

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
May 3, 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:

John Brown, Director of Athletics, Wellesley Public Schools
Jamie Chisum, Principal, Wellesley High School
Linda Corridan, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools
Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Lloyd Tarlin, MD, Resident and former Board of Health Member
Beth Sullivan Woods, Member, Select Board

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

The following meeting minutes were approved: April 26, 2021

1. Administration

- a) Marijuana Dispensary – Beth Sullivan Woods reported that several residents have requested to speak during tonight's Select Board meeting to voice their opposition to permit a marijuana dispensary at the Wellesley and Natick town-line. Carol Hannenberg reported that there are many Natick residents who are also opposed.

2. Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that the number of COVID cases are decreasing, now averaging less than two cases per day. Ms. McCauley said cases from Babson College are also decreasing, as many of the students have left campus. Ms. McCauley and Linda Corridan noted that this week's case reports will indicate whether a spike in cases has resulted from those that traveled during April school vacation.

b) COVID-19 Restrictions and Guidelines

Marcia Testa Simonson reported that mask restrictions have been loosened. Face coverings will not be required outside in public when people can be physically distanced. Leonard Izzo reported there has been confusion caused by the language of the new guidelines. Dr. Doron noted the language should have said that masks should be worn outside, when you're in a crowd. Mr. Izzo said the change in guidelines has resulted in a flood of requests for activities, programs and camps which require a submission of COVID plans for review by the Health Department. Dr. Doron said that the outdoor mask requirement should have never been implemented, as the science indicates that transmission does not occur outside.

Leonard Izzo reported that the Health Department has received a Freedom of Information Act request from a group regarding how many citations and fines (related to COVID) have been issued. The Health Department has not issued any fines or citations, maintaining their position that it is better to educate than to fine.

c) COVID-19 Vaccination – Survey for Housing

Joyce Saret reported that she has conducted a survey of housing residents to determine if there are any barriers to obtaining a vaccination. There is a population that is waiting or is not planning on become vaccinated. She is working on messaging to the housing population offering assistance. Ms. Saret noted Health Department initiated transportation arrangements to vaccination sites has been confirmed and at least one resident will be using this mode to obtain a vaccination.

d) Babson College – COVID-19 Update

Linda Oliver Grape reiterated the importance of contacting local colleges (Babson, Wellesley and MassBay) in early summer to discuss school reopening plans and immunization mandates.

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

Linda Corridan reported that there were three cases in the WPS last week as a result of travel during school vacation. Ms. Corridan said that saliva samples are being sent out today.

Leonard Izzo reported that plans have been submitted by WPS for events, such as the annual senior scavenger hunt, car wash and others; these activities are being reviewed on a case-by- case basis.

Wellesley Public Schools – Team Sports

John Brown reported on a survey sent to the Dual County League and Tri-Valley League to gauge how many of their member communities have approved wrestling. Dual County reported that 8 are not running wrestling programs, 2 are, and 1 is a maybe. Tri-Valley: the majority are not running wrestling programs, 4 are, and he is awaiting additional data from other communities.

f) Sports Tournaments

Vivian Zeng reported that the restrictions on sporting tournaments will be eliminated on May 10th. Details will be reported as they become available.

g) Social Services/Mental Health

Ms. Saret is working on securing a program and speaker on depression and mental health for WPS.

Wanda Alvarez reported that she has reached out to Jon Mattleman to discuss the possibility of offering a suicide prevention program in September.

Shepard Cohen reported on his meeting with Mark Kline, who is leaving Human Relations Services at the end of June. Mr. Cohen reported that the agency has hired an executive search firm to assist in the recruitment of the director.

3. Environmental Health

a) Tobacco Regulations

Leonard Izzo reported that a legal posting will be provided to the Townsman notifying the public of the Board of Health meeting at which a vote will be taken to accept the draft regulations as permanent. The date of the meeting has not been determined.

b) Summer Camps

Vivian Zeng reported that several applications for new camps have started to come in, including soccer and basketball camps from Curry College. These camps intend on operating at Babson College. Mr. Izzo reported that this is surprising as the Health Department had been told that the College would be limiting the number of individuals on campus this summer. Mr. Izzo will be addressing his concern at his weekly meeting with Babson on Thursday.

Linda Oliver Grape suggested that during his meeting, Mr. Izzo express his surprise that the College is entertaining these types of events, and the Health Department will scrutinize the programs, as safety is a paramount concern.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on May 10, 2021, 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Deadra Doku Gardner

Administrator