

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes.
August 4, 2021
12:06 PM

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:

Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist
Ashley Denton, Public Health Nurse
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

In attendance:

Jie Bai, resident
Linda Chow, School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools
Shira Doron, MD, resident
Leda Eizenberg, School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools
Lisa Fico, resident
Stephanie Hawkinson, Communications and Project Manager, Town of Wellesley
Ashely Hulme, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools
Melanie Kelley, RN, St Pauls School
Regina LaRocque, MD
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools
Catherine Mirick, School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools
Beth Sullivan Woods, Select Board

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 PM.

The Board of Health approved the following meeting minutes: July 28, 2021.

Citizens Speak

Lisa Fico spoke on behalf of herself and her family. The family are regular visitors to Provincetown, MA. Ms Fico reviewed the current increase in COVID cases in Provincetown and the issues possibly leading to the increase. She asked that the Board of Health not use the same guidelines for Wellesley as used in Provincetown as there are different circumstances. Ms Fico reviewed her personal thoughts of what should be addressed regarding masking and guidelines noting that she has two vaccinated school age children.

Dr Regina LaRocque spoke as the mother of two children in Wellesley Public Schools, as a Town Meeting Member and as a scientist. She reported that the new virus strain (Delta) is more transmissible than before. Dr Larocque pointed out that every major public health organization endorses the use of masks indoors. Dr Larocque stressed that children need to be in school in the Fall and highlighted the steps needed to be taken to protect them. Dr Laroque stressed the importance of children beginning the school year with another layer of protection by wearing masks.

Jie Bai spoke as a parent of a senior attending Wellesley High School. Her son is fully vaccinated however has a hearing disability and has difficulty hearing while wearing a mask. Ms Bai reported that there should not be a requirement for children to wear masks in school. The choice should be left to the parent.

Director's Report

a) Colleges and Private Schools

As noted at the last meeting Leonard Izzo again reported that he and the staff are in close communication with the colleges and private schools regarding the COVID safety protocols of school openings.

b) Wellesley Public Schools – COVID

David Lussier introduced the new Wellesley Public Schools Nursing Director Ashley Hulme. Dr Lussier reported that at this time Wellesley Public Schools will be reopening on a full schedule and that there is no plan for formalized social distancing.

Dr Lussier reported that the use of masks and testing are the areas currently in question. Dr Lussier reported that the Center for Disease Control and the Academy of Pediatrics are suggesting that students wear masks at the start of the school year. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts

Department of Public Health (MDPH) recommended last week that masks be worn for grades K thru 6k. Currently there is no plan for a statewide mask mandate in place. DESE and DPH are allowing each local community to make their own final decision for back to school in the fall. Lenny Izzo reported that he is disappointed in state response and was hoping for more guidance for local health departments.

Shira Doron reported on the state's recommendation for masks in grades K thru 6. Dr Doron reported that metrics could be developed to turn the use of masks on or off.

Catherin Mirick stated that the School Committee needs more information from the Board of Health perspective. Marcia Testa Simonson reviewed the quality of life noting that there are detriments to children wearing a mask all day, every day while in the classroom. There needs to be more recognition of the negatives of mask wearing and how masks can affect the quality of life. Dr Testa Simonson reported on the negative consequences to wearing a mask such as not being able to see facial expressions. These negatives can greatly affect children.

Linda Grape reported that she is strongly in support of all eligible populations being vaccinated and stressed the importance of getting the vaccine to as many in the population as possible. She expressed concern in the increase in the Delta variant strain. Ms Grape reiterated that the main goal of the vaccine was to prevent death and hospitalization noting that thus far the vaccine is working.

Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that there have been two cases per day in the last week. Those that have been tested positive have been kids and young adults. None who have been terribly sick or hospitalized.

b) Funding Program - NC8

Leonard Izzo reported that the NC8 funding program is primarily for nursing in all eight communities in the sub-region.

c) Vaccine

Leonard Izzo reported on the state-run vaccine sites noting that there have been no appointments. The state is phasing out of state-run clinics.

d) CTC

Marica Testa Simonson reported that CTC has been extended thru the end of the year. Wellesley Health Department used the services minimally and only on weekends.

e) St Johns School

Melanie Kelly the school nurse at St Johns School was present. She noted that the school was opening as planned.

f) Office space

Shep Cohen reported that that he will address the office space plan with the Recreation Commission chair.

g) Community Health Coordinator

Shep Cohen reported that he and Leonard Izzo have reviewed the Community Health Coordinator job description and have made recommendations and updates to the qualifications and responsibilities. Mr. Izzo has distributed the job description to the Board of Health, and he will be forwarding it to the Human Resources Department. It will be posted in the next few weeks.

h) Environmental Health

Vivian Zeng provided an overview of the activities taking place at the camp, beach and food establishment.

Ms Zeng reported that a tobacco compliance check was conducted at B and P Auto. A pack of cigarettes was sold to an underage customer. The owner has an appealed the \$1000 fine. The hearing will be scheduled for the next Board Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for August 11, 2021 at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Deadra Doku Gardner
Administrator