

Town of Wellesley
Board of Health Meeting (online remote)
Meeting Minutes
March 14th, 2023, 8:30 AM

Present

Board:

Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Acting Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary
Shira Doron, MD FIDSA FSHEA
Shepard Cohen, MPA, Associate Member

Staff:

Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator, Retired
Jhana Wallace, MPH, Community Health Coordinator
Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator
Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nursing Supervisor
Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Specialist

In attendance:

Christina Dougherty, Advisory Liaison
Stephanie Hawkinson, Public Information Officer, Town of Wellesley
Ann-Mara Lanza, Building a Better Wellesley, TBE Racial Justice Initiative, Select Board Member
Paul Merry, Civil Rights Attorney, Board Member, World of Wellesley, Town Meeting Member

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM

1. Citizen Speak

There were no requests to speak.

2. Administration

- a. Dr. Testa Simonson welcomed new Board of Health member Dr. Shira Doron.
- b. Meeting Minutes Approval for 3/2/23- Ms. Wallace noted that Beth Sullivan Woods was added to the minutes for 3/2/23 as present. Ms. Oliver Grape moved to accept the 3/2/23 minutes as presented. Dr. Testa Simonson seconded. Dr. Doron voted yay. The minutes were approved.

- c. Ms. Doku-Gardner scheduled optional Board of Health meetings for Monday 3/27/23 at 6:00 PM and Tuesday 3/28/23 at 6:00 PM for Town Meeting Review. Dr. Testa Simonson suggested revisiting the necessity for a Board meeting before Town Meeting closer to the Town Meeting date.
- d. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force presented an update on Article 17 (To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$100,00 from certified free cash to be expended under the direction of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force for an Equity Audit and to adopt an Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias Resolution) to be proposed with the Select Board and School Committee at Town Meeting.
 - Dr. Testa Simonson requested a copy of the presentation slides.
 - The Board provided feedback about the presentation with a focus on who is included or excluded when discussing “equity.”
 - Dr. Testa Simonson suggested the Board meet soon to determine how the Board will support Article 17.

3. Director’s Report

- a. The Board voted on the Board of Health position of Chair. Ms. Oliver Grape moved that Dr. Testa Simonson continue in her role as Chair. Dr. Doron seconded the motion. Dr. Testa Simonson, Dr. Doron and Ms. Oliver Grape all voted yay. The motion passed. Dr. Testa Simonson noted that the Chair position is for a tenure of one year.
- b. Mr. Izzo reported that regional funding via the Norfolk County 8 Coalition Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant requires that one Board of Health and one Health Department staff member from each participating community must attend a health and racial equity training. Further use of Wellesley Health Department use of PHE funded regional staff was discussed with suggestions to consider ideas for an epidemiologist.
- c. Mr. Izzo updated the Board on the FDA grant recently received by the Department.
- d. Mr. Izzo discussed upcoming health issues including tick-borne illness and the end of the public health emergency.
- e. Ms. Dougherty inquired about the use of opioid settlement funds. Mr. Izzo reported that Wellesley has supplied needed documentation for the next round of settlement funding and the Town will work collectively to find the best use of funds and in determining how to move forward.

- f. Ms. Dougherty reported that the Advisory Committee voted 14-0 in support of the Health Department budget.

4. Nurses Update/Community Health

- a. Ms. McCauley reported that COVID numbers are very quiet and death rates are coming down.
- b. Ms. McCauley responded to a question from the 3/2/23 meeting by Ms. Oliver Grape regarding the impact on Newton Wellesley Hospital (NWH) of the Brockton Hospital fire. NWH reports that they are not sure of any direct impact but that the hospital is generally very busy. The Beth Israel Needham nursing director reported no major impact, but South Shore locations have been impacted. Dr. Doron reported the impacts for Tufts have been equipment evacuation and decontamination. Ms. Oliver Grape reported a 48% rapid strep positive rate this week.

5. Environmental Health Update

- a. Ms. Zeng reported that the Health Department will be sharing updated proposals for tobacco and food safety regulations with the Board at another time.
- b. Ms. Zeng reported that the summer camp webinars were successful.

6. Any urgent item not reasonably anticipated prior to 48 hours of BOH meeting.

- a. The Board discussed the upcoming meeting with the Human Resources Committee for 3/21/23 at 7:00 PM to propose new classifications for the Health Director and Public Health Nurse Supervisor positions.
 - Dr. Testa Simonson suggested the important topics to be addressed include equity within the Health Department for equal levels of service and meeting the commercial market evaluation and demand for public health and public health nursing positions.
- b. Ms. Oliver Grape inquired if the Board would provide input on Article 41 having to do with the apartment complex called The Nines, with language calling for permission to repurpose condo space to be apartments or condos.
 - Ms. Oliver Grape suggested the Board share the Department's experience with the builder thus far and that it would be beneficial for Town Meeting to be aware of current issues as the builder is not in compliance with Health Department requirements.

- Ms. Testa Simonson suggested that the Health Department's priority issue would be density and increasing the Health Department's need for providing services. Ms. Oliver Grape also suggested the police may be able to provide data on increased need for police at the complex.
- Mr. Izzo reported that the builder was asked to provide more child-friendly space. Ms. Dougherty reported that there is a development agreement being put together asking for a play space and a community liaison to be funded by the management company to reduce the need for Health Department staff to provide services.

The next Board of Health meeting will be Thursday, March 16th at 3:00 PM.

Dr. Testa Simonson moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Oliver Grape seconded the motion. Dr. Doron voted yay. The meeting was adjourned 10:24 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator