

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 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:

Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist
Deadra Doku Gardner, MS, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, LICSW, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Bob Brown, The Swellesley Report
Linda Chow, Chair, School Committee, Wellesley Public Schools
Linda Corridan, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools
Shira Doron, MD, Resident
David Lussier, Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools
Lloyd Tarlin, MD, Resident, former Board member

The following meeting minutes were approved: March 3, 2021, March 8, 2021, March 10, 2021

1. Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that since the last meeting on Wednesday, March, 10, 2021, there have been 5 confirmed cases at Babson College and 11 in the community. Three of the community cases are young adults residing outside of Wellesley.

Ann Marie McCauley reported that suspect cases have started to come in from doctors who are testing vaccinated individuals for antibodies. Dr. Shira Doron reported that there is an obsession to find out if the vaccine is working, but the tests doctors are using don't work; they should be using the (S) Spike Protein antibody test and they aren't.

b) Babson College – COVID-19 Update

At the last meeting, Leonard Izzo and Vivian Zeng reported on their meeting with Babson College regarding increases in COVID cases on campus, as well as planned social events. Mr. Izzo reported that the Health Department staff is in contact with several Babson departments (health, food, programming) on an ongoing basis. Mr. Izzo said he will be having weekly calls with Erin Carcia, Mary Rose and Polly McCabe from Babson College.

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

David Lussier reported on last Thursday's (3/11/21) webinar. There were more than 500 people in attendance to learn about the science behind reopening of the schools, as well as the operation plans for the next month. Dr. Lussier said there will be another webinar for parents of students in third through fifth grades this Thursday. The webinar will provide information on how to participate in weekly pool testing.

Dr. Lussier reported four new cases last week; 2 were identified from external testing and 2 from surveillance testing.

Dr. Lussier reported that as of this morning, approximately 400 school staff have been vaccinated.

Dr. Lussier reported that the elementary schools will return to full in-person learning on April 5, 2021. The State has finalized a plan for middle school children to return to school by April 28th however, Dr. Lussier anticipates that Wellesley Middle School students will return prior to that date. He noted they are looking at dates for all grade levels (including the High School) to return.

Dr Lussier inquired as to how the administration should address non-classroom space. Leonard Izzo said they should review each school separately. Mr. Izzo will contact the State to determine exactly how non-classroom spaces should be addressed, as the guidance is not the same as business occupancy guidance.

Dr. Lussier reported that two surveys are going out to the WPS community in the next few days; 1) to determine what parents' expectations and questions are when their children transition to full in-person learning, and 2) a form will be sent out asking parents for their decision on whether they will send their child/children back or opt-out.

d) Office Occupancy

Leonard Izzo reported that the guidelines of business office capacity is currently at 50% of pre-COVID capacity. Marcia Testa Simonson reported that another guideline is 10 individuals per 1000 square feet and cited the following example; If you have a 4000 square foot area you can have 40 people there as long as they are spaced six feet apart.

Mr. Izzo noted the guidance still indicates that if you do not have to be in an office you should continue to work remotely.

e) COVID-19 Vaccine, Clinics and Homebound Populations

Ann Marie McCauley reported the vaccination clinic held at the Health Department last Thursday went well. Leonard Izzo said he received complimentary emails in regards to the clinic.

Ms. McCauley reported she completed the State's homebound survey. She has been vaccinating homebound individuals with remaining doses after the clinics.

Ms. McCauley reported that the State requires minimum vaccine orders for the homebound population of 100 doses, which must be used within ten days or returned to the state. There are not 100 homebound individuals that she is aware of in the community, therefore she would not be able to use the full allocation of 100 doses. Linda Oliver Grape suggested that Ms. McCauley might work with surrounding communities to share 100 doses. Leonard Izzo said sharing the vaccine with surrounding communities is not an option due to travel considerations and vaccine handling.

Leonard Izzo reiterated that the State is not going to allow Wellesley to host a large local vaccination clinic primarily because the community is within a 40-minute drive of three mass vaccination sites. Cheryl Lefman said the Norfolk County 8 (that includes Wellesley) regional clinic application is the lowest on the list as there many resources in close proximity to their communities including: mass vaccination sites, regional clinics, and pharmacies. She noted the application would most likely not be approved.

- f) The Board of Health reviewed an email from a concerned resident regarding the lack of vaccine for DPW employees. Shepard Cohen will respond to the resident and explain that this is not a Town decision and comes from the State. Social Services/Mental Health

Shepard Cohen reported that the meeting of mental health and social service providers is scheduled for March 19th at 2:30pm. The meeting will focus on determining how to best fill gaps in services for students and how to leverage and expand resources.

2. Environmental Health

a) Regulations

Lenny Izzo reported that a draft set of tobacco regulations are still being reviewed by Town Counsel.

All regulations are in the process of being updated.

b) Food Services and Volunteer locations

Jessica Cliff reported that there have been no new issues at this time.

3. Administration

a) Newton Wellesley Hospital

Shepard Cohen reported that there is a Newton-Wellesley Hospital Community Benefits meeting this week.

This meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on March 17, 2021, 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner

Administrator