

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2022 10:00 a.m.

Present:

Board:

Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair
Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary

Staff:

Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator

In attendance:

Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Ashley Hulme, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

The Board of Health approved the meeting minutes of March 17, 2022 and March 30, 2022.

Director's Report

Leonard Izzo reported that Jhana Wallace has accepted the position of Community Health Coordinator. She is expected to begin her employment the first week of May 2022.

The candidate for the Environmental Health Specialist position has accepted the position and is expected to have his preplacement physical today.

Mr. Izzo reported that he will be recruiting per diem nursing staff. He also noted that we currently need a part-time inspector.

1. Community Health

a) COVID Update

Leonard Izzo said that Ann Marie McCauley is on vacation this week. He reported that there were five new cases yesterday. Two of the cases were under age 18. Mr. Izzo said there had been an increase in the college cases returning to school after spring break holiday.

b) COVID Vaccine Clinics

Leonard Izzo reported that the nursing staff continues to run covid clinics. The one scheduled for next week is full.

Mr. Izzo also reported that we did get a few parents that needed flu vaccine. We have a great deal of flu vaccine remaining and a supply of Covid vaccine available.

c) Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) Update

Ashley Hulme reported that there has been an uptick in positive cases at the high school. Staff are following the mitigation practices at a school level. For the high school there is no hard and fast pattern among the positive cases. Cases are among all grade levels and among participants of various sports, activities, and clubs. Ms. Hulme noted that reporting is not accurate as the results are coming in days late. Ms. Hulme cited an example of a test result that was completed on April 1 and was just reported yesterday thus slightly increasing the numbers for that particular day.

Marcia Testa Simonson reported that if the numbers are not accurate than the running seven-day average within a week is what should be reported in a weekly update and not a daily update. Ms. Hulme reported that the WPS population continues to use the rapid at-home test. If a student or individual tests positive on a rapid test the school is not requiring a confirmation PCR test. Out of the 30 positive cases last week only 3 or 4 were PCR tests. Dr. Shira Doron reported that there is a false positive rate of 11% on the I-health tests.

Leonard Izzo elaborated that it is very difficult to explain false positives and false negatives to the public. He stated that there needs to be information on the WPS dashboard regarding the positive cases and when they are reported so the public understands.

Ashely Hulme reported that Superintendent David Lussier continues to send a daily message out to the school population. Linda Oliver Grape reported that focus needs to be made on return to school after April vacation week. Leonard Izzo will be meeting with Superintendent Lussier to further review the April vacation back to school protocols.

Lenny Izzo reported on a recent email that was received from a school parent regarding a 250-person party and a house party of 100 parents. Ashley Hulme reported that these events are not something that the schools can control. The board briefly discussed masking – Ashley Hulme and Leonard Izzo agreed that to mandate masks for indoors will not make much of a difference when there are no masks required elsewhere.

Dr. Shira Doran reviewed the recent pattern of infection of the COVID subvariant, BA.2, now the dominant strain. The pattern of infection in Europe and other parts of the country suggests that Massachusetts will probably emerge unscathed.

d) Substance Abuse Survey

Leonard Izzo reported that the intern and the social workers have put out a survey regarding substance abuse to the Wellesley Middle and High School populations. 200 responses were received within the first 48 hours.

e) HRS Contract - draft

Shepard Cohen reported that he is working on an update to the FY23 HRS contract. A draft will be completed by next week.

2. Environmental Health

a) Food Establishment Updates

Leonard Izzo reported that Oath Pizza is coming to Wellesley and will be taking over the Roosters space on Linden St. Beth Sullivan Woods reported that Roosters is moving within the same building complex.

Mr. Izzo elaborated that several new restaurants are looking to open the first week of May 2022. There have been ongoing supply chain issues.

b) Camps

Leonard Izzo reported that there are multiple new camps coming to town. Many of these are operators with no previous experience. He expects to have the most campers in Wellesley this year. Mr. Izzo also reported on various changes that have taken place at Babson College in the reporting structure as well as in the camping program. None of which have been beneficial to the health department.

c) Building Space

Leonard Izzo provided an update on the Health Department office suite and the anticipated changes to the Warren Building. Mr. Izzo reported that there is an expected rehab of the HVAC system in the next few years.

Beth Sullivan Wood reported that the town of Wellesley has been awarded a grant of \$150k for a back-up generator in the Warren Building.

d) Mosquitos and ticks

Lenny Izzo reported that he is anticipating a very bad tick season. Currently there are no indicators for mosquitoes.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner, Administrator