

Wellesley Board of Health  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
Meeting Minutes  
February 1, 2021  
12:00 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:

Wanda Alvarez, Community Social Worker  
Jessica Cliff, Environmental Health Specialist  
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:

Bob Brown, Editor, The Swellesley Report  
John Brown, Athletics Director, Wellesley Public Schools  
Jamie Chisum, Principal, Wellesley High School  
Linda Chow, Chair, Wellesley School Committee  
Shira Doron, MD, Resident  
John Lanza, Liaison, Advisory Committee  
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools  
Melissa Martin, Member, Wellesley School Committee  
Marie Taylor, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM

The Board of Health approved the following set of minutes:

1-27-2021

Citizen Speak:

No one was in attendance who wished to participate in Citizen Speak.

1. Administration
2. Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) Cases and Dashboard

Dr. David Lussier provided an update on case counts at WPS. There were nine cases last week; four identified through surveillance testing and five through community screening.

Dr. Lussier reported on the dashboard webinar last Thursday, noting 270 people joined. He said they presented a proposal of a recalibrated dashboard, noting its inclusion of districtwide data, as well classroom information. He believes it will be informative for the community. Dr. Lussier said the proposal will be forwarded to the Joint Health and Safety Committee for final approval. Dr. Lussier thanked Dr. Doron and Dr. Marcia Testa Simonson (among others) for their input on the dashboard metrics.

b) COVID-19 Update – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) -Vaccine

Dr. Lussier reported there are many questions on the timing of vaccinations for educators in Phase II. He said it is governed by a statewide approach. They are exploring their options.

c) COVID-19 Update – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) – Athletics

Dr. Lussier reported the State has proposed an additional season for sports, entitled, Fall 2 Season 2020-2021. This would include cheerleading (sideline), volleyball and football. Dr. Lussier would like approval of the plan (and any recommendations from the Board of Health), before it is presented to the School Committee.

John Brown, director of athletics for WPS provided slides detailing the Fall 2 Season 2020-2021 plan:

Slide 1:

**Approval Timeline**

The timeline for state-level approvals of Fall 2 sport guidelines are as follows:

Jan 18-22 MIAA Sport Committees-determined modifications

Jan 25-27 Sports Medicine – Approved all Fall 2 modifications

Jan 28 COVID Task Force – Approved the Sports Medicine recommendations

Jan 29 MIAA Board of Director – Approved all modifications and recommendations

Slide 2:

### **Fall II Season 2020-2021**

Practices expected to begin on February 22nd

Games beginning approximately two weeks later, running through April 25<sup>th</sup>.  
The proposed schedule ends April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Competition within the league is expected to be similar to the fall and winter

No out of league competition/No MIAA tournament

Slide 3:

### **Safety Considerations**

Restrictions and Modifications

- Team benches distanced, assigned seats for each player
- Designated mask break areas
- Locker room restrictions
- Assigned seating on buses

Will work with Town officials on spectator policy with the plan to have no spectators inside school buildings and limitations outdoors

EEA, MIAA and Bay State Conference modifications

- NFHS COVID-19 course for coaches
- Limited roster sizes

- Increased spacing
- Disinfect shared equipment and bench areas
- Buffer time between sessions

Slide 4:

### **Scope of Programming**

Boys and Girls Indoor Track (outside)

Girls Volleyball

Cheerleading (sideline only)

Football

No Middle School Athletics

John Brown said masks are mandated for every sport, even during football practices and games. Mr. Brown stated his concern about those that go outside of town (and out of state) to play club sports.

Vivian Zeng reported on the ten-page MIAA modifications document, noting it includes information on spacing, social/physical distancing, sideline cheerleading, the 45-player limit, as well as a six-coach limit. Marcia Testa Simonson said it also includes cold weather resources.

Leonard Izzo said an education campaign is needed for parents signing their children up for sports; to clarify the procedures and possible ramifications when there is a positive case identified. Contact tracing would ensue and the entire team may have to be quarantined.

Shira Doron referenced an opinion piece in JAMA, authored by three from the CDC, which indicated their value of in person class-time over sports. Dr. Doron said sports may be important for a child's well-being, and while there may be increased risk in sports (especially between athlete-athlete) and resulting quarantines, they don't have to result in building or community transmission.

Shepard Cohen made a motion to approve/endorse the plan presented; Marcia Testa Simonson seconded and Linda Oliver Grape approved.

d) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley provided a case update. The weekend was busy, with new cases from Babson College, including a basketball player, which resulted in a quarantine of the entire team. Since the last update, there have been approximately 30 cases in the community and 15 from college campuses, mainly through household spread. Ms. McCauley noted one hospitalization of a senior, although she did not know the reason. Marcia Testa Simonson said hospitalization rates peaked in January and the positivity rate is going down.

e) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

Ms. McCauley reported that she, nursing staff and other staff have engaged in PrepMod training, the system used for COVID-19 vaccination clinic operations. Their goal is to become proficient, so they may use it at upcoming clinics.

Ms. McCauley reported residents and staff at the long-term care facilities have received their vaccinations. She noted that one facility had positive cases during the week they were immunized.

Leonard Izzo reported on the collaboration between COA, Health and the Town's Communication and Project Manager, Stephanie Hawkinson to help seniors 75+ navigate the State's complicated system to obtain appointments. Mr. Izzo, Joyce Saret and Cheryl Lefman reported on the new call center at the COA, staffed by volunteers, as well as staff, to help seniors make appointments for vaccination. Daily news briefings to their list-serve, as well as the community in general, have resulted in some success, as well as mitigation of anxiety. Mr. Izzo requested that COA maintain a list of home-bound residents, or those otherwise needing assistance to obtain a vaccination. Mr. Izzo is awaiting guidance from the State about home-bound individuals.

f) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics – Age Restricted Congregate Housing

Leonard Izzo reported on his conversations with Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) Director Sean Barnicle and WHA Board Chair Maura Renzella about a State program to offer age-restricted clinics to those in low

income, senior housing. Housing authorities may partner with a healthcare facility or with their local health department to offer clinics. Mr. Izzo relayed willingness (of the Health Department) to partner with them. Mr. Izzo noted the request must be brought forth from both the WHA and Health Department, and signed by WHA. It will go into effect when those 65+ become eligible, possibly by the end of February or into March.

g) Social Work

Joyce Saret provided an update on the virtual chat on self-care with Health Department social workers held Thursday, January 28, 2021 from 1:00-2:00 PM. Ms. Saret said a small number of people attended (several canceled or were no-shows). They had a useful conversation and she followed up with participants about future offerings. Ms. Saret said they wish to offer additional programming.

h) Terminology

Leonard Izzo reported on a request by a resident to change terminology used throughout messaging vehicles – from “social” distancing to “physical” distancing. Cheryl Lefman summarized past efforts to incorporate this change, noting that many pre-made signs, as well as nomenclature on sites such as CDC, reference “social” distancing, which makes it difficult to solidify the reference as “physical” distancing.

i) Advisory Committee

Shepard Cohen reiterated the Board will present its budget to the Advisory Committee on February 24, 2021.

This meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on February 3, 2021, 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman

Community Health Coordinator