

Town of Wellesley
Board of Health Meeting (online remote)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 25th, 2023 9:00 AM

Present

Board:

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

Staff:

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

In attendance:

Christina Dougherty, Advisory Liaison
Beth Sullivan Woods, Select Board

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM

1. Citizen Speak

There were no requests to speak.

2. Chair Report

3. Director Report

- a. Mr. Izzo reported that the Environmental Health Specialist, Adam DiPersio, passed the Registered Environmental Health Specialist Exam.
- b. The Board discussed the staffing situation at the Department. Mr. Izzo reported difficulties filling positions and retaining staff due to salary issues noting that Wellesley offers lower salaries for similarly qualified positions than neighboring towns. A recent public health nurse candidate turned down an open position as the salary was less than half of their current salary. Additionally, the open position of Senior Environmental Health Specialist only received one applicant.

Dr. Testa Simonson discussed the challenge of hiring in the public health workforce and the need to discuss this issue further with Town departments as the Department's ability to perform required duties is in jeopardy.

- c. Mr. Izzo reported that two new positions, a full time social worker and full time sanitarian, will be posted on or around July 1, 2023.
- d. Mr. Izzo discussed pool regulations. Wellesley does not have lifeguard regulations for semi-public pools. The Department is working on draft regulations.
- e. Ms. Oliver Grape inquired about lifeguards at Morses Pond. Mr. Izzo explained that the Pond opens without guards but will be fully staffed with lifeguards on June 26th. Recreation staff will be at the Pond through June 26th.
- f. Mr. Izzo reviewed staff programming and outreach.

4. Nurse Supervisor Report

- a. Ms. McCauley reported on collaborating with the Social work team to address Housing Authority residents needing extensive support with cleaning during the certification process.
- b. Ms. McCauley reported that Social Work staff have attended Keep Well Clinics and supported residents with paperwork and MassHealth. Ms. McCauley also noted that the Keep Well clinics are generally poorly attended. The Department might want to consider ways to encourage attendance.

5. Administration

- a. Ms. Sullivan Woods suggested two items for Health Department to discuss/address:
 - 1) The need to determine if opioid funds are being held or need action at Town Meeting (i.e., via introduction of a Warrant).
 - 2) Excessive grease trap regulations. Mr. Izzo reported that the Town is transparent that all food businesses need an exterior grease trap. This policy is enforced by the Town Engineer but supported by the Health Department.

6. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Board prior to posting.

- a. The BOH reviewed the Human Relations Service (HRS) contract. Dr. Testa Simonson mentioned that the HRS contract should have standard clauses and scope of work. The current document is closer to an agreement or grant. Dr. Testa Simonson inquired if the contract needs amending prior to signing for this Fiscal Year. It was determined that further discussion is not needed prior to July

1, 2023, and the contract can be signed as is but conversations with HRS should take place prior to Town budget determinations in November, 2023.

It was decided that further discussion with HRS would cover the following:

- The need for additional school-based services (should also discuss with School Committee and/or school staff).
- Involvement and/or support with utilizing opioid settlement funds.
- Staffing and capacity issues including the need to amend the 1.5 FTE school support staff to 2.0 FTE. The .5 FTE is not currently filled. Amending to a 1.0 FTE may make staffing that position more likely.

- b. Dr. Testa Simonson discussed opioid settlement funds earmarked for prevention and treatment programs.

Dr. Doron suggested considering Narcan training for residents and purchasing Narcan supplies accessible to residents. Mr. Cohen suggested collaborating with Newton Wellesley Hospital. The Health Department and Board of Health will develop a plan and strategy to use the funds according to state regulations on usage. Mr. Cohen emphasized the need for the Board of Health and Health Department to maintain leadership on utilization of opioid settlement funds.

- c. Dr. Testa Simonson discussed the need to appoint Health Department staff as Health Agents.
- d. Dr. Testa Simonson discussed the legal benefits of certain Health Department staff being named Health Agents. Mr. Izzo reported that this language is in the job description for staff that would require the authority to make decisions but is not currently a title for staff acting on behalf of the Board in that capacity. Ms. Testa Simonson asked that this topic be included on a future agenda for further discussion.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10: 34 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator

