

Town of Wellesley
Board of Health Meeting (online remote)
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 4, 2023
5:30p

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, MS, Administrator
Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director

In attendance:

Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Christina Dougherty-Advisory Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

1. Director Report

- a) Return to school - Leonard Izzo reported on his recent meeting with David Lussier, Superintendent of Wellesley Public Schools. Mr Izzo noted that there will not be a masking mandate put into place at the Wellesley Schools. The superintendent has put a message out to the school community advising that COVID test kits are available for pick up at the Wellesley Health Department. In addition, a shipment of 9000 test kits arrived last week. These kits are now available at the Health Department and the Main Library for residents to pick up.
- b) COVID Update- Leonard Izzo provided a brief update on COVID and flu in the community noting that the numbers are not excessive. Linda Oliver Grape expressed concern about the possibility of rising COVID numbers and the number of positive cases among reporting employees. Shira Doran, MD gave a review of the current hospital information and reviewed employee infection graphs. She noted that the number of current cases is not approaching the numbers reported last winter at this time. Ms Oliver Grape strongly encourages the schools to carefully monitor absenteeism rates.
- c) NEHA-FDA Grant Program- Leonard Izzo announced that the Health Department received the first of a nine-track grant in the amount of \$26,400. The initial track is for Environmental Health staff to travel to FDA training conferences in VA and New Orleans. In

addition, there is a fee for a contractor who will write the FDA plan required by the grant. The grant follows a calendar year schedule (January to December) as opposed to a fiscal year. Discussion took place as to how the department receives the funds. Mr Izzo is in the process of working with Financial Services to determine how best to receive the funds. Mr Izzo added that from a budgetary perspective this grant has no impact on the departments FY24 budget submission.

2. FY24 Draft Budget

Marcia Testa Simonson reviewed the various changes and increases to the FY24 budget both in personnel and expenses.

The two significant increases in the expense budget were for the department to contract a Medical Director to sign standing orders and provide medical consultations. Prior to FY23 this was an expense covered by the School Department and is no longer an option. \$3,000 has been added for this activity. An additional \$11,000 has been added to provide Shingrix vaccine to elders without insurance.

Ms Testa Simonson reviewed the increase in the personnel budget. The director intends to hire an additional fulltime environmental health agent and a fulltime social worker. Mr Izzo and Ms Testa Simonson reviewed the recent agreement with the Housing Authority to supply some shared funding for a new fulltime social worker hire. The bulk of the social worker's position will be based at the Wellesley Housing Authority; however, this individual will also work with the Council on Aging and the Health Department. This posting is to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Board of Health voted to approve the budget. Marcia Testa Simonson will prepare a presentation for the Advisory Committee reviewed by the Board at the next meeting.

3. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku-Gardner
Administrator