

Wellesley Board of Health
CONFERENCE CALL
Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2020
11:30 AM

Present:

Board:

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

Staff:

Leonard Izzo, Director
Ann Marie McCauley, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Deadra Doku-Gardner, Administrator
Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator

Wellesley Public Schools

David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools
Linda Chow, Chair, Wellesley School Committee
Sharon Gray, Secretary, Wellesley School Committee
Catherine Mirick, Wellesley School Committee
Jim Roberti, Wellesley School Committee

In attendance:

Marjorie Freiman, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Beth Sullivan Woods, Board of Selectmen
Jesse Boehm, Broad Institute
Katey Goehringer, Wellesley Education Foundation
Robin Ingalls, MD, Boston University
Liz Larsen, Wellesley Education Foundation

This was a remote meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 11:32 am.

1. Administration

- a) Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) – School Reopening Plan

In advance of today's meeting, Linda Chow, Chair of the Wellesley School Committee provided the Board of Health the draft version of the WPS School Reopening Plan, dated August 11, 2020.

During the meeting, the Plan was shared and discussed with the attendees.

The Board of Health and School Committee members agreed that the school re-opening metrics must be more specific than provided by the State. Additional information must be provided before the Wellesley metrics can be approved. The information will be reviewed at another meeting. An overview of the school decision trees for other districts, such as Cambridge and Natick models were briefly reviewed.

The Board of Health reviewed various options regarding school opening (hybrid) plans. Leonard Izzo reported on yesterday's Norfolk County 8 (NC8) meeting, noting that NC8 communities are facing the same issues. He said the Governor's office may be providing more specific guidance to health and school departments in the Commonwealth, as to how schools should reopen and what models may be used.

Marcia Testa Simonson elaborated on the differences in the communities across the state, noting that Wellesley continues to be a low risk community. There are approximately 841 staff and teachers in the Wellesley Public School system. Dr. Lussier reported that 90% of the employees do not reside in Wellesley. Some may reside in high-risk communities. Dr. Simonson reported that it would be beneficial if the Board of Health could review the age distribution, as well as where staff and faculty reside, for each school. The School Committee agreed to provide this information. In addition, Dr. Lussier said another consideration is that METCO students are based outside of the community.

There continues to be hope that all students and staff will be able to return to in-person instruction. At this time, schools must provide flexibility in the staffing models and provide special consideration on the approach for vulnerable students and those experiencing fear and anxiety. As discussed at a previous meeting, Linda Chow reiterated the importance of understanding the protocols and creating a decision-making matrix.

Linda Chow reported that the School Committee will be meeting on August 13th. Their goal will be to vote on an opening school model.

Dr. Jesse Boehm of the Broad Institute reported there continues to be multiple pieces that must be considered to safely open the schools. Dr. Boehm believes that regular testing of students, staff and faculty is a critical piece to a successful school opening. Among other options being considered, Dr. Boehm reported that Newton Wellesley Hospital is considering testing symptomatic children and staff in surrounding communities. He noted that this would be billable to insurance.

The next remote meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 11:30 am.

The Board of Health meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner
Administrator

Documents reviewed during this meeting and on-file in the Health Department:

- WPS School Reopening Plan, dated August 11, 2020.