



Needham Public Health Division



Board of Health Meeting Minutes DRAFT

Date: January 17, 2023

Location: Rosemary Recreation Complex – Multi-Purpose Room, 178 Rosemary St., Needham MA 02494 OR via Zoom

Members: Edward Cosgrove, PhD, Chair; Kathleen Ward Brown, ScD, Member; Robert A. Partridge, MD, MPH, Member; Stephen Epstein, MD, MPP, Member

Staff Present: Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health, and Human Services; Tara Gurge, Assistant Director of Public Health; Tiffany Zike, Assistant Director of Public Health; Hanna Burnett; Lynn Schoeff; Ally Littlefield; Diana Acosta; Carol Read; Julie McCarthy; Taleb Abdelrahim; Michael Lethin; Cindi Melanson; and Karen Mullen.

Welcome and Public Comment Period

Dr. Cosgrove called the meeting to order at 9:00AM and initiated a roll call. Present were Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, and Dr. Partridge – Y.

According to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, as an act relative to extending certain states of emergency accommodations, as passed by the General Court, and signed into law, Acting Governor Karyn Polito, on July 16 2022, revised Section 20 of Chapter 20, the Acts of 2001. In so doing, provided modifications to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, which allow for flexibility to hold remote only, and hybrid meetings, while preserving public access and, where appropriate, public participation. Currently, that additional flexibility will expire on March 31, 2023, unless additional legislative action occurs. As part of today's hybrid meeting, all votes will occur via a roll call.

There was no public comment at this time.

Review of Minutes – December 16, 2022

The Board agreed to table a motion on the December 16, 2022, minutes until its next meeting.

Staff Reports and COVID update

Emergency Management – Michael Lethin



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Mr. Lethin stated that the Needham Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was substantially revised. The updates were presented at the Local Emergency Planning Committee and the Plan was signed into effect. He noted that Needham was reimbursed \$277,260.12 in FEMA Public Assistance for costs incurred during the January 2022 blizzard. He explained that Massachusetts has become an OSHA designated state, meaning that municipalities are now required to comply with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act by reporting hazardous chemical inventory to the Local Emergency Planning Committee and Fire Department.

Emergency Preparedness – Tiffany Zike & Taleb Abdelrahim

Mr. Abdelrahim explained that the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) drafted an evaluation survey to measure volunteer training interests. The group also began working to set up a training regarding operating pet shelters during emergency situations. The MRC participated in the NC-8 December MRC Advisory group meeting. The Emergency Preparedness Public Health Safety group began working on the COVID After Action Reports 1 & 2 (Improvement Plan portion). The group also reviewed what kind of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training labs should have.

Substance Use Prevention MassCALL3 grant Dedham, Needham, Walpole, Westwood – Carol Read

Ms. Read introduced Lydia Cunningham, as the new Substance Use Prevention Program Coordinator. Ms. Read explained that she works with the Massachusetts Alcohol Policy Coalition regarding alcohol policy and advocating at the state level. There is no current legislation, but the groups are working on an All Call status report for Massachusetts. This tool can be used for local prevention and public health. This report will be presented.

Substance Use Prevention – Karen Mullen

Ms. Mullen stated that at the SPAN Winter quarterly meeting, December 15th, speaker Karen Brisbois of Prevention Solutions presented, "Prevention Coalitions: Making an Impact". Twelve coalition members attended. She stated that, in December, 28 youth advocates contributed 52 hours of service in Needham.

Public Health Nursing – Hanna Burnett

Ms. Burnett stated that 110 confirmed cases of influenza have been reported, along with 23 suspected cases. There was one anaplasmosis case in December. Also of note was a case of Psittacosis. BP clinics have been held at both Needham Housing Authority locations and in the office. The Matter of Balance class has begun with a full class and continued interest, and three CPR classes have been held. A full-time nurse has been hired. This person has quite a bit of pediatric experience.



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Dr. Epstein asked what happens during the BP clinics if someone presents with hypertension. Ms. Burnett stated that staff checks both arm BPs, asks about current medications, and suggests residents should call their primary care physicians. Residents are not referred to the ER in these cases.

Epidemiology – Julie McCarthy

Ms. McCarthy stated that the wastewater data for the State was increasingly high, but recently took a significant dip. She noted that the Needham vaccination rate data needs to be examined, as some of the age group reports are registering over 100%.

Dr. Epstein noted that hospitalization rates for the elderly seem to have spiked. He asked about encouraging nursing home populations to receive the bivalent vaccine. Ms. Zike stated that this would be reviewed.

Shared Services Grants – Diana Acosta

Ms. Acosta stated that she, Roland Abuntori, and Jessica Kent continued assisting Needham with the 2023 permit renewals on ViewPointCloud. She and Mr. Abuntori attended MHOA's Guide to Local Public Health Webinar online. She also attended the Office of Local and Regional Health's Performance Standards meeting. The Baseline Capacity Assessment was completed for the State. Results are to be released in March 2023. Regina Villa Associates (RVA) continued to work on stakeholder engagement and facilitation for the Charles River Public Health District. As part of these services, RVA will lay out an engagement plan, develop materials, conduct stakeholder interviews, facilitate working group meetings, and produce a final report with recommendations based on the work of the previous six-plus months of effort. The first phase will be conducting stakeholder interviews which will include discussions on current strengths, gaps, and how shared services could improve the current capacity.

Environmental Health – Tara Gurge

Ally Littlefield explained that two grants from the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) and US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) have been accepted for the Environmental Health team. One grant includes a training optional add-on, which allots \$7,382.00 for conferences, trainings, and travel expenses. The other grant is a Track 2 Development Base, in the amount of \$4,929.00, which will allow for resources to complete and continue to maintain all 9 FDA Retail Program Standards. The group is working to draft an 'Alternative Kitchen Policy,' which incorporates these new types of food establishments, including pop-ups, unattended food establishments (a.k.a. micro markets) and ghost kitchens.

Ms. Littlefield reviewed a nuisance complaint brought by Mass DPH for Suite #151 on Kearney Road. A follow-up inspection found multiple violations, one including evidence of open needle packs. Results were brought to the State's attention. The acupuncturist was not permitted through the Town and was required to apply for a sharps permit within 24 hours. A reinspection was



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recently conducted, and no improvement was noticed. The State has brought this to the Committee on Acupuncture, Board of Registration in Medicines' attention, where a hearing will take place on February 9th to discuss the ongoing violations and possible disciplinary action. No sharps permit will be issued until the Town hears back from the State following this hearing. A follow-up has been sent to the acupuncturist that a third unannounced inspection will occur and failure to comply with previous violations will result in an administrative hearing.

Ms. Gurge updated the Board on 55 Linden Street. The court appointed a receiver for that vacant property. The receiver met with Erik Tardif, Assistant Building Commissioner, and Ms. Gurge at the site to do a full assessment of the property. The property has continued to deteriorate, and the receiver recommended to condemn the property. Dave Roach, Building Commissioner, wrote a letter of condemnation for this house and posted it. This house will be torn down. A demolition permit application will be submitted and hopefully expedited to ensure the property is safe. There are also pest control issues in the house that the receiver is aware of.

Mr. McDonald noted that there is a new housing code for the State which will impact how the staff works.

Traveling Meals Program – Rebecca Hall

Mr. McDonald (reporting for Ms. Hall) explained that the Town is still pursuing a vendor solution. He is also working toward renovating the kitchen at the Center at the Heights to accommodate meal preparation both for the Center and for the Traveling Meals Program. Mr. McDonald reported that he has requested \$40,000 for a new vendor.

Discuss alcohol compliance challenges and licensee education

Ms. Shannon explained that the Stop Act grant is focused on reducing under-age drinking. The compliance work for this item is not new but can be sustained as part of this grant. Thirty-one percent of Needham High School students have reported current use drinking, and nineteen percent reported binge drinking.

Three compliance checks were completed over the last twelve months, arranged around a number of TIPS trainings. The December 2022 compliance check reported ten failures of the twenty-five businesses checked. Thirty percent of the businesses who failed did not check IDs at all, seventy percent checked ID and still served, and fifty percent of those who failed were served by a manager. Of the ten failures in that compliance check, only two of the businesses had staff attend a TIPS training during the year. Six businesses had recurring sales-to-minor violations, within a five-year review period. Eight businesses passed all three compliance checks over the year.

Dr. Epstein stated that one possible conclusion from this data is that TIPS trainings are useless. That will likely be the conclusion of the Select Board. An experiment from the Select Board,



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these compliance checks also do not seem to be doing anything. Dr. Epstein stated that he believes, under Chapter 111, the Board of Health should take this over from the Select Board.

Dr. Cosgrove said that the failure is that the Select Board has not given consequences to the repeat offenders. He said that the Board of Health should have a discussion with the Select Board.

Dr. Partridge stated that it appears the businesses are not concerned regarding failure at these compliance checks. He agreed with having a discussion with the Select Board.

In response to a question from Dr. Partridge regarding what type of ID was used, Ms. Shannon stated that a vertical, under-21, ID was used in many of the cases. Other cases involved out-of-state IDs.

Dr. Epstein stated that the Board of Health has previously addressed this with the Select Board and no changes were made. Dr. Cosgrove stated that it is the Board of Health's right to take this over under Chapter 111. This is a health issue.

Mr. McDonald stated that the Select Board is currently in the middle of meeting with each of the restaurant managers regarding the last failed compliance check. The Select members are also currently in the middle of overhauling their regulations. It might be prudent to address this issue as part of that overhaul.

Dr. Epstein noted that all employees need to be involved in TIPS trainings, instead of one from each establishment.

Mr. McDonald noted that the membership of the Select Board has changed over the years. The Board of Health could consider having a discussion with the current Select Board.

Ms. Shannon stated that she reviewed the fifty-three attendees of the TIPS trainings in 2022, and the people who attended TIPS are not the ones who committed the violations, with the exception of one person. With the high rate of managers who served the minors, she noted that the Needham regulations require managers, assistant managers, and bartenders to attend the TIPS trainings.

The Board agreed that it would like to have a discussion with the Board of Selectmen at a future meeting on this topic.

Discuss Shared Services Grant



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Mr. McDonald noted that Sherborn is interested in joining the collaborative. The goal is to have towns agree to share services and work together or move on from spending much time and energy toward this item.

Review Progress on 2021 and 2022 BOH Goals

The Board agreed to table discussion on this item to a future meeting.

Continued Brainstorming 2023 and 2024 BOH Goals

Ms. Zike stated that she split the goals into Departmental Service Goals and Performance Management Goals. Dr. Cosgrove stated that he agrees with the goals presented and would like a way to quantify progress toward them.

Dr. Epstein stated that he believes three of these goals are administrative: Accreditation, Review Regulations, and Regional Collaboration. He stated that many of these items are reactive and respond to problems. He does not see many proactive items that were previously discussed, such as eating, fitness, movement, etc. These are items that the Board should be actively promoting.

Dr. Brown suggested exercise classes or others held in Town, to get people out of their houses and moving. Ms. Zike stated that additional funding would be needed for the Division to carry this out. However, the Aging Services and the Park and Recreation Department hold classes, and the Division would help to promote these.

Biosafety Regulations – Brief Update and Discussion

Ms. Zike stated that the Town has not yet heard back from Cambridge. Some changes have been made to the draft document. The Board discussed additional changes to be made, including that a Level 4 laboratory will not be permitted in Town and that a Level 3 will require a variance. The Board agreed to advertise this document for a public hearing in February.

Brief Updates

- **Claxton Field**

Mr. McDonald stated that the Department of Environmental Protection has asked the Town to consider sampling at Claxton Field, based on a resident's complaint. At a meeting next week, the Town will request additional information as to what testing is being requested. While the Town's main concern is the safety of the Field, there is also a hope to accommodate a sports plan, if possible.

- **Regional Training Hub Grant**

Mr. McDonald stated that the Public Health Division has received a large, multi-year grant. This could tie in nicely to the shared services grant program.

Other Items



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None at this time.

Next BOH Meeting

The next regular Board meetings will be held on February 16, 2023, at 6pm; at a date to be determined in March; and on April 14, 2023, at 9am.

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Partridge and seconded by Dr. Brown, it was voted to adjourn. Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, and Dr. Partridge – Y. Motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Attachment:

January 17, 2023 meeting packet