

Board of Health
Town of New Marlborough
Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2022

Meeting was called to order in person at Town Hall at 6:00 PM with Board members Larry Davis III, Jordan Chretien, newly appointed member Peter Marks and agent Scott McFarland present.

Minutes of December 14, 2021 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

A monthly Covid and public health nursing update through 1/10/2022 for New Marlborough and Southern Berkshire County was provided by the Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative in an email from Amy Hardt and is attached to these minutes. Of significant note is a spike in the number of cases since our last meeting, and especially during the last week of December the into the first two weeks of January. The SBPHC is running popup testing a couple of times a week as long as tests are available.

Septic designs received and reviewed included:

- 886 Sisson Hill rd (Upgrade, 4-bedroom)
- 1121 Canaan-Southfield Rd (Upgrade, 3-bedroom)
- 1015 Sisson Hill Rd (secondary dwelling, new construction, -bedroom)

New well permit was issued for Pelkey, new lot/new construction split from 373 Hayes Hill Rd (waiting for new 911 number).

No new Title 5 inspections or Perc tests were done.

The SBPHC is requesting public health nursing funding from each of the towns, in order to support the setup of flu vaccination capabilities for the upcoming season. Once initial flu doses are purchased, funding for subsequent year doses will come from insurance reimbursements for the prior year doses. Also an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) is being drafted for review by each of the towns legal counsel.

Houses for which a nuisance order was issued for 1252, 1254 and 1272 Canaan-Southfield Rd are not yet completely demolished, however an excavator is on-site and demo work appears to be underway to meet the January 31, 2022 deadline.

Update on DEP PFAS well sampling program: Scott is copied on results of tests as they come in. Most so far are Non-Detect for PFAS compounds. One well had 2 parts per trillion detected, which is below the Drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL).

Scott has a schedule conflict on Tuesday evenings in February, so the board graciously agreed to meet for the February meeting on Wednesday February 9, 2022 at 6 PM. Motion to adjourn was seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott McFarland, Agent.

Public health Nursing Covid update, 1/10/2022:

Even with all the hyped-up reporting coverage lately, when I saw these numbers I was a little shocked. Yes, we had already seen steady increases for months and an obvious climb as the winter holidays got going, but the dashboard shows an increase of 2x in new cases that week over the previous week, and 2.5x growth for Berkshire County overall. Taking a sneak peak in our database at what will be reported for Jan 2-8, it looks like reported cases rose last week another 70% or so in South County. And, we know these reported cases are maybe half(?) the actual cases or less, since there are only so many testing appointments available. Conservatively speaking, experts suggest it will be at least a couple more weeks before new cases peak in the Northeast, and probably a bit longer.

So, if you feel lately that everyone you know has COVID in their home or workplace, that tracks. In lieu of yet another graph breaking it all down by age, vaccination status, clinical symptoms, etc. this week we continue to focus on public health guidance. Because (surprise!) in the middle of that holiday week of astronomical growth, the CDC downshifted their isolation and quarantine requirements, suddenly changing what all of us were expected to do and updating their already overwhelming webpages [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation | CDC](#). MA DPH quickly adopted the changes and made their own attempt at breaking it down [Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for the General Public | Mass.gov](#). We have found that many people just want a simple explanation to have on hand, but aren't find it.

In response, we offer our own version of the new isolation and quarantine guidance as a table on this week's dashboard – hopefully it will help a bit. Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative nurses (Jill Sweet and me) work hard to find solid answers to the questions we receive from community members by regularly consulting with state epidemiologists and other public health nurses. Lately, we have also been providing free drive-thru rapid antigen testing at sites in Sheffield and Lee each week – visit www.tinyurl.com/berkshirerapidtest for more info and an appointment. Drop-ins are also welcome.

Thank you for all you are doing in your local sphere to help stop the spread of Omicron – while most of us will just experience the virus nowadays as a short cold/flu (if even that), the havoc it is currently wreaking on our communities and on the lives of our most vulnerable residents is real.

Amy Hardt MPH, BSN, RN
Lead Public Health Nurse
Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative

Number of cases by town:

Last week's numbers. I believe it's the first time every single one of our SBPHC towns had cases. 25% of them are 18yrs or under and got follow up calls, as did the 65 and ups (thank you to rock stars Jill Sweet RN and Alliance staff Andrea Goodman!)

Town	1/2-1/8	12/26-1/1
ALFORD	3	1
GREAT BARRINGTON	111	66
LEE	124	62
LENOX	76	41
MONTEREY	5	5
MT WASHINGTON	2	0
NEW MARLBOROUGH	13	6
OTIS	18	8
SHEFFIELD	63	40
STOCKBRIDGE	17	9
Grand Total	432	238

These #s are based on Event Date in MAVEN, which is when the first positive test sample was submitted or when symptoms began, whichever came first. Both PCR and rapid antigen tests have been included (such as those reported by a testing site like our drive-thru clinics, urgent care or pharmacy). Not at-home test results, which are not reported anywhere officially.