DRAFT HEALTH BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (BRC) MEETING MINUTES 25MAY2021

Voting members present: Kathie Lynch (Chair), Ann Birner (Minutes), Toni McLellan for Kim McNamara, Richard DiPentima,
Absent: James Petersen
Non-voting city staff present: Stephanie Seacord, Kristin Shaw
Action items below identify name of responsible party in bold font.

Kathie read the approved waiver for remote meeting participation during the pandemic and participants identified location and any others present at that location. A motion to approve the minutes of May11th was made Ann and seconded by Rich. The minutes were approved without comment or discussion.

The dashboard was reviewed by **Kathie**, who will present it at the next Reopen BRC meeting. Described as "what we've all been looking for", cases are falling in NH and in Portsmouth, positivity is down in NH and approximately level in Rockingham County, and graphs are trending in the right direction across ME, NH, and MA. **Stephanie** will update the dashboard with new vaccination data this afternoon.

FAQs are current; Mask FAQ and Mask Mandate FAQ updates will be pending City Council action.

The future of the Health BRC was discussed in the context of a conversation Kathie had with Mayor Becksted recently. BRCs, once convened, are intended to last until the end of the Mayor's term; in this case, the end of December 2021. Kathie laid out 3 options for members to consider:

- Write to Mayor Becksted requesting early termination of the BRC
- Continue to exist "on the books" but without meetings
- Continue to exist without regular meetings but with the ability to meet as needed

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Rich that regularly scheduled meetings end as of today's, with future meetings to be scheduled as needed to address changes in the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ann seconded the motion and discussion ensued. Kathie proposed that any member of the BRC or Health Department could call a meeting with 24 hours' notice, and that primary authors of FAQs (Rich – monoclonal antibodies; Ann – Daily Life, Mask, Mask Mandate; James – Ventilation; and Kathie – remainder of FAQs) maintain them, keeping the BRC informed of changes. Ann suggested that Stephanie also be authorized to continue to make changes based on emerging information, at her discretion either consulting the BRC before or notifying the BRC after doing so. All agreed with these conditions and the motion was approved.

Relevant to the Health Department, the City Council will hold an emergency meeting to discuss whether to end the Mask Ordinance prior to its current expiration of June 30th. Health Officer Kim McNamara suggests keeping the mandate, but for indoor spaces only. The group considered whether large, crowded outdoor events such as rallies or concerts should specifically be subject to mask requirements. The complexity of defining which events would be included, the lack of a clear pathway or will for enforcement, and the unlikelihood that dangerously large events will take place before June 30th led to a consensus to endorse continuation of the ordinance until June 30th but eliminate application to any outdoor setting (i.e., aligned with Kim). **Kathie** will write, and **Stephanie** will review, a letter to Mayor Becksted expressing this view. The letter will also put forth our decision regarding the future of the Health BRC as described above.

Toni described the status of the vaccination program locally and statewide. She has provided to the public, via the city website, an exhaustive list of locations and processes for obtaining vaccine. Some pharmacies are now booking out to late June (mostly in the case of the Pfizer vaccine), while others can offer true walk-in. The State offers Johnson & Johnson vaccines (reservations required via VINI) on Saturday afternoons, and walk-in programs are open daily 3-6 pm at State sites with whatever brand is available.

Stephanie explained influences on and of the state's Emergency Status, such as qualifying NH for federal funding and enabling exceptions to state liquor laws.

Rich recommended a book "Premonition" by Michael Lewis as an interesting read about the pandemic.

There were no public comments. Ann made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Rich, all agreed.