

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2021
11:30 AM

Present:

Board:

Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair
Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary
Carol Hannenberg, MD, Associate Member

Staff:

Wanda Alvarez, LSW, Community Social Worker
Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist
Deadra Doku Gardner, MS, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, LICSW, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m.

The following meeting minutes were approved: April 12, 2021

Citizens Speak

No one was present to participate in Citizen Speak.

Chairman's Report

Shepard Cohen reported on his thoughts on the possibility of an in-person meeting. Marcia Testa Simonson and Leonard Izzo provided reasons as to why that is not possible at this time; the Board of Health agreed that meetings will remain remote.

Administration

Linda Oliver Grape reminded the staff and Board of Health that Annual Town Meeting begins on Monday, April 26, 2021.

1. Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that since the last meeting there has been a decrease in the number of COVID cases in the community. She noted that post school vacation there is a strong possibility of an increase in cases.

Ms. McCauley reported that in the last nine days there have been 36 new cases in Wellesley (20 in the community and 16 at Babson College). She said there were three or four individuals in the last week who were exposed to the virus just prior to receiving their first dose of vaccine and have become symptomatic.

b) COVID Vaccine and Clinics

The Health Department does not have additional vaccine clinics scheduled as they will not be receiving additional allocations. Carol Hannenberg reported that Trip Advisor in Needham continues to operate as a COVID-19 vaccination site.

Shepard Cohen reported on his concern for Barton Road residents, as well as other low-income and group housing locations. The Board of Health agreed that all residents be made aware that vaccine is available and there should be no barriers to obtaining a vaccination. Joyce Saret suggested that a survey be provided to all congregate housing, senior housing and low-income residents asking if they want to be vaccinated and asking if they need assistance with scheduling an appointment or obtaining transportation.

c) Babson College – COVID-19 Update

Leonard Izzo and Ann Marie McCauley reported on their weekly call with Babson Administration. Mr. Izzo reported on an off-campus house party last week that impacted approximately 45 Babson College students; the host of the party was in isolation.

Mr. Izzo reported that students are finished with classes and are leaving campus. He said that the College will be offering fewer educational programs during the summer and have scaled back campus activities. Linda Oliver Grape inquired as to whether the College will have a mandatory vaccination requirement for the fall enrollment. Mr. Izzo said that he will address this on his weekly call and noted that a large number of students have already been vaccinated.

The Board of Health agreed that all local colleges be contacted late in the summer to discuss school planning and procedures regarding COVID restrictions and operations.

d) COVID-19 – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS)

Leonard Izzo reported on recent DESE guidelines regarding 3 feet of distance in the classroom and on buses and 6 feet of distance for activities outside including camps and official after-school programs. Marcia Testa Simonson reported that it is easier for teachers to control students in the classroom and on the buses at three feet, and noted that students must wear masks. Mr. Izzo said the nursing staff will be conducting contact tracing of sports teams based on the six feet guidance, however contract tracing for in-school cases will be at the three feet guidance.

Mr. Izzo said the schools continue to struggle with how lunch periods will be handled in the fall.

Mr. Izzo reported on Wellesley High School graduation ceremonies. There will be boxes in the stands for families and they will be separated by six feet; only the students will be on the field.

e) Newton Wellesley Hospital

Shepard Cohen reported that Dr. Jodi Larsen is leaving her position at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Leonard Izzo said she has been tremendously responsive contact.

f) Town Hall – COVID Response and Reopening

As noted at the last meeting, Leonard Izzo has been working on a plan for town office buildings to reopen.

Mr. Izzo reported that the Town Hall building remains closed to public access. Mr. Izzo has conducted one walk thru and additional walk-thru inspections are being scheduled. He noted there are several areas of concern where there are pinch points and tight spaces. Services will be available but trying to control the number of people inside the building is going to be difficult. There are also issues with the ventilation and air circulation in certain areas of the building.

Vivian Zeng reported that she will be doing a walk – thru of the Senior Center to determine usage of space and what can and cannot be

utilized. She noted that there is a Tolles Parsons building timeline for opening which has been posted on-line.

Leonard Izzo reported that the main library is being closed for renovation. The library will provide abbreviated services at the former Talbots location on Central Street.

g) MetroWest Hospital

Shepard Cohen reported on last Friday's meeting with Scott Munger, Market Director of Behavioral Medicine, MetroWest Hospital. Mr. Munger reported they are in the midst of an expansion and a capital improvement project and will be closed until October 25, 2021. They plan on expanding their programming, providing intensive outpatient care services and increasing the number of pediatric beds and services when the location reopens. The hospital added 14 adult beds and three pediatric beds. The location will be able to accommodate 103 patients; previously they could accommodate 86.

h) Social Services/Mental Health

Shepard Cohen reported that he will meet with Mark Kline, Director of Human Relations Services on Monday, April 26, 2021.

2. Environmental Health

a) Tobacco Regulations

Leonard Izzo and Jessica Cliff provided an overview of changes made to the tobacco regulations. Mr. Izzo reported that the draft has been finalized by Town Counsel and approved by the State. The draft version of the regulations will be forwarded to the Board of Health for review and comment.

Mr. Izzo will provide a legal posting in the Townsman notifying the public of the Board of Health meeting at which a vote will be taken to accept the draft regulations as permanent.

b) Summer camps

Vivian Zeng has been working with camps to ensure that operations will comply with COVID protocols.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on April 26, 2021, 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner

Administrator