

Wellesley Board of Health  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
Meeting Minutes  
March 29, 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  
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  
Beth Sullivan Woods, Member, Select Board

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 PM.

The following meeting minutes were approved: March 24, 2021.

Citizen Speak

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

## 1. Community Health

### a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that the number of positive cases continues to increase in the State and Town, and noted that Wellesley is now averaging five new cases per day. She reported that there were thirteen new cases over the weekend.

Ms. McCauley reported that testing is picking up many new mild and asymptomatic cases. The age range of cases is between 14 and 21 years old. There have been some cases between the ages of 52 and 62.

Dr. Shira Doran reported that there is a concerning uptick in cases across the State, however the rate of hospitalizations remains flat.

### b) COVID 19 - Town Athletics

Leonard Izzo reported on non-school athletics, noting that club sports seem to be more problematic than school sports. He said data indicates that transmission is occurring during games and practices, rather than at outside activities. He noted that during the Friday, March 26 Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) call, Dr. Katie Brown (MDPH) reported that the highest number of cases were in the 16-21 age group. This group is attending social gatherings and events related to athletics and some families are driving together to games and practices. Mr. Izzo reported that he continues to receive complaints about lack of masks being used and people not following social distancing protocols at athletic events.

### c) Babson College – COVID-19 Update

Leonard Izzo reported on his weekly Thursday meeting with Babson College administration. They discussed the Babson College graduation plan with approximately 450 students graduating. There will be no guests allowed. The plans and policies around the graduation are sound and he does not anticipate any issues.

### d) COVID-19 – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) – Athletics

Ann Marie McCauley reported on a recent picture in the Wellesley Townsman of the Wellesley High School football team showing them huddled together with none of the players properly wearing a mask.

Leonard Izzo and Linda Oliver Grape reported that the Board of Health had supported and voted in favor of seasonal athletics as long as there was strict adherence to guidelines. The recent photo has generated concern regarding non-compliance. The Board agreed that school administrators must reinforce compliance of the standards. David Lussier reported that Dr. Jamie Chisum and John Brown have been and will continue to reinforce messaging around the importance of wearing masks.

Cheryl Lefman reported that messaging went out in last Friday's Community Briefing regarding guidelines and reinforced the use of masks.

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

David Lussier reported there have been four new cases since last week, identified through community screening. They indicated house-hold transmission (there was no in-school transmission).

Dr. Lussier reviewed the WPS COVID dashboard data, noting the fourth consecutive week of improvement in case numbers. The dashboard reflected a positive trajectory with all metric categories in green.

Dr. Lussier said 65% of the staff have received at least one dose of vaccine. There was a designated vaccination clinic for educators last Saturday (3/27/21) and additional clinics for educators are scheduled over the next several weekends.

At a previous meeting, Dr. Lussier reported on the WPS full in-person classroom opening timeline and plans. Elementary schools will be the first to convert to full in-person learning on April 5.

Dr. Lussier reported that the School Committee will provide full school in-person opening details at their meeting scheduled tomorrow evening (March 30, 2021). He noted that lunch period has been difficult to address space-wise and therefore, it has been determined that WHS will be dismissing students at 1:30 pm with a "grab and go" lunch; this will be done so they will not lose any classroom instructional time. Both the elementary schools and WMS will have a lunch period outside with an indoor option for inclement weather.

Lenny Izzo addressed concern about those who will travel over the April school vacation period. Ann Marie McCauley reported that mandated travel guidance is now just a travel advisory. Dr. Doron said there used to be a map with states' risk level, and that map is no longer being generated. Overall, there are no riskier places to be than here in Massachusetts and New England due to the increase in cases. Linda

Oliver Grape suggested that families returning from vacation may want to be tested on Friday prior to returning to school on Monday.

Dr. Lussier reported that grades 3, 4 and 5 will begin saliva testing with samples being submitted today. This will add 900 students to the testing pool. Testing will continue through the end of the academic year. Linda Chow stressed the importance of reinforcing messaging around testing, even as more people are being vaccinated, as much needs to be learned about variants.

Dr. Doron reported on the close contact guidelines. She noted that the three feet standard only applies to schools, however the guidance outside of schools remains six feet. She said that some states have decreased the guidelines everywhere, however Lenny Izzo does not believe the guidelines will change in the State.

Linda Corridan reported on students who are traveling internationally and will attend WPS. She noted that she has been working with Ann Marie McCauley regarding a student from Denmark who will begin school on Monday. Both agree that they would like to see the district require COVID testing prior to attending school.

Leonard Izzo reported that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will be providing prom guidance next week. Graduation plans have been finalized.

f) Vaccine and Clinics

Ann Marie McCauley reported that she will be receiving second doses for residents in senior public housing. The State's homebound vaccine program is expected to begin this week. She noted there are strict parameters for those that wished to be vaccinated through this program.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA) has been contracted by the State to vaccinate homebound individuals in certain communities. Individuals may call a designated number to answer screening questions and register as a homebound resident for vaccination. The State will then refer those eligible residents to the CCA. Ann Marie McCauley will contact the Council on Aging to notify them that they may be receiving calls about this program.

g) Wellesley's Wonderful Weekend and the Boston Marathon

Beth Sullivan Woods reported that Wellesley's Wonderful Weekend has been moved to October 3, 2021 and the Boston Marathon is scheduled to take place over Columbus Day weekend (October 11, 2021).

#### h) Social Services/Mental Health

Shepard Cohen reported that he will complete draft of a report from the Friday, March 19 Mental Health and Social Services meeting. Mr. Cohen said the report will include recommendations to seek funding to provide additional social service/behavioral health staff, especially going into the summer. Professionals in the field are in high demand and are not readily available in the community; therefore, WPS and the Board of Health need to fill the gaps.

Joyce Saret reported that she is gearing up for additional programs and services and will gauge how best to provide support. Ms. Saret stated that she speaks with Kate Burnham at the Council on Aging (COA) twice a week and she is the one to best identify the needs of seniors in the community.

Wanda Alvarez reported that she continues to work with some families and residents at Barton Road. Some are working with social workers from school or the COA, and she assists with those same individuals and families.

Joyce Saret reported on an open Resident Services Coordinator position at Wellesley Housing Authority. The rate of compensation is making it challenging to fill the position.

## 2. Environmental Health

### a) Pools

Vivian Zeng reported that Boston Sports Club will not be applying for outdoor pool permits.

### b) Camps

Vivian Zeng reported on meeting with camps, and she will be discussing Morses Pond next week.

### c) Tobacco

Jessica Cliff reported on her meeting with Town Counsel regarding the draft tobacco regulations.

### d) Outdoor Seating at Restaurants

Vivian Zeng reported that those restaurants that applied for permission to provide outdoor seating will be opening April 1st.

3. Administration

a) Board of Health Meetings

The Board of Health (BOH) has agreed to reduce the meeting schedule to one day per week. Until further notice, the BOH meetings will be held on Mondays at 12:00 noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on April 5, 2021, 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner

Administrator