

Administrator's Report
Board of Health Meeting of March 10, 2022
Report covers from 02/10 – 03/09/2022
Items requiring Board vote are noted with an asterisk ()*

A. Inspection Report Reviews

None.

B. Septic Plan Reviews

None.

C. Building Permit Applications

(1) 10 Centennial Grove Road, Gorman, Map 143, Lot 31

I signed the building permit application to demo the existing dwelling at this property. The property owner provided the necessary pest control report and asbestos abatement documentation as required.

(2) 58 Choate Street, Glorieux, Map 115, Lot 22

I signed the building permit application to renovate an existing bathroom, existing mud room, and existing (finished) basement. There is no proposed increase in flow or other request that would impact the septic system.

D. Other

(1) Mosquito Management Plan & DPH funding*

Essex has not authorized participation in/membership in a mosquito control district, which means we may be subject to emergency measures – including aerial spraying – conducted by the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board (SRMCB) if and when a public health emergency is deemed to exist. This would include cases of mosquito-borne illnesses such as EEE or WNV in our community. If Essex wishes to opt out of spraying, we would be required to have an alternative mosquito management plan approved by the State, and the plan would outline the services Essex is proposing provide in lieu of State mosquito control. These services include public education and outreach, source reduction, water management/ditch maintenance, etc.

We applied for an intern through the graduate school of public health to help with the required education and outreach portion of the mosquito management plan and our application was denied for this summer, since we've had student interns through this program in recent history; however, I have reached out the DPH to ask if they would help us find a suitable intern for this project, at our expense.

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Recommendation: Discussion, and possible vote, on funding a public health student intern or other temporary position using a portion of the remaining DPH funding provided during FY20. The cost would be approximately \$2500 for 160 hours, leaving approximately \$3100 in the grant.

(2) Public Health Intern Job Description*

In anticipation of DPH requesting a job description to help us find a suitable intern, I would hope to advertise the position as follows: The Essex Board of Health (BOH) is looking for a summer 2022 intern. The ideal candidate will have completed coursework in Entomology and Health Communication. Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is an extremely rare but serious and often fatal infection. It is spread by the bite of a mosquito infected with EEE. In Massachusetts, the virus is most often identified in mosquitoes found in and around freshwater, hardwood swamps. To help mitigate spread of areas where EEE is identified Massachusetts has allowed, and in some cases required, aerial spraying. In 2021 communities were given the right to opt out of aerial spraying provided they met certain criteria. The intern would likely participate in activities related to health education surrounding EEE and aerial spraying. The successful candidate would be exposed to LBOH operations as well as interfacing with Northeast MA Mosquito Control District and DPH. Some of the tasks the intern may be responsible for include: • Research how the community feels at large about aerial spraying. • Develop a needs assessment to assess current knowledge of EEE: the risks, prevention strategies and resources available. • Provide outreach to the community about aerial spraying and the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses such as EEE.

Recommendation: Discussion, and possible vote, on a job description for a public health student intern or other temporary position.

E. COVID-19 and Other Updates

(1) Vaccine updates

Approximately 1150 adult vaccines (age 12+) have been administered in Essex, which includes primary and booster doses. 179 pediatric doses (age 5-11) have been administered in Essex. Overall, our coalition has administered over 13,000 doses at regularly scheduled and pop-up clinics. In Essex, we will continue to offer both pediatric and adult vaccines on the 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons, alternating with Manchester's 1st and 3rd Monday clinics. We expect this will continue through the initial surge of requests for kids under 5, when this is approved, and then will revisit the need for regular standing weekly or biweekly clinics.

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(2) Rapid Antigen Testing

We have received a supply of iHealth rapid antigen tests through the partnership established by the Public Health Excellence grant (with Hamilton, Wenham, and Rockport). These kits were distributed to the Senior Center, and to residents via drive-through at Essex Elementary School on February 23rd. Remaining kits are being distributed through our office during normal office hours, up to 2 kits per household with proof of Essex residency required. The Essex Housing Authority also received a separate supply of test kits through a state distribution program.

In addition, we still have BinaxNOW tests provided by MDPH, available upon request; however, these are considered “official” tests, requiring BoH administration of the tests and all results reported to DPH.

Community	Pos. rate 3/10*	Pos. rate 2/10*	Vax Rate (overall)
Essex		8.36%	77%
Gloucester		11.9%	81%
Manchester		5.63%	89%
Rockport		9.93%	88%

*Positivity rate is calculated using molecular (PCR) tests only, and is calculated by dividing the number of positive tests by the total number of tests conducted during the time period.

Essex Case Counts

October 2021: 10
November 2021: 55
December 2021: 116
January 2022: 87
February 2022: 16