

Wellesley Board of Health
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2020
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:

Deadra Doku-Gardner, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, Director
Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Linda Chow, Wellesley School Committee
Linda Corridan, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools
Marjorie R. Freiman, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Katey Goehringer Wellesley Education Foundation
Douglas Golenbock, UMass Medical Center
Sharon Gray, Wellesley School Committee
Mark Kline, Human Relations Services
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools
Shannon Mackey, Human Relations Services
Catherine Mirick, Wellesley School Committee
Lise Olney, Board of Selectmen
Lindsay Stensieck Human Relations Services
Beth Sullivan Woods, Board of Selectmen
Tom Ulfeder, Board of Selectmen

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

1. Wellesley Public School (WPS) – Testing

Superintendent David Lussier provided an overview of the baseline testing that was offered to students and teachers. More than 3,000 students were tested over

three days. Two members of the staff and one student were reported being COVID-19 positive before the start of school.

Dr. Lussier reported that he initially sent out district-wide communications noting the testing process, as well as to notify parents of a positive Covid-19 individual.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that contact tracing continues to be the responsibility of the Wellesley Health Department (WHD). Positive cases of individuals who live outside of Wellesley are reported to the health department in their home community. Linda Corridan reported that she is in close contact with Ann Marie McCauley, and in the event that someone is reported positive she immediately notifies the WHD nursing staff.

Mr. Izzo reported that 23 of the student testing results were unable to be submitted to MAVEN. One of those cases was the one positive student case. Linda Chow reported that the vendor knew they had data issues and it appeared to be a result of the front end of the operation.

Linda Corridan reported that she was notified by the testing company promptly of the positive case and that she worked with the family. It was difficult tracking this information through MAVEN, however WHD nurse Heidi Harper, was able to follow-up with the contact tracing information provided by Linda Corridan. Katey Goehring reported that the missing cases were all eventually entered into MAVEN.

Linda Chow reported on ongoing surveillance testing. School leadership believes this is very important. Ms. Chow reported that no decisions have been made in regards to cancelling the current surveillance testing contract; however, they are looking at different sources of testing (possibly MIRIMUS).

Dr. Douglas Golenbock reported on his experience at UMASS Medical Center. He has confidence in the saliva testing and reported on the robotics of the pool testing by MIRIMUS. Large volumes of saliva (24 people) can be concentrated and tested via PCR testing. The group test is then individually tested and the positive case(s) taken out and contact tracing begins. The positive test would be reported to MAVEN.

Linda Chow reported that at present, the testing contract is still in place for the ongoing surveillance testing of staff. The vendor is drafting an additional proposal. The school committee anticipates that a small number will be tested next week. If they continue with the current vendor, the testing will use the nasal swab option.

Katey Goehring reported that 90% of the student population was tested, 10% were not. Ms. Goehring reported on the student access survey. They received many responses however, only one family had a transportation issue and transportation was arranged and provided.

2. Wellesley Public Schools – Facilities

Linda Chow reported that she does not have an update on the ventilation systems at the schools.

Leonard Izzo will contact the Facilities Maintenance Dept. and provide an update at a later date.

3. Human Relation Services (HRS) – Mental Health

Dr. Mark Kline provided a summary of his August 2020 report. Dr. Kline reported that all functions at HRS are now offered via telehealth.

Dr. Kline reported on various challenges faced by HRS. The agency continues to provide outpatient care to town residents. Of late, an increasing number of families and individuals are in need of counseling. Residents are affected not only by the pandemic, but also by the adjustments to remote learning, anxiety and stress in the family, and kids trying to figure out the college application process. HRS staff is at capacity, as well as most other providers in the area.

Dr. Kline reported that HRS is in the final process of obtaining a two-year funding (grant) from the Metrowest Foundation. Funding will assist with increasing the agency's capacity.

Dr. Kline reported that the facility where HRS is located is antiquated (built in 1866) and needs to be upgraded. HRS is in the process of planning upgrades and is currently seeking grants to assist with their physical plant improvements, to increase space, and to enable staff to return to in-person counseling. Dr. Kline noted that younger children would greatly benefit from in person sessions.

Dr. Kline noted that the agency is receiving many calls about technology addiction. Laura Fader on the staff specializes in this type of addiction.

It was noted that Leonard Morse Hospital will be closing at the end of this month. Dr. Kline reported HRS will be referring to the Riverside crisis team, as well as to Newton Wellesley Hospital.

Dr. Kline reported on the Fund for Wellesley COVID-19 grant, which allowed HRS to run community forums this past spring.

4. Human Resources

Leonard Izzo met with Human Resources last night. He reported that Wanda Alvarez (Community Social Worker) will be starting next week. The second full-time sanitarian position has been filled.

5. COVID-19 Updates

Leonard Izzo reported that there have been no significant increases in positive cases in Wellesley,

6. Flu Clinics

Mr. Izzo reported that town employee clinics are in process. The town-wide drive-thru clinics will begin next week. All appointments have been filled.

7. Food establishments update

Vivian Zeng reported that Sweetgreens had a small fire, however the location is back in service as of yesterday.

8. Fall Harvest- Farmers Market

Vivian Zeng has been working with Beth Sullivan Woods on this project. The event will take place over two Sundays. The goal is to increase pedestrian traffic in the business district.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 11:30am

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner
Administrator