

JESSICA COLLINS, Chair
TONY JUDGE, Vice-Chair
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC 1, Clerk
CHRISTINA REMIE, RN
JOHANNA RAVENHURST, MSPH

SHARON D. HART, Public Health Director

Board of Health Minutes

January 12, 2021

As Approved February 9, 2021

Present: Jessica Collins, Chair; Tony Judge, Vice-Chair, Karen Walsh Pio, Clerk; Johanna Ravenhurst, Board of Health Member; Sharon Hart, Public Health Director; Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Public Health Director

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Chair Collins.

1: Acceptance of Minutes:

Chair Collins stated that she would accept a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2021 meeting.

Walsh Pio made the motion to approve the minutes and Ravenhurst seconded the motion. A roll call vote was then taken:

Collins – Aye
Pio - Aye
Ravenhurst – Aye
Judge – Aye

All were in favor.

2: Announcements and Open Forum:

There were no comments submitted to the Board on the Google Form from the public.

Walsh Pio asked if there is a plan for the Health Department to administer COVID-19 vaccine shots like was done with the Flu Clinic. This question was then tabled to the COVID-19 update section of the meeting.

Collins stated that she would like to talk about the Master Plan Implementation Committee. Each department was to give goals and objectives. Chair Collins and Hart did some work on this and the Committee is interested in coming back to speak with the Board of Health on where they stand with the

work that Chair Collins and Hart did and where they stand with the Board. Chair Collins will forward to Hart and the rest of the Board their request and maybe they could be put on the next agenda to speak.

Hart talked about the new employee coming to enforce COVID-19 safety standards in the next week or so. She will be full-time but may work weekends also. She will be doing any necessary enforcement. Monasia is certified as a Registered Sanitarian (RS) and received her Masters in Public Health. Hart stated that she will be a good fit for our office. There will be a little bit of a learning curve and she will be doing some training but we are looking forward to her starting in the department. Her salary will be funded out of the COVID-19 grant money, with hopes to continue afterward. Hart discussed the funding that she has applied for and how it can be used.

3: New Business:

(a): COVID-19 Update

In regards to vaccine roll-out, the Mass Department of Public Health is still sticking to its Phases 1, 2 and 3. The Bangs Center in Amherst is holding a vaccination clinic right now for our first responders who are on this side of the river. South Hadley signed on to have Amherst do our first responders (COVID-19 facing health care workers.) Public Health workers will be in Phase 2. Vaccines are not here yet. So, Hart stated, plans must be in place: freezers, refrigerators, etc. and then you get approved by the State to hold the clinic. Health care professionals and drug stores like CVS and Walgreens will also be able to give it.

Chair Collins asked who decides if a health department stands up a clinic. Hart responded that the State does. Hart also stated that we are not ready yet to do one. The State is focusing on vaccinating first responders only right now. Down the road, there is a possibility that we will do one. We have to order a freezer, a thermometer for it, etc. Hart stated that we could use the Medical Reserve Corp (nursing students at UMASS.) or Walgreens to help give the vaccines. But there would be a need to be trained in Prep Mod for someone to handling the billing, bookings, etc. Judge asked if Board of Health members participate in the clinics. Hart stated that the Health Department is responsible to establish and monitor the site. The Health Department does it all. Hart also discussed possible sites in place in a plan she has had ready since 2015. She stated that she has planned for this mass vaccinations for 15 years and is ready for it. The other option is a drive-thru clinic, but people would have to go through, get the shot, and drive back around to park for 15 minutes to check for after effects. All first responders are getting their shots indoors but Hart likes outdoors best. Walsh Pio stated that she now has plenty of information to bring back to her constituents. Hart stated to keep checking the Mass.Gov website as they are constantly updating it. Hart also stated that prevention slogans on the lighted road signs will continue right now. The signs are currently being cleaned and will be put back out. Hart said for the Board to let her know of any catchy slogans regarding COVID-19 that they would like to see on the lighted sign boards. Pio and Judge liked something along the lines of “Don’t Stop Now! Keep It Up – Vaccines Coming!”

(b): Board of Health Physician Appointment

Hart stated that Dr. William Mugg, General Practitioner, has volunteered and is available to sign for vaccine and standing orders and support the Board of Health, especially during COVID times. Dr. Clinton, our physician, retired and Hart knows that Dr. Clinton was here more than 16 years, even longer than Hart. Collins asked for a bio on Dr. Mugg and Hart stated that she can get one for everyone, if they desire.

Judge asked if the doctor would be compensated in any way for the position. Hart responded that originally the position was paid, but Dr. Clinton said to save the money to pay for any additional Town Nurses needed to do a vaccine clinic instead. Judge also asked how often the Town Doctor is needed and Hart responded that currently he is only needed for Flu vaccine – to sign the State’s standing orders which includes how to deal with reactions. The doctor does not need to be present to administer the vaccines, per Hart.

Collins stated that she will accept a motion to nominate Dr. William Mugg as the Board of Health Physician, unless people want more information about Dr. Mugg. Pio stated that she is content to entertain a motion. It is important to have continuity especially right now and it is awesome that as a resident of the community he wants to step up. Judge stated that if his duties are mostly administrative, then we hope he will be a good administrator and he will move to appoint Dr. Mugg as Town Physician. Collins accepted his motion and Ravenhurst seconded it. She stated that if this is the typical way that a Town Doctor is appointed then that is fine with her. Hart stated that she discussed this with the Town Administrator and this is the process to appoint the doctor for the Board of Health. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) could be obtained from the Town Administrator but is not necessary. Hart was told that the election is done at a Board meeting.

Roll Call:

Ravenhurst: Aye

Judge: Aye

Pio: Aye

Collins: Aye with MOU in place.

4: Old Business:**(a): The North Pole Estates Subdivision – Records Request Status**

Jernigan stated that the records request information was compiled and sent off and we have not heard anything back yet.

Hart asked if the Board is interested in working on any bylaws for the next town meeting. She reminded Chair Collins that she had been interested in the past on doing so. Chair Collins stated that she is not working on any bylaw groups currently but would be willing to. No one else from the Board stated that they were either. Hart reminded everyone that the Board of Health can do regulations but not town bylaws. Attorneys will be holding a workshop for the Planning Board Staff and Brad (Planning Board Chair) and one other Planning Board member would attend to help with the North Pole concerns and the company's attorney, per Collins. Hart stated that is specific to North Pole Estates but she is checking to see if there is a bylaw overall that you would want for the area. Collins offered to reach out to colleagues, the Planning Board and Conservation to see if there are any ideas for regulations in Zone 2.

(b): Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Chair Collins stated that Remie had done some work on this and sent the Board a document for review. Unfortunately, Remie could not attend the meeting tonight. Chair Collins discussed other things going on in town around this topic - an outreach in the newspaper last week on this topic and Hart mentioned the Symposium of Understanding. Hart discussed the clinical psychologist involved in that – Dr. Lauren Appio. She deals with organizational psychology in relation to equity issues. The Town Administrator, Mike Sullivan, has offered her to Zoom in on one of our Board meetings. That way we can have a better understanding of what is being done in all town departments on this issue – instead of re-inventing the wheel, if someone is already doing it. We can all ask questions and see what is going on that way. If the Board is willing, Hart can ask Sullivan to set up a time with her. All the Board members were in agreement for having Hart tell Sullivan to set up a time.

Collins stated that there was an email from the School Superintendent after an unfortunate issue last week. There had been an email or posting that was racist in nature between students after the incident in Washington last week. Collins did reach out to the Superintendent on how the Board of Health can help with this issue but she hasn't heard back from the School Superintendent yet. She will let the Board know once she hears anything. Pio then discussed how the staff in the schools have helped in the past with resources there. Collins asked the Board if it is okay to look into the Symposium and then the Dr. will join the Board of Health meeting in February? All were in agreement. They were also all in agreement to hold the work Remie did and look at it in the next meeting. They appreciate all the time and energy she put into that work but all were in agreement that maybe one Town approach may be better.

(c): South Hadley Landfill: Closure Management Proposal for a Dedicated Contaminated Construction Soils Site – Update

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Hart discussed that there have been no new developments on the proposed project as of yet in terms of the Health Department. Hart let the Board know that there is no application in to the Health Department yet for review.

Judge asked then asked a question about the COVID-19 vaccination process. He wanted to know if the Board of Health members have a responsibility to staff or manage any of the immunization sites. Hart stated that the Medical Reserve Corps is participating in the Amherst vaccination site. If we were having a South Hadley clinic, it would be the Medical Reserve Corps. Judge then asked about how much responsibility the Board would have over the clinic in managing it, organizing it, holding it? Hart stated that we have all the responsibility just like with the Flu Clinic. We set up the site, call for the location, work with DPW to install signs and traffic flow, reach out the building owner to coordinate the site. Our office would do that, stated Hart. The pre-planning is already put in place so that is helpful, per Hart. We have the supplies except that we don't actually give the shots. We have planned for this for 15 years and are ready for it.

Frank Detoma then spoke. He stated that late last week he put in the mail to the Board a letter regarding test wells that are in the location of the Dry Brook Hill that are in the excavation site of Chicopee Concrete. They have never been properly decommissioned and are concerned about the health and safety of the drinking water because of it. Detoma stated that the Board of Health has authority to decommission those test wells. Detoma will attend the next Board of Health. He feels that the authority to handle this rests with the Board of Health. Please read the letter and Detoma stated that they can all discuss at the next meeting.

Judge asked Detoma on whose authority it is to deal with the test wells and Detoma said the authority rests with the Board of Health. Hart stated that once we all get the letter, we will move forward. Our regulation oversees drinking water wells so she will need to check with DEP and our town attorney to see what needs to be done.

The next Board of Health Meeting was set to February 9, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

5: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Collins and all were in agreement.

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ATTACHMENT A

DOCUMENT

RECORD LOCATION

COVID-19 Numbers for South Hadley

BOH File

Proposed Letter by Christina Remie regarding Racism as a Public Health Crisis

BOH File