ to schedule them into an appointment.

\*\*\*According to the town census there are over 4,400 residents age 75+ (at 100 doses per week it would take over 40 weeks just to do 1<sup>st</sup> dose clinics)

February 23?: Hope to schedule another clinic for 100 Phase 2 patients (75+)

Feb- March: Plan to conduct small weekly 100 patient clinics for patients in eligible Phase 2 Stages (primarily elders) until vaccine supply from the State increases. (Clinic assistance from Elder Services, School Nurses, Per Diem Nurses)

\*\*\* **DUE TO THE VERY LIMITED TOWN SUPPLY, RESIDENTS SHOULD GO TO <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccination-locations> FOR CLINIC LOCATIONS**

Dan further discussed that on December 15, 2020, the MA DPH reached out to the local health departments to see if they were willing and able to vaccinate their first responders. They learned of two available vaccines; the Pfizer and Moderna, and fortunately with their capabilities, the state is giving Weymouth the Moderna Vaccine. He provided the attendees with a packet of information ahead of the meeting. It includes the vaccine

information and Emergency Use Authorization for the Moderna vaccine. Both public health and twelve school nurses have been trained on vaccine administration and handling. Since then, they ramped up on educating themselves on the handling of the brand-new vaccine. The state simultaneously rolled out a new software system for self-registering individuals, and integrates patient data into the state's program, and allows for third-party billing. They worked with the first responders to make sure they had the required 200 willing and able patients the state required. Four days of first responder clinics began on January 11, 2021, at the Senior Center. The Moderna vaccine has positive and negative attributes; once a vial is punctured, all ten doses must be used within a six-hour time period, so assurance of groups of ten was necessary for all clinics. The software system module assists with coordinating the groups of ten. As in many other locations, if a patient does not show up for the assigned appointment, other eligible individuals have to be contacted to come in, and there is some flexibility to that. The clinics ran well and was a good start. It was a good opportunity for all who participated. They learned how to store and manage the vaccine, monitor the patients for the required 15 minutes following administration of the vaccine, and was a good way for the department to see how the clinics are working.

More discussion with other town representatives- the Mayor's Office, Elder Services Office, school administration, and others on how to continue to run clinics going forward. Unfortunately, on January 25, they were informed by MA DPH that the local health departments would only receive 100 doses per week going forward, and based on what the federal government provides, the state determines where the vaccine is to be distributed. The state is trying to run some large-scale clinics throughout the state, including Foxboro, Springfield, and Fenway, so a large quantity is allocated to those venues and the volume of the vaccine coming to local health departments is limited.

The town had to shift gears and determine how best to utilize the doses they are given for the phase they are in. Currently they are in Phase 2, Stage 1, which includes residents over the age of 75 and the town will hold some small clinics over the next weeks for this demographic. Due to the limited quantity, and the number of Weymouth residents over 75, it would take 40 weeks to vaccinate that population. They are grappling with how to reach out to this population to get them in to vaccinate. Advertising a general clinic would cause confusion and generate too many calls. They have a plan to reach out directly to those residents with a contact phone list, and scheduling them in with the prep-mod system, so that residents without computer access are registered, and these clinics will run over the next several weeks.

Mr. McCormack continued that additional doses received last week will be used to administer the required second dose to first responders. First and second doses must be given 28 days apart, and as clinics continue to run, there will be first dose clinics and second dose ones. Data must be collected after the clinic and submitted for state reporting. Patient data must be reported within 24 hours of a clinic, so the state can track the vaccine. Additional staffing will be required to coordinate these efforts. Four additional clinics are scheduled for February 8-11, 2021; fifty first responders per clinic at the senior center. Four rooms are available and SS Health will provide monitoring for the 15-minutes following shots. He hopes that on February 16, 2021 to hold the first

clinic for 100 patients eligible in Phase 2, Stage 1, also at the senior center and he hopes to have personnel in place to register seniors by the end of this week. Given the limited amount of vaccine, they plan to hold 100-patient clinics weekly going forward. There are opportunities to obtain additional allocations per week and that the manufactured volume will be ramped up under the new federal administration. As new allocations become available, they will exponentially ramp up the staffing and location of the clinics. They will need additional nurses and have been approached by potential volunteers. They hope to continue to use the smaller venue as well as larger ones such as the cafeterias at WHS, but it is dependent on vaccine availability. They will continue to meet with potential partners in the town to increase their efforts, but it will have to rely on additional allocation from the state and are restricted as to size and location.

The Health Department along with the state, continues to strongly urge residents who can to take advantage and register for the larger clinics at the other three locations, until the town has adequate supply. The town website and Facebook page contains more information and he provided the website information that is also above in the chronology. It directs people to the MA website and includes all the state clinics and potential registration sites that are hyperlinked. He suggested the larger ones have more volume and are more likely to have appointment availability with shorter waiting periods. Things change daily. They meet with the state and local partners frequently and are exploring a homebound location component. There are lots of opportunities to collaborate and expand the programs. There is plenty of funding; CARES Act, FEMA reimbursement, and the ability for clinics to bill third parties. No clinic can charge for the vaccine itself, but they have the ability to charge for the administrative costs to deliver it. The rate is 45 doses per clinic to recover costs for running the clinic. Weymouth is a large community and it will require a full-time individual to administer the clinics. He welcomed any suggestions to enhance the program.

Chair Happel asked why no one has been brought in yet to administer if funds are available. Mr. McCormack responded that this is happening quickly. They were initially told not to expect vaccines to roll out until March or April in Phase 3, but are now ramping up for the earlier onset. Information is coming out quickly from DPH, the Feds, and the CDC. They continue to meet weekly and determine what resources are needed. He asked the public to be patient.

Chair Happel asked if there is anything set up to reach out to the senior population who might live alone, and track who was reached and who has not been? Mr. McCormack responded that the Elder Services Director, Karen Johnston, is combining separate lists to a single spreadsheet. He prefers the department reach out to them rather than have them call in. They will reach out as the list becomes available.

The chair asked how the recipients were chosen for the initial senior clinic. Mr. McCormack responded that 25 residents from each of the town's zip codes will be randomly chosen and contacted to make an appointment, with individuals who will assist them with registering for the clinics.

The chair noted that Quincy and other towns have partnered with health care systems. Will Weymouth do the same? Mr. McCormack responded that it isn't in the plan. The town is large enough to have sufficient resources. They have met with SS Health and are willing to help but also stymied by the restrictions on quantities.

Chair Happel noted other states are doing better than MA. He asked why? Mr. McCormack responded that it all rests strictly on supply and demand. As vaccine is manufactured, it is being distributed worldwide. The supply chain goes from federal government then to the states. There is no stockpile of vaccine.

Councilor Dwyer asked how the website is set up. He has heard from constituents interested in getting more information loaded to the website. Mr. McCormack responded that they are doing as much as they can with existing staff to update the website daily, posting case counts and information on vaccine, and isolation and quarantine. They also have their own Facebook page which is updated daily, and he recommended residents use this as a resource as well. It has a link to town Facebook page. His personal opinion is that the town webpage is not user-friendly. There are many better platforms for sharing information. These are the best two resources, or contact the Health Department directly. Much of the information is generated at the MA DPH website, which is also a great resource.

Councilor Dwyer suggested through the chair that he would like the Town Council to follow up with connection and cooperation of SSH. It's a for-profit institution, but connection in the midst of a pandemic is really important. Mr. McCormack added that the partnership with SSH for the community test site is going really well. He and SSH would be willing to partner further, but they have to make sure all the pieces are in place.

Councilor Kiely asked if the town has adequate refrigeration for the vaccine. This has been a critical issue for those in the utilities; especially once the supply ramps up. Mr. McCormack responded that Weymouth is being issued the Moderna vaccine, which doesn't require ultralow temperature freezers. The town has three freezers, appropriately tagged and certified by DPH for the program. There may be other players with vaccines coming on line that don't require freezing or more than one dose. They have adequate supply, currently.

Councilor Kiely asked if he knew whether pharmacies and smaller players are getting similar product or more than the 100 Weymouth is receiving. Mr. McCormack responded that he can't answer that. DPH is distributing to every single site. They have seen discrepancies between what parties are getting, but existing partnerships and agreements with DPH were in place prior to the restrictions. SSH systems run the Health Express sites and they are getting similar numbers. It's statewide and partially because the state is running the large-scale clinics. Councilor Kiely noted the drive through testing has been smoothly run. She asked what accommodations will be made for the seniors living alone who may not have access to transportation to the clinic. Mr. McCormack responded that Weymouth is well set up for this. There are four vans to transport. They will also roll out a home visit program as well, but not yet. The town has a home visit partnership with

SSH and they already are generating a list of individuals. They will find and vaccinate the homebound individuals.

Councilor Burga highlighted that Mr. McCormack mentioned that other towns already have partnerships with other entities. They are already vaccinating those in Phase 2, Stage 1 because of those partnerships. Councilor Burga also reiterated that people who are anxious to get vaccinated and are willing and able to travel can go on the MA website and register. It would be great to get half of the seniors vaccinated through the VA or larger clinics. More testing sites will open soon. She would like to see a link for appointments or waiting lists for seniors new to town, perhaps on a form or an email. She would also like to see the links to the state sites. Mr. McCormack noted additional clinics are popping up daily on the state site. He agreed that everyone is looking for convenient and close clinics. A lot of misinformation is also out there. He has concerns with a list; he does not want to give false hope that getting on a list will generate an appointment.

Chair Happel pointed out that he is happy to hear homebound residents are being considered. He asked, going forward, how will the town monitor 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses? Fairing Way vaccinated their population and how will that factor in to the town. Mr. McCormack responded that they reached out today to DPH to find out who already has been vaccinated to remove them from lists. The only locations other than long term care, is Union Towers through the Federal pharmacy program. None of the other senior complexes in town will be. The town can request additional doses to vaccinate them, but adequate staffing and resources will be needed to expand operations. There are two tracking mechanisms; the state's PrepMod System allows individuals to register for their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses and tracks who received which. The program is user friendly, and can blast email reminders. There is one other tracking mechanism--anyone who gets vaccinated is legally entered into the state's MIIS system, which tracks anyone who registered and received vaccine.

Chair Happel thanked Mr. McCormack and his staff for the information and service they are providing and urged he reach out to the Town Council for any assistance they can provide.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:23 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Vice Chair Harrington to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Burga.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Burga-Yes, Councilor Dwyer-Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Vice Chair Harrington- Yes, Chair Happel- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Attachments:

1. COVID-19 Vaccination in MA: Phase 1 & 2 Eligibility Status
2. Packet-

- a. Messenger RNA (mRNA) COVID-19 Vaccines
- b. Pre-Vaccination Checklist
- c. Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic / Nurses
- d. What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine
- e. Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Fred Happel as Public Safety Committee Chairman  
Voted unanimously on 1 March 2021