

Wellesley Board of Health  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
Meeting Minutes  
March 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, LSW, Community Social Worker  
Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist  
Deadra Doku Gardner, MS, Administrator  
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director  
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator  
Joyce Saret, LICSW, Senior Community Social Worker  
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Linda Chow, Chair, School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools  
Linda Corridan, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools  
Shira Doron, MD, Resident  
Hillary Drew, Wellesley Theatre Project  
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools  
Melissa Martin School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools  
Anne Perkin, Resident  
Ellen Subramaniam, Resident  
Beth Sullivan Woods, Member, Select Board

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 PM

Citizen Speak

Ellen Subramaniam reported she recently emailed the Board of Health (BOH) and asked them to review a document from the Public Schools of Brookline, *Evidence of Scientific Consensus in Support of Reduction of 6-Foot Distancing Parameters*. Ms. Subramaniam reviewed her concerns and asked the BOH to weigh-in on the following topics in relation to Wellesley Public Schools:

- 3' vs. 6' distance requirement
- Teacher vaccinations
- Surveillance testing
- Education regarding unnecessary fear and anxiety

Hillary Drew of Wellesley Theatre Project requested guidance on upcoming outdoor theatre programs and productions. She will contact Leonard Izzo directly.

## 1. Community Health

### a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley was not present at today's meeting. Leonard Izzo provided a COVID-19 update, noting there has been an uptick of cases, with an average of (approximately) 8 cases per day in the last week.

Linda Corridan reported on students who recently tested positive, noting that the Wellesley Public School nursing staff conducts the contact tracing working closely with nurses at the Health Department. Ms. Corridan reported that some of the students were asymptomatic, some cases were through family-based transmission and others were related to travel over the school vacation week.

### b) COVID-19 – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS)

David Lussier reported that last week there were 17 positive cases in the WPS. He noted they were most likely connected to travel during February school vacation. All but two of the cases were students in the secondary schools.

Dr. Lussier reported that the Commissioner of the Board of Education (BOE) is expected to present a proposal to the BOE on Friday March 5, 2021. The proposal is expected to present the guidelines for all districts to start full-time with students in the classroom on April 1, 2021. Dr. Lussier anticipates this will be a unified plan for the entire State.

Dr. Lussier hopes that teachers can receive their first shot in March. As noted at the last BOH meeting, the first dose is essential in the WPS reopening plans.

Dr. Lussier reported that the joint Health and Safety Committee approved the updated dashboard which is now posted. In addition, he noted a meeting is being planned to include the Health Director to discuss WPS end of year activities.

Dr Shira Doron reported that she attended the Board of Education meeting last week and provided testimony on the science around the 3' vs. 6' distancing in the classroom. She said that in-school transmissions do not have to be affected by the community transmission rates. A letter was sent by the medical community to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support this information. Dr. Doron reviewed the context of Commissioner Riley's presentation last Tuesday.

David Lussier responded to Linda Oliver Grape's inquiry regarding the status of preschoolers and space concerns within WPS. Dr. Lussier reported that the PAWS program schedule varies with half-day and full-day programs. The school is able to follow its pre pandemic schedule.

Dr. Lussier reported that space is particularly challenging at the secondary level, at the Middle School, and especially at the High School. Movement around the schools is challenging. This is evident if anyone has been to the High School (pre-pandemic) in between class periods; students are shoulder to shoulder in the hallways. Considerations will have to be made around school arrival, and dismissal however the greatest issue will be with the physical classrooms at the Middle and High school which are small. There are multiple space challenges such as how to set up spaces for particular courses. In addition, WPS must consider the group of students (at the High School) that are over age 18, who take classes with younger students. This becomes a challenge to manage, as the students who are technically adults, must be separated from younger students.

Dr. Lussier highlighted various challenges WPS is facing including utilizing spaces differently, shortening lunch breaks and managing furniture in order to adhere to the 3-foot rule.

#### c) COVID-19 Vaccine and Clinics

Marcia Testa Simonson reported on the status of the vaccine. There continues to be issues with scheduling of vaccine appointments, as well with the PrepMod system. Dr. Testa Simonson noted, there are currently 60,000 doses being shipped to the Commonwealth per week and hopes more will become available in the coming weeks.

She noted that as of last Saturday, approximately 95% of the 75 and older population have been vaccinated.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that the Johnson and Johnson single dose vaccine was approved (under EUA) by the FDA.

Leonard Izzo reported the Health Department will be receiving 100 doses of Moderna vaccine from the Federal Pharmacy Program. This vaccine is specified for those in age-restricted and low-income housing. A clinic for these residents is scheduled for Friday, March 5, 2021.

Dr. Doron reported that Tufts Medical Center expects a shipment of 2000 doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, as well as doses of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. She said pharmacists are nervous about the potential for error, drawing up the wrong vaccine for the wrong person. Patients will not be given a choice of vaccines.

Linda Oliver Grape said that anyone receiving a vaccine should take a photo of their vaccination card in case the card is misplaced. Going forward we do not know how these cards will be used to provide proof of vaccination.

d) Social Services/Mental Health

As noted at the last meeting, Shepard Cohen is gathering a group of mental health professionals to discuss how to leverage and expand upon existing mental health resources to meet the student mental health challenges. At today's meeting, Mr. Cohen said he is working with Mark Kline of Human Relations Service to coordinate and schedule a date.

Wanda Alvarez reported that she and Joyce Saret continue to provide support and resources to the community, schools etc. A support group was held on Friday and went very well.

Cheryl Lefman reported that the Mental Health Resource Guide has been updated and posted on the Health Department website.

e) Newton Wellesley Hospital Update

Shepard Cohen reported on an upcoming meeting with Newton Wellesley Hospital. The meeting is to include local health directors and board of health members. He expects this meeting to be held the second or third week of March 2021.

2. Environmental Health

a) Tobacco Regulations

Leonard Izzo reported that a draft set of regulations will be reviewed at the upcoming board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

Jessica Cliff reported that she has been in touch with the School Resource Officers (SRO) regarding vaping in the schools.

b) Babson College

Vivian Zeng reported there have been several calls from Babson College regarding their annual Spring Day event, which includes food trucks and games. This is a large event and that the organizers may need to present details to the Board of Health for approval given the number students they are intending to host. The event is scheduled for April 2021.

c) Food Establishments

Vivian Zeng reported that effective today, restaurants are permitted to increase their capacity, however tables must continue to be spaced 6 feet apart. She is working with the Select Board office so that restaurants will be able to increase space for outdoor dining.

3. Administration

a) Select Board

Shepard Cohen reported he will be attending the Select Board meeting this evening as it will be Marjorie Frieman's last meeting as Select Board Chair. The Board of Health wishes her well.

b) Summer Camps

Leonard Izzo reported the state has approved the operation of overnight camps. Mr. Izzo addressed the use of field use and the use of a bus to provide shelter.

Beth Sullivan Woods is working with Recreation Director, Matt Chin on a plan for transportation funding for children attending camp programs.

This meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on March 3, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner

Administrator