

Wellesley Board of Health
Meeting (ZOOM) Minutes
August 13, 2020.

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:

Leonard Izzo, Director
Deadra Doku-Gardner, Administrator
Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator

In attendance:

Jessie Boehm, Broad Institute, resident
Linda Chow, Chair, Wellesley School Committee
Amy Frigulietti, Assistant Executive Director of General Government Services
Marjorie Freiman, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Sharon Gray, Wellesley School Committee
Katey Goehringer, Wellesley Education Foundation
Meghan Jop, Executive Director of General Government Services
Jon Lanza, Liaison, Advisory Committee
Liz Larsen, Wellesley Education Foundation
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools
Melissa Martin, Wellesley School Committee
Carl Nelson, resident
Kimberly O'Sullivan, OPM Consulting, resident
Jim Roberti, Wellesley School Committee
Beth Sullivan Woods, Board of Selectmen

The meeting was called to order at 11:34 am.

Citizen Speak

Carl Nelson reported that he has reviewed the Wellesley Public Schools reopening plan and is interested in whether the Board of Health has reviewed the air quality in the public-school buildings. Mr. Nelson asked if the town would be considering changes in the air quality systems in the school buildings. Leonard Izzo and David Lussier reported on the Facilities Management Department (FMD) functions and the details of the current air filtration systems.

Kimberly O’Sullivan reported that she operates a company called OPM Consulting which brings products into offices to improve quality and safety. Her children attended Wellesley Public Schools and that is the basis of her interest. She reported that she is able to provide PPE and testing items to municipalities and businesses.

Dr. O’Sullivan reported that children should be temperature checked at the start of each day and is interested in whether thermometers are in place.

1. Administration

a) Wellesley Public Schools – School Reopening Plan

Marcia Testa Simons addressed various metrics that would be used to decide on school reopening.

Linda Chow reported that the Superintendent and the School Committee have done some of the analysis on the demographics of those who attend or work at the Wellesley Public Schools. As discussed at a previous board meeting, 90% of the school related staff, faculty and employees do not live in Wellesley. In addition, there is a small percentage of students who also do not live in Wellesley.

Leonard Izzo reported that he is organizing a working group to review the decision metrics when one or more positive cases are reported in the schools. He will collaborate with the Superintendent and the school and public health nurses on applicable issues.

Shepard Cohen said that what is done for the schools in regards to metrics will also apply to other town buildings.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that she has a few edits to the School Reopening Plan, specifically to the role and responsibilities of FMD. In addition, Ms. Oliver Grape suggested that the school building HVAC systems be reviewed by an expert mechanical engineer to ensure the safety of the air quality. Ms. Oliver Grape reiterated that the School Committee should consider a different hybrid (in-person and remote learning) schedule, rather than the one currently proposed. She noted that she was looking from the health perspective of the proposed schedule. According to Dr. Lussier, the current hybrid plan allows for consistent and steady learning for the students, but does not take into account virus spread.

David Lussier reported that reopening decisions and positive case responses need to be easily explained and understood by the public. Dr. Lussier reported on the State's guidelines, noting that additional areas need explanation and detail.

Sharon Gray reviewed a meeting that was held earlier today with a group of Wellesley physicians. Ms. Gray briefly reported that this group was in agreement with the Board of Health as to how the schools should be reopened.

The Board of Health voted and approved the recent changes to the School Reopening Plan for Wellesley Public Schools as presented by the School Committee and the Superintendent. This plan is being presented tonight at the School Committee meeting.

b) Testing

Leonard Izzo reported that Babson College is in the process of testing their staff. Wellesley College will begin testing next week. Mr. Izzo has been in touch with both of the schools and has reviewed their opening plans.

Dr. Jessie Boehm (a Wellesley school parent) of the Broad Institute reported that his working group is three or four days away from suggesting detailed school testing operational plans. He reported that as of last night, there are no potential bottlenecks except for funding. Five towns have come together as one coalition. These communities are Revere (red community), Chelsea (red community), Somerville, Brookline and Wellesley. Marcia Testa Simonson reported that Brookline is rumored to begin school remotely. Dr. Testa Simonson questioned whether they would be testing even though students would be at home, and if that were the case, whether they would be the control community for the coalition.

Dr. Boehm reviewed the processes and testing options available, as well as how testing would work in Wellesley should the plan be accepted. He reported there is a possibility that Newton Wellesley Hospital will be accepting Wellesley and Newton residents and provide priority testing, however that is still in the planning stages.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that additional information regarding testing sources is expected from the State and that it is best to see what the plan may be. In addition, Ms. Oliver Grape noted that in the future, the working group may wish to include town leadership and town council for their expertise.

Lenny Izzo noted that consideration needs to be given to threshold points when testing would not continue. Mr. Izzo questioned whether the plan will test for a three-month trial period, or run the entire school year. Dr. Boehm reported that the symptomatic piece must continue all school year long. Dr. Boehm noted at this time the commitment would be for three months and would be reviewed in November. Decisions would be based on the data coming in.

Linda Oliver Grape reported she has been in touch with various testing providers and as things move ahead, they will need to monitor turn-around times.

Lenny Izzo questioned the location of the testing. Dr. Boehm reported that it would be a town decision. Katey Goehringer reported that the group is looking at options including public and private land. A location would need to accommodate a 40' x 40' tent and spaces for 40 cars. The testing site cannot be in a congested area. Discussion has been taking place with one of the religious institutions, as well as town owned Moses Pond parking area (after the location has closed for the season).

Meghan Jop reported that while the Broad Institute is providing testing in the colleges and in private institutions, working operationally within a municipality is very different. There are legal questions in the procurement process and questions as to how the testing is engaged in a public school. The town's liability has to be considered as well.

The next conference call of the Board of Health is scheduled for Friday, August 14, 2020 at 11:30 am.

The Board of Health meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner
Administrator

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

- NONE