



Board of Health Meeting Minutes DRAFT

Date: June 14, 2024

Location: Public Service Administration Building & via Zoom

Members: Tejal K. Gandhi, MD, MPH; Stephen Epstein, MD, MPP, Chair; Robert A. Partridge, MD, MPH, Member; Edward Cosgrove, PhD, Member; Aarti Sawant-Basak, PhD, Member

Staff Present: Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health, and Human Services; Tiffany (Zike) Benoit, Assistant Director of Public Health; Tara Gurge, Assistant Director of Public Health; Sainath Palani; Julie McCarthy; Sam Menard; Kerry Dunnell; Carol Read; Karen Shannon; Lydia Cunningham; Natascha Nussbaum; Alison Bodenheimer; Taleb Abdelrahim; Ginnie Chacon-Lopez

Welcome & Public Comment Period

Dr. Epstein called the meeting to order at 9:00AM and initiated a roll call. Present were Dr. Gandhi – Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Cosgrove – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, Dr. Sawant-Basak – 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 by Acting Governor Karyn Polito, on July 16 2022, revised Section 20 of Chapter 20, the Acts of 2021. 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, 2025, 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: May 10, 2024

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Cosgrove, and seconded by Dr. Partridge, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes May 10, 2024, as presented. Motion passed: Dr. Cosgrove – Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, Dr. Sawant-Basak – Y.

St. Mary's Street – Housing Order Public Hearing

Sai Palani explained that this case started in early April. The exterior included bulk items such as machinery and auto parts. These were located in the front, side, and backyard of the residence. Following an inspection, a housing order was sent on April 2, 2024, with 30 days to correct the violations. Mr. Palani and the Building Commissioner returned on May 21st for a reinspection. Mr. Palani observed that the items in the front were moved to the backyard and determined that the violation had not been corrected. Mr. Palani decided to bring the issue to the Board for enforcement. Mr. Palani also had concerns about impeded egress at the back door

Dr. Gandhi entered the meeting.

Dr. Cosgrove stated that there seems to be the potential for rodent infestation and mosquitos with the items being kept on this property.

Conrad Ardine, the property owner, stated that he has been working diligently on this problem. There are medical issues which have led to the extended timeline for cleaning this up.

Dr. Cosgrove suggested extending the timeline by approximately six weeks. Mr. Ardine stated that this would be very helpful.

Ms. Gurge stated that in 2019 she and a previous health agent worked with the owner weekly during the summer. The items were removed at that time and no orders were issued. During the pandemic, items were replaced on the property and neighbors started calling in complaints.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Cosgrove, and seconded by Dr. Sawant-Basak, based on the good faith effort shown, it was voted to extend the deadline by six weeks from today, contingent on continued progress. Motion passed: Dr. Gandhi – Y, Dr. Cosgrove – Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, Dr. Sawant-Basak – Y.

Board of Health Input on Select Board Goals

Mr. McDonald stated that the Select Board has asked other Town boards and committees to comment on their goals. The Board of Health could consider this in the context of short-term policy goals and/or long-term budgeting goals.

Dr. Epstein stated that he would like to see specific initiatives tied to the Select Board goals.

Dr. Cosgrove suggested an additional goal that the Select Board support the goals of the Public Health Division and the Council on Aging.

Dr. Partridge stated that goals #4 and #5 only have one item to complete within the first 0-18 months and he would like to see more related items included within this time period.

Synthetic Marijuana Regulation Discussion

Cheryl Sbarra, Esq., Executive Director of the Mass. Association of Health Boards, reviewed the proposed language to replace the existing Article 22 regulation ‘Regulation for the Restriction of Synthetic Drugs,’ with the revised ‘Regulation for Prohibiting the Manufacturing, Sale, and Distribution of Synthetically Derived Cannabinoids and Kratom.’ She explained that the original article was accurate during the time of drafting, but it is no longer accurate. Creating a list of items is too difficult of a task to keep up with, as it almost immediately becomes outdated.

Dr. Epstein asked about covering certain other items, such as stimulants and psychedelics, which do not seem to be included in this new regulation. Ms. Sbarra explained that the State has tried to cover all items under the Controlled Substance Act list. Items on this list are illegal to sell. It is unclear who does the enforcement for these products, though.

Dr. Sawant-Basak stated that public awareness of which substances are banned will be important.

The Board agreed that it would hold a public hearing on this document, and scientific data will be gathered to share with the Board prior to this hearing. The Board will vote on this item in August or September.

Staff Updates

- Nursing – Ginnie Chacon-Lopez

Ms. Chacon-Lopez stated that the Matter of Balance program at North Hill ended and there were five graduates of the program. During the Mother's Day Diaper Drive, 2,698 diapers were donated to children impacted by domestic abuse. Strep and a gastrointestinal infection moved through a daycare center in Town and MDPH was made aware.

- Epidemiology – Julie McCarthy

Ms. McCarthy reviewed the COVID-19 data. The biosafety permit cycle timeline will continue to be worked on. The first renewal cycle is almost complete. The 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey data was recently received. This will be reviewed and presentations on the data will be made in the future.

Ms. McCarthy stated that the EPA recently released standards for PFAS levels. Massachusetts has typically had a lower standard than the EPA but is working to update this guidance. Currently, the water system in Town has higher levels than the federal standard. The Board agreed it would like to further discuss PFAS at a future meeting.

- Substance Use Prevention, MassCall 3 – Carol Read & Lydia Cunningham

Ms. Cunningham stated that another public service announcement aired for four weeks in local movie theaters during the pre-movie package. She will review the data regarding airing of this PSA, SAMHSA Talk They Hear You, at a future meeting.

Ms. Nussbaum explained that local youth were engaged as part of the #MyWhy project which is intended to spark a dialogue among youth about the science of drug use and addiction. The students' responses to the prompt, "*What motivates you to stay healthy and substance free?*" will be made into mini documentaries for each town. There were more than 120 student participants in the four towns..

- Substance Use Prevention – Karen Shannon

Ms. Shannon explained that a SPAN parent education event geared for parents of any age child, but marketed to those with students in 5-12 grades, was held on May 14th. Also, the Parent Survey was recently closed out and a report is forthcoming. Year 4 of the STOP Act Grant started last month, and a compliance check was held with the Police Department. For the first

time since compliance checks were resumed in December 2021, there were zero sales-to-minor violations.

- Environmental Health – Sai Palani & Tara Gurge

Mr. Palani stated that an intern, Hanna Touadjine, from the MA Department of Public Health will be assisting with the self-auditing of Standard 8 of the FDA voluntary retail standards.

Ms. Gurge stated that she and Mr. Palani recently completed the MA PHIT Food Training class. Both received certificates.

Mr. Palani stated that the Food Safety Excellence Program pilot ended in May. It was determined that the original scoring system was too harsh and has been adjusted. A new draft of the policy will be reviewed at the July Board meeting. There will still be a staggered roll out for the program after July.

There was discussion regarding restaurant violations. Ms. Gurge stated that many of these seem to be staffing issues. Some of these items have been requiring consultants.

- Shared Services (Public Health Excellence, Regional Field Training Hub, Contact Tracing/Investigating) – Kerry Dunnell

Ms. Dunnell stated that the PHIT training makes Ms. Gurge and Mr. Palani eligible for the last step in the Food Inspector trainings through State funding and Shared Services. These trainings will likely begin in the new fiscal year.

- Accreditation –Alison Bodenheimer

Ms. Bodenheimer stated that staff are reviewing and formatting documents to meet PHAB requirements. Ms. Bodenheimer also said that staff are working on FY25 plan.

- Emergency Preparedness –Taleb Abdelrahim

Mr. Abdelrahim stated that the Special Locations, Critical Infrastructure, Vulnerable Population information for the Town was completed and delivered. This information was last updated in 2017-2018. The information will be shared with the GIS team.

- Traveling Meals – Rebecca Hall

Mr. McDonald stated that the volume for this program is still quite high.

Other Items

- SunMed Your CBD Store – follow-up

Mr. McDonald stated that the Your CBD store has officially closed.

- Nicotine Free Generation

Mr. McDonald stated that staff have received hundreds of letters and emails on this topic since the last discussion. It is unclear if any of the correspondence is from anyone in Town.

Dr. Partridge suggested retiring all tobacco permits and becoming a nicotine-free town. Dr. Epstein stated that this has been in progress for the last decade. A new tobacco sales permit has not been issued in 15 years.

The Board discussed holding a public hearing on this item at a future date.

Upcoming BOH Meetings

- **Friday, July 12th from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Cosgrove, and seconded by Dr. Gandhi, it was voted to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed: Dr. Gandhi – Y, Dr. Cosgrove – Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, Dr. Sawant-Basak – Y.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 AM.

Attachment:

June 14, 2024 meeting packet