

Harvard Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, March 24, 2020
7 P.M.
Approved: April 7, 2020

Board of Health Members present, via Zoom: Sharon McCarthy; Libby Levison; Tom Philippou, Chair.

Attending, via Zoom: Alison Flynn, Board of Health (“BOH”) Clerk; Ira Grossman, Health Agent, Nashoba Associated Boards of Health; Joan Eliyesil, The Harvard Press; John Osborn, The Harvard Press; Nick Deane; Josh & Evan Burek.

After technical difficulties were resolved, Chair Tom Philippou called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Flynn read the virtual meeting preamble, including confirmation of member and staff access, an introduction to the remote meeting, and the meeting business ground rules.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Eliyesil indicated that she has questions about COVID-19. Mr. Philippou agreed to address her questions after that discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss communication methods regarding scheduling of meetings- Ms. Levison suggested the BOH schedule weekly meetings during the State of Emergency. The members discussed availability and decided that all meetings will be scheduled at 7 pm to better accommodate Ms. Flynn’s schedule and allow for BOH call-in to the weekly Department of Public Health (DPH) calls for Local Boards of Public Health (LBOH). It was agreed that meetings falling on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month will be devoted to COVID-19 discussions, and the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month will also cover routine BOH business. Mr. Grossman indicated that he can likely be available for those 7 pm meetings. Ms. McCarthy made the motion in favor of weekly 7 pm meetings during the State of Emergency; Ms. Levison seconded. The roll call vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Ms. Levison stated that her request for a discussion regarding past communication methods for scheduling meetings is no longer needed.

Mr. Grossman asked if the BOH would authorize his issuance outside of meetings of septic permits where the application meets 100% compliance with the local regulations and State Code. Mr. Philippou suggested this discussion be resumed at the next meeting, as the topic was not clearly listed on the agenda; Ms. Levison indicated she believed it would fall under COVID-19 response. Mr. Grossman confirmed that the purpose of the request is to expedite permitting during the State of Emergency. Mr. Philippou stated that with an increase in meetings, there should not be a delay in permitting. Ms. Levison indicated that as it was decided two meetings

per month would be solely devoted to COVID-19, the BOH is not increasing the number of meetings where permits will be issued. Mr. Philippou indicated that a short discussion about this request will be added to the next agenda.

b. Clerk and Health Agent Update

- Ms. Flynn requested approval of an Amazon for \$111.86 for the purchase of Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) supplies approved for purchase at the last BOH meeting. Ms. Levison made the motion to approve the invoice, allowing for reimbursement to Ms. Flynn for the purchase; Ms. McCarthy seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by roll-call vote. Mr. Philippou authorized Ms. Flynn to sign the invoice on his behalf.
- Ms. Flynn asked the members whether they would like the advice offered by Town Counsel in his e-mail of the same date to the applicant, or if they would like to discuss the advice first at a future date. The members agreed they would prefer to discuss the advice at a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

a. SafeWell: ETR status update- Mr. Philippou advised that Lisa Touet at DEP asked him to e-mail her the ETR lab results recently submitted to the BOH by SafeWell. He indicated the results were then sent to legal counsel at DEP for her review. Mr. Philippou has not heard back from legal counsel or Ms. Touet with any comment, and asked that the discussion be tabled for a future meeting.

b. Continued discussion regarding COVID-19 response, preparedness, and messaging, including preparation of an updated BOH FAQ and discussion regarding emergency supply acquisition/needs- Mr. Philippou indicated that the Governor's recent Order specifies it is to be enforced by the BOH, and suggested this is a big ask of a volunteer board. Ms. McCarthy stated that may be the intention of the order, but the two DPH conference calls she has attended have not indicated that enforcement is what the LBOH should spend their time on. Further, she stated, DPH has emphasized that the assistance of LBOH is most needed in assisting with messaging. Ms. McCarthy indicated that LBOHs should be focusing on education and keeping residents healthy versus policing social distancing. Mr. Grossman confirmed that if there is an issue, the BOH will be the mechanism to enforce.

Ms. Levison advised that she has been put on an emergency COVID-19 management team which was formed out of the Thursday afternoon meeting. She indicated that the team also consists of Deb Thompson, Chief Denmark, Chief Sicard, Ms. Sobalvarro, Mr. Bragan, and they were joined yesterday by Mr. Grossman and previously by a resident who is experienced in public health messaging. From those meetings, Ms. Levison said, it is her understanding that Chief Denmark believes the Police are responsible for enforcing the closure of Town properties (the track, beach, etc). Ms. Levison also advised that the team was responsible for the short message, "Stay at Home. Stop the Spread. Save Lives!" that was sent out over the Town's Blackboard connect system. The group will also be sending an educational poster to various civic groups in town to request circulation to their e-mail lists, and will ask to post it on NextDoor Harvard. Ms. Thompson will also be forwarding it to the COA community. Ms. Levison indicated that at one team meeting she suggested the track be left open so that seniors have a safe place to walk, even for limited hours, to maintain mental health. She stated that Chief Denmark expressed concern that officers responsible for enforcing social distancing at the track

would risk infection. Ms. McCarthy stated that response seems extreme, and suggested that anyone walking the track would not be symptomatic. Mr. Philippou indicated he believes law enforcement is addressing new methods of enforcement which maintain social distancing. Ms. Levison stated that the Select Board will be considering whether the playing fields, beach, and track can be opened, and asked if the BOH would support the same. Mr. Philippou stated this would be reasonable. Ms. McCarthy made the motion to support opening of the track, beach, and playing fields during daylight hours for citizens' mental health during this stressful time, assuming they maintain six feet of social distance; Ms. Levison seconded. The motion was passed by unanimous, roll-call vote.

The BOH members considered the updated FAQ prepared by Ms. McCarthy, and the comments received from Mr. Bragan and Ms. Thompson. Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Flynn will incorporate the revisions and arrange for posting to the homepage.

Ms. McCarthy reported on the most recent DPH call to LBOH; Mr. Philippou stated he also listened in. Ms. McCarthy indicated the call included comments regarding two rounds of funding being awarded to the LBOH. Mr. Grossman indicated the NABH has received \$100,000 on behalf of the 17 NABH communities, and the Harvard BOH Chair should've received correspondence from Jim Garreffo regarding the same. Mr. Grossman reported it was decided that the money would be best spent on hiring an additional public health nurse. He confirmed that it is expected that the second round of funding should be coming through in the same amount.

Ms. McCarthy reported the call included the information that Katie Brown is requesting volunteers to assist with contact tracing from the 9 universities that have schools of public health. The DPH is establishing training for the volunteers to start early next week. Advertising for volunteers will also be placed on the DPH website. Ms. McCarthy stated it was indicated the volunteers will not have access to MAVEN; a new database for contact tracing is in development for use by the volunteers.

Ms. McCarthy reported that the DPH call also included a reminder that MA residents call dial 2-1-1 to speak to someone, 24/7, about their COVID-19 questions. The DPH call indicated 2-1-1 will advise the wait time, if any, and allow for call back if you do not want to hold. Ms. Levison added that residents may also visit MAss211.org.

Ms. McCarthy added that DPH will be soliciting the MA Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) for volunteer support to the hospitals.

Ms. McCarthy indicated that Kevin Cranston, Assistant Commissioner for DPH and Director of the Bureau of Infectious Diseases, reiterated the importance of treating positive results as protected health information and suggested ambulance services should reach out to the public health nurse to confirm whether the response is to a COVID-19 positive home.

Mr. Philippou asked the BOH to consider whether the BOH should have access to MAVEN in the event that NABH becomes overwhelmed with results. Mr. Grossman indicated he would ask if that is possible, but believes access to MAVEN is extremely limited. Ms. Levison stated she is unsure that she would want access, as she is not clinically trained, and does not want the responsibility of interpreting the data unless absolutely necessary by the state of the emergency. Further, Ms. Levison added, she has complete faith in the NABH public health nurses. Mr. Philippou noted his concern that with additional onboarding of staff, there is more

room for error. Mr. Grossman assured the members that the NABH public health nurses monitor MAVEN many times a day, and in the event of a positive result received over the weekend, Mr. Garreffo contacts the Town.

Ms. McCarthy continued that Mr. Cranston indicated that Quest Diagnostics had reporting delays with MAVEN, but this issue has been corrected. DPH indicated wait times for results should go down because of this correction.

Ms. McCarthy stated that Mr. Cranston also stated the LBOH should be prepared in the event that they receive calls directly from healthcare providers reporting a clinical diagnosis. In that event, Ms. McCarthy explained, the public health nurse can make a note in MAVEN. Mr. Grossman confirmed that some providers are skipping testing and proceeding with diagnosis if the patient is symptomatic and has known positive contact. He indicated that the public health nurse can then note this in MAVEN to begin contact tracing. Ms. McCarthy explained that Mr. Cranston emphasized it was okay to do so when acting on a trusted source, but not on rumor.

Ms. McCarthy reported that DPH indicated they are working on compiling a list of locations offering drive-through testing; there is not currently a permitting or registration requirement for these facilities. Ms. McCarthy stated that she would like to gather more information about a drive-through testing location that DPH mentioned at a CVS Pharmacy in Shrewsbury.

Ms. McCarthy also stated that DPH stated they are developing guidance for public health nurses regarding the requirements for monitoring residents in isolation or quarantine. Ms. McCarthy stated that a public health nurse who called in expressed concern that she was unable to call each of these residents daily. Ms. McCarthy indicated it was her impression that the guidelines are likely to emphasize the more urgent need for contact tracing versus daily check-ins.

Ms. McCarthy reported that a Worcester BOH caller indicated they were having an issue with the families of first responders wanting testing to confirm they have not been exposed by the first responders. Dr. Brown responded that there is no CDC approval of testing for asymptomatic residents due to the risk of receiving false positives.

Ms. Flynn will upload Ms. McCarthy's notes from the call to the COVID-19 Response Team Dropbox.

Ms. Flynn requested the BOH consider Chief Sicard's request for primary & secondary contacts for the BOH for COVID-19 emergency planning purposes. Ms. Levison volunteered to act as primary; Mr. Grossman will be listed as her secondary.

Ms. Flynn asked the BOH to consider the e-mailed request of Region 2, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, for sharing of supplies received on March 23rd. Ms. Flynn noted that this request included the need for masks. Ms. Flynn read to the BOH members the inventory of masks currently in the possession of the BOH. The members agreed that the inventory is not enough to assist Region 2, and should the BOH provide the inventory, Harvard would be left without. Ms. Levison noted that even if the BOH does not need the masks, another response group in Harvard might. Ms. Flynn also asked the members to consider the March 13th e-mail from Region 2 offering to cover COVID-19 related printing and translation service costs, and to provide PPE and monitoring kits and translation services. Ms. Levison will reach out to the ambulance service and the COA to see if they think there is need of monitoring kits in town.

Ms. McCarthy asked the BOH to consider including on the BOH webpage the New York Times article by astronaut Scott Kelly offering tips for surviving isolation. She suggested that it contains helpful information for mental health and is well written. Ms. Levison suggested Ms. McCarthy send it to the COA & post it to NextDoor; she will do so. Mr. Philippou indicated he doesn't believe the article needs to be on the website and expressed concern that keeping updated information on the website could be overwhelming.

Ms. Levison reported that Ms. Sobalvarro has approved Ms. Flynn to obtain PDF editing software to better assist her while working from home at this time.

Ms. Levison asked the members to consider the "Board of Health Update" document recently received from Jim Garreffa. The members agreed that this document could be used as the basis for a press release in the event there is a positive case in Harvard. Mr. Philippou and Ms. Levison agreed to the importance of adding a "last updated" date to the document; Ms. Levison stated it would also be important to keep each version of the document.

Ms. Flynn reported that she has not received any new calls or e-mails with concerns regarding COVID-19.

Mr. Grossman confirmed for Ms. Eliyesil that there are no COVID-19 positive Harvard residents currently, and the BOH would not be aware if results are pending.

Mr. Grossman confirmed that the BOH is responsible for enforcement of closures of businesses deemed "non-essential". Ms. Eliyesil asked whether Mr. Grossman would be investigating the possible non-closure of the bowling alley, and stated she was making a complaint that she does not believe they intend to close. Mr. Grossman advised that he does not have the availability to confirm the closure of all non-essential businesses, but will follow-up if someone makes a complaint or it is brought to the attention of the BOH. Mr. Grossman indicated that the Governor's Order and Mass. General Law indicates the mechanisms for enforcement, and suggested that includes, first, a written warning, second, a fine, and third, a cease and desist order. Ms. Levison asked the members for their thoughts on whether landscaping businesses should close, as the employees can social distance and are outside. Mr. Philippou stated he believes landscapers can handle their transactions without person-to-person contact, but cannot allow more than one person per vehicle. Mr. Philippou indicated that the enforcement will have to be considered on a case by case basis dependent on the circumstances. Mr. Grossman indicated that the Order is clear that the BOH is responsible for enforcement. He further added that the BOH could request police assistance if necessary, but otherwise, the Harvard Police will enforce the Governor's Orders on town-owned property as dictated by the Select Board. Mr. Philippou volunteered to generate a draft letter to the Police Department indicating how the BOH plans to enforce the Order. The BOH members will review the draft at the next meeting. Mr. Grossman will provide Mr. Philippou with the enforcement language from the Order and Mass. General Law.

c. Additional updates re PFAS testing in Harvard- Ms. Flynn advised that additional results were forwarded to the members on March 13th. Ms. McCarthy indicated that she was unable to open one of the attachments and did not see the aggregate data. Ms. Flynn will resend the e-mail prior to the next meeting. Ms. Flynn also advised that three of the outreach letters to property owners, urging they accept the Army's offer to sample, were returned as undeliverable. The BOH members agreed there was nothing further to be done for these addressees. Ms. Flynn

stated she was unaware whether the Army's initial letters to these addressees were also returned as undeliverable.

d. Continued discussion regarding preparing a Well-Owner Tip Sheet- Ms. Levison suggested this topic be tabled for a while, as no members have the availability to prepare a well-owner tip sheet at this time. Mr. Philippou agreed.

e. Continued discussion re guest speakers for 2020- Mr. Philippou suggested that a Zoom presentation be organized. Ms. Levison will reach out to Ron O'Connor at DPH, staff at BU School of Public Health, or staff at Harvard School of Public Health to see if anyone has the time and interest in participating.

f. Continued discussion re 2020 stable permit season & addressing non-compliance- Mr. Philippou suggested this item be tabled for a future meeting.

g. Review BOH Master schedule- The members agreed this discussion could be tabled for a future meeting.

h. Update regarding request for sharing of RDP points- Mr. Philippou suggested this item be tabled for a future meeting.

i. Update from the Transfer Station Committee- Mr. Philippou reported that one of the BOH members has resigned. He indicated that he hoped there would be a replacement or reconsideration by the member in due time.

j. Review Action Items- Ms. Flynn stated that action items were not prepared after the last meeting.

PERMITS

- Ms. Flynn advised that the permit application packages of GW Shaw & Son & Republic Services are complete, and offered her recommendation that permits be issued. Ms. McCarthy made the motion to issue the same; Ms. Levison seconded. All were in favor, by roll-call vote.

MINUTES

- Ms. Levison made the motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2020, for the meeting occurring at 2 p.m., as amended; Ms. McCarthy seconded. All were in favor by roll-call vote.
- The members agreed to table the review of the minutes of the March 10, 2020, 7 p.m. meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Levison asked Ms. Flynn to consider whether additional supplies are needed to assist her while she works from home. Ms. Flynn stated that she has what she needs.

Ms. McCarthy made the motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:54 p.m.; Ms. Levison seconded. The roll-call vote was unanimously in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Flynn
Clerk

Referenced Documents:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of 3/10/20 at 2 PM
- Draft minutes of 3/10/20 at 7 PM
- Amazon invoice of March 13, 2020
- E-mail of 3/24/20 from Town Counsel
- Draft COVID-19 FAQ of 3/24/20
- Sample Document “Board of Health Update” prepared by J. Garreffi