

Wellesley Board of Health  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2021, 1:00 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:

Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director  
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator  
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nurse Supervisor  
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Shira Doron, MD, resident  
Ashley Hulme, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools  
Ellen Subramaniam, resident

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 PM.

9-30-2021 and 10-21-2021 meeting minutes were approved.

Chairman's Report

1. Administration

a) Advisory Meeting

Shepard Cohen reported that a meeting with Advisory is scheduled on Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cohen will contact John Lanza (who was not able to join the Board of Health meeting today) to discuss procedures.

b) Warren Building Office Space

Leonard Izzo previously reported that he contacted the Facilities Maintenance Department to discuss much needed additional space in the

Warren building for the Health Department. A meeting and a walk-thru of the building has been scheduled.

## 2. Community Health

### a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley provided a report based on a request by Shepard Cohen to address certain data points to ascertain trends and the origin of cases:

- The positivity rate has decreased to 0.5% this week, down from 0.6%
- In the last two (reporting) weeks, there were 34 cases (six from Babson College); 30 of whom were symptomatic and four were asymptomatic
- There were zero hospitalizations and deaths
- Testing was conducted for a variety of reasons including travel

Ms. McCauley said she had previously reported that Elizabeth Seton had administered boosters to their residents. At that time, Newton-Wellesley Center for Alzheimer's Care was waiting for consents and vaccine. Flu vaccine has been administered at the long-term care facilities.

### b) Flu Clinics

Ann Marie McCauley reported that community drive-thru flu clinics have been completed. There is a flu clinic scheduled on Monday, November 8 at the Tolles Parsons Center for seniors (and the general community) and one at the Health Department on Wednesday, November 10 for Wellesley Public Schools staff and faculty.

### c) COVID-19 Booster Clinic

Ann Marie McCauley reported that a COVID-19 booster clinic (using Moderna vaccine) was held on Friday, October 29. Attendees included first responders and school nurses. Approximately 90 booster shots were administered.

d) MassBay

Linda Oliver Grape reported that MassBay plans on returning to in-person learning in January. Vivian Zeng reported she and Mr. Izzo will meet with MassBay to discuss their reopening plans.

e) Star Academy

Leonard Izzo and Ann Marie McCauley reported that Star Academy is back in session following an outbreak of COVID-19 cases. Concerns were addressed and proper procedures are in place.

f) Narcan and Substance Abuse Efforts

Leonard Izzo reported that Newton-Wellesley Hospital will continue to provide doses of Narcan to Wellesley's first responders and others, and will continue to partner with the Health Department to coordinate distribution.

g) Wellesley Public Schools (WPS)

Testing

Ashley Hulme provided a report on the COVID testing program at WPS. Testing commenced in the elementary schools in the beginning of October and on October 12 at the Middle School. Thus far, there have been a total of five positive pools. She summarized the process of rapid reflex testing and PCR testing.

Ms. Hulme described the Test and Stay program, providing rapid testing to allow students to stay in school. 500 tests have been administered and all were negative. Marcia Testa Simonson noted that this saved many school absences.

Ms. Hulme noted they would not be conducting pool testing during the week of Thanksgiving, so as not to be subject to any potential delay of results (at the Broad Lab). She noted there had been issues with the lab's turnaround time (of PCR tests) last week.

Ms. Hulme said the National Guard would assist with testing until November 19. CIC Health has been training the health services staff so they may continue testing services after the departure of the Guard.

Dr. Shira Doron said that no threshold has been determined to stop testing. Dr. Doron summarized the science involving the positive predictive value of testing. She noted the low incidence rate and a number of false positive results.

There was discussion among meeting participants about the continuation of the testing program, including a resident (Ellen Subramaniam) who had sent the Board of Health an email about surveillance testing.

### Masking

Linda Oliver Grape inquired about the WPS plans for masking. It was noted that the current DESE mandate for masks in schools will be in place until January 15, 2021. Dr. Doron said that 16 or 18 schools have applied for a waiver. Dr. Doron noted that the CDC and White House have not stated a goal in regards to masking. Ashley Hulme said that close to 88% of the WPS staff have been vaccinated.

Ellen Subramaniam reported that at last Tuesday's School Committee meeting, there was discussion regarding a memorandum of understanding between the Wellesley Education Association (teachers union) and WPS - to be contractually obligated to continue masking until the end of the academic year (until no longer contractually obligated). It was shared that Superintendent Lussier has signed, but the School Committee has not yet decided if they will sign and will make a decision by next Tuesday's meeting. Ms. Subramaniam requested that the Board of Health take a position on this issue. Board members stated they need to review the document and obtain additional information before taking a position. Shepard Cohen will contact the Chair of the School Committee.

### 3. Environmental Health

#### a) Food Donation

Shepard Cohen said he was aware of several food donation efforts including in the faith community, Rotary and others. Leonard Izzo said he believes these organizations are providing services to those in and beyond the Wellesley community. Mr. Izzo said the Health Department provides inspectional services to organizations under their jurisdiction, and hopes other organizations providing these services will come forward. He also mentioned Health Department staff are collaborating on a program involving residents with food subsidies.

#### b) Food Applications

Vivian Zeng reported the Health Department received two plans for new food service operations, and is awaiting plans from another.

c) Choke Save Program

Ms. Zeng reported the Health Department will host a Choke Save program for food establishment operators and applicable staff; the program will be held at the Warren Building. This program may be offered quarterly.

d) Housing

Vivian Zeng reported on a no heat complaint. This was quickly resolved by the landlord. She also reported she is working on a complex housing case involving other town departments.

e) Local Colleges Pubs Reopening

Ms. Zeng is working with Wellesley College to reopen their student run pub Punch's Alley and Babson College's Roger's Pub and Grille.

4. Community Health Coordinator

Leonard Izzo reported that thus far, 60 applicants have responded to the job posting. He is looking for candidates with local public health experience, as well as those with communication skills. The job opening will be posted in public health professional organizations and schools of public health.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator