

Town of Wellesley  
Board of Health Meeting (online remote)  
Meeting Minutes  
Friday, July 15, 2022, 11:00 AM

**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:**

Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator  
Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator  
Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Health  
Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator  
Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director  
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nursing Supervisor  
Wanda Alvarez, Community Social Worker  
Joyce Saret, MSW, Senior Community Social Worker  
Steve Calichman, Environmental Health

**In attendance:**

David Cohen, Director, Department of Public Works  
Shira Doron, MD, Resident  
Diane Soderholm, resident

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 AM

The Board of Health approved the minutes of June 15, 2022.

**Citizen Speak**

Diane Soderholm reported that the Planning Board approved space for a new biolab tenant at 53 Worcester Street. Ms. Soderholm urged the Town of Wellesley to put into place regulations similar to 90 other cities and towns in MA. Ms. Soderholm strongly suggests that Wellesley follows their lead and immediately create a committee to review the regulations and permitting process to protect the health and safety of Wellesley residents.

## **Chairman's Report**

Shep Cohen inquired about recent passage of state legislation regarding improvements and funding for local public health. Dr. Testa Simonson explained that there are programs and funds to do with ARPA and other excellence grants that towns can engage in but there is nothing new funding-wise. Lenny Izzo reported that there are shared services via NC-8, but he was not aware of anything new other than opioid settlement money. Lenny Izzo also reported that OLRH has a webinar scheduled for 8/11 about regarding the settlement.

## **Community Health**

### **a) COVID update/planning**

Anne Marie McCauley reported on the new case numbers for the previous two weeks. There is a slight uptick in cases, but people are not as sick as the current strain is less virulent. Dr. Doron noted that the current variant may not be more contagious and shared information about the current variant(s) and potential for major illness and hospitalization. Dr. Doron noted that there is no actual 3<sup>rd</sup> booster now but there may be a booster in the fall.

Dr. Doron inquired about summer camp cases and international students at college campus summer camps. Lenny Izzo reported a handful of cases but no spread within camps and that the Health Department is not receiving many calls, only a few regarding planning for school and summer camps. Mr. Izzo reported that there are plans to reach out to Babson and Wellesley and Mass Bay in August to understand their plans with regards to COVID and their issues of concern.

Shep Cohen requested that Jhana Wallace prepare a community wide communication describing the Department's current plans for COVID including data monitoring, clinics, masking and other mitigation efforts. Lenny Izzo noted that the Department is planning to send out a briefing early next week with a covid update and will reach out to the Board of Health for input on messaging.

Dr. Doron mentioned that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has not put out testing recommendations and we will likely no longer have any testing programs in next school year. Symptomatic testing may be recommended for all schools and higher ed.

Lenny Izzo reported that the Department has test kits and gave them out to the community including Town of Wellesley staff, local agencies and faith-based organizations. About 1400 were also distributed to food service providers.

### **b) Mental Health**

Joyce Saret reported on her meeting with the assistant principal at the high school to discuss ways to collaborate. Specific areas of interest are substance use prevention and alternative healthy activities for kids.

Joyce Saret reported that Human Relations Services is well-staffed and able to support the community needs.

Wanda Alvarez reported that she continues meetings with Housing Authority residents to provide support and referrals.

Linda Oliver Grape reported that tomorrow (7/16/22) the national 988 number for the Suicide Prevention Hotline will be live. The number may not be fully operational so the Department should hold off on major promotion and await information from DPH. Additional information will be provided at a later date.

## **Environmental Health Update**

### a) PFAS update and Fluoride update

David Cohen, Director, Department of Public Works, delivered an update and report on the PFAS issue at Morses pond:

- The new interim system became operational on June 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Tests were non-detectable for PFAS compounds. However, the EPA issued interim health advisories for PFAS including 4 specific compounds with advisory levels-two of which are much lower than DEP. DPW is unable to test for those low levels so they are awaiting guidance from DEP. DPW has a plan for but has delayed permanent treatment at Morses while waiting for interim system performance and the EPA regulations.
- DPW has a PFAS page on their website with information.
- Ms. Oliver Grape inquired about Wellesley College water use and water pressure. Mr. Cohen reported that water pressure should improve once Wellesley College goes off the system but also noted that there were pressure concerns the previous week. Mr. Cohen explained why alternating days for limited use are important and not watering on Mondays is helpful as alternating gives the system recovery time to fill tanks and helps pressure.

Dave Cohen provided an update on the fluoride supply. Mr. Cohen noted that there is currently an ample supply however he is sensing a squeeze in the coming months due to supply chain issues. Lenny Izzo noted that Wellesley does not want to move away from fluoride.

### b) Environmental Health update

Vivian Zeng provided an update on the following:

- Food borne illnesses reported through MAVEN
- Summer camps
- Restaurants

### **Administration**

- a) The Board discussed the timeline for upcoming meetings. Ms. Testa Simonson requested a clear agenda ahead of time and that the Board meetings focus on action items for the Board of Health. Shep Cohen noted that he felt Department staff updates were also important.

Potential upcoming agenda items were identified to assist with meeting date planning. Deadra Doku Gardner suggested that school COVID planning be addressed in August and additional emergency sessions can be called if needed.

Ms. Oliver Grape requested that the issue of the upcoming biolab be addressed soon as the health and safety aspect is Department oversight. Ms. Oliver Grape suggested that the Board have the biolab developers come in and do a presentation to assess the need for regulations or other decisions. Dr. Testa Simonson agreed and noted that any regulation would have to be moved on as a Board. Dr. Testa Simonson asked that the biolab be added to the next meeting agenda and the Department review regulations from other communities in preparation. Lenny Izzo noted that three- or four-weeks' time may be needed to schedule a presentation and review regulations.

- b) Lenny Izzo noted that the remote meeting process was approved by the Legislature through 12/15/23. Remote meetings can continue moving forward. Shep Cohen noted that he prefers in-person or hybrid meetings.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for August 2, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator