

Plymouth Area Democrats General Meeting Minutes May 27, 2020

Mike Machanic, acting Interim Chair, convened the meeting a little after 6:30pm.

He introduced Eleanor Patten from coordinated campaign and she spoke a little bit about herself and her purpose. Mike introduced Mike Arnold who is Bill Bolton's campaign manager. He announced Bill's town Hall set for this Tuesday (6/2) and their fundraiser set for tomorrow.

Estee announced a request for videos from candidates, announcing their candidacy and talking about themselves. She invited them to throw some money at paid Facebook ads, which are fairly inexpensive, to promote themselves. She will be featuring tips and tricks and sending out an email to each candidate. We will feature some of these videos at our next meeting.

Sarah Daniels-Campbell announced the Saturday morning annual Grafton County meeting from 10:00 a.m. till 11:30 p.m. During this time, we will hear from regional committees and Eleanor from coordinated and Bill Bolton, among other speakers.

Mike acknowledged the dignitaries on the Zoom call, which included: Bill Bolton, Josh Adjutant, Suzanne Smith, Kevin Mays, and Dick Osborne.

Mike introduced our guest speaker, Brittania Macdonald, who is Chief of Medicine at Speare hospital. Brit is a physician assistant in the OB-Gyn department at Speare Hospital, and runs the PSU clinic 3 days a week. "Asymptomatic spread" was key wording that created serious concern amongst medical professionals when talking about Covid-19 virus. She returned home from a medical conference after the announcement was made about the lock down, and they immediately went to work mobilizing resources at Speare. They looked at their strengths and weaknesses. They are a 25 bed critical access facility which means they typically only accommodate short stays and surgeries. They are not equipped to handle 14 day ICU stays. Speare jumped to action quicker than other hospitals, because they could. Critical care was not a strength. So during March and April they put together a critical care task force. They increased from 3 to 12 critical care beds and ran staff through a critical care boot camp. They erected tent outside the ER for triage because there is still no definitive information on whether Covid-19 can be spread through ventilation systems.

She talked about the alternative care site at the hockey rink at PSU and that it came into being as preparation because, at the time, Dartmouth was not taking transfers any longer. This site is set up for mild cases who need light oxygen. They do not anticipate needing it as of this time period. Britt let us know that the rapid test is not super reliable and is only about 50% accurate. They are currently driving tests to a Boston testing facility daily for an 8 hour test result that is more reliable. They are fully prepared with adequate PPE. FEMA is reimbursing at 75% and governor Sununu says the state will reimburse the additional 25%. This is good news.

Mike then asked for questions from the audience. A question was asked about testing for PSU students. Speare is willing to help, but there are questions about procedure. There is no definitive answer among medical professionals as to how long immunity lasts for this particular strain. But almost no guarantee of long term permanent immunity. Antibody testing is not reliable at this point here in New Hampshire. And there are questions that need to be addressed about how students interact with one another and within our community, and during vacations home, which all can be risk factors for spread.

The question was raised about kids' summer camp camps and whether they would resume in the summer. Kawasaki disease (in children) is a concern, however it is low level concern. There is no definitive list of risk factors even now for this particular strain. Asymptomatic spread is a concern. Britt feels like locked down camps (where children are essentially quarantined for the weeks during their stay) are doable and fairly low risk, but day camps, where children are travelling back and forth every day from home, are higher risk. But every person/family needs to decide on their own comfort level of risk.

A question was raised about timeline for anticipated increase in cases, and concern about PSU students returning to campus. Dartmouth expects October, November and December they will still be taking transfers from Speare. But if unexpected conditions suddenly arise this may not be the case. Britt is hoping PSU keeps the alternative care site at the hockey rink up and running just in case.

A question was raised about contact tracing. New Hampshire is being urged to test more. Because the numbers are very low. We have a reported 2 to 3% infection rate. Britt expects to see more people with Covid-19 over the next weeks and months. Not necessarily spikes, but more cases. Currently there are many more tele-visits now than ever before, and they are currently being paid at 100% right now but this will likely not continue as insurance companies will decrease their reimbursement for these services. The other concern is mental health cases that are on the rise currently, and cases that are entering the emergency rooms in critical condition because they are delaying being seen. Money generation is a big concern for the hospital. Recent studies continue to

confirm that masks are helping to stop the spread. She suggests everyone wear them when they are in public.

The question was raised about returning to the workforce. Britt suggests if you are working in the public, that taking showers when returning home and wearing work specific clothing that can be taken off at the door are best-practices. Spouses sleeping in the same bed is risky, compounded with any use of C-pap machines and nebulizers, which aerosols the virus, and puts other family members at increased risk. She suggested temporarily sleeping separate from each other. Today there are no official CDC guidelines for health care professionals. She suggests giving space to family members and if there are any symptoms within the household, and to get tested.

Suzanne Smith commented about the House passing several tele-health bills, and relaxing the general medicine and psychiatric medicine reimbursements. And task force for reopening New Hampshire and public health department are reviewing and making recommendations for summer camps.

Meeting adjourned.