

TONY JUDGE, Chair
CHRISTINE MCKIERNAN, MD, Vice-Chair
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC 1, Clerk
JESSICA COLLINS
STEPHEN FRANTZ

SHARON D. HART, Public Health Director

Board of Health Minutes

January 10, 2023

As Approved – February 14, 2023

Present: Tony Judge, Chair; Dr. Christine McKiernan, Vice Chair; Jessica Collins, Board of Health Member; Karen Walsh Pio, Board of Health Clerk; Sharon Hart, Public Health Director; Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Public Health Director; Monasia Ceasar, Health Compliance Specialist, Maureen Couture, Public Health Nurse

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Judge.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the November 11, 2022, Meeting:

Chair Judge introduced the minutes from the 11/11/22 meeting and questioned if there were any comments or changes to be made. No changes were brought forth to the Board. Walsh Pio made a motion to accept the meeting minutes and Collins seconded it. A roll call was taken, Collins, Judge, and Walsh Pio approved the minutes. Dr. McKiernan abstained as she was not present at the meeting and could not verify the accuracy of the minutes.

2. Announcements and Open Forum:

Hart introduced Maureen Couture, the newly appointed public health nurse. Couture outlined her primary duties for the Department and highlighted her efforts in disease surveillance and COVID-19 follow up. Hart noted that the Department does disease surveillance for over 90 communicable diseases and is actively following up on positive COVID cases of those who are 65 years of age and older. The Department receives notification from the state regarding positive PCR test results for follow up. Hart noted that she sends out a weekly report to Town Administration regarding case numbers and such. There has been a total of 74 COVID related deaths in Town since March 1, 2020.

The Town has received 9,000 COVID test kits that have been distributed to the COA, libraries, and other town buildings for public access. Test kits have also been delivered to positive cases upon request by the public health nurse. Walsh Pio noted that those 65 and older have access to 8 free test kits a month through Medicare. It was also mentioned that people should be mindful of the test kits expiration date prior to administering the test. Judge questioned if a new vaccine will be available soon. Hart noted the State is getting together to discuss what that looks like. There will be an analysis of the prevalence of strains to decide which strains should be included in the new booster.

Collins shared that the Public Health Institute will be hosting a webinar on January 20, 2023 at 12 pm about long COVID. Dr. McKiernan noted that Baystate hospital is also studying the effects of long term COVID. Collins noted she would share the link with the Department staff to be posted on the website and forwarded to the Western Mass Public Health Association.

3. Director's Update:

Director Hart provided an update on the Department's monthly summary regarding complaints received, inspections conducted, notices issued, etc. Collins requested clarification on what housing complaints are. Hart provided an overview for the Department's response and enforcement role in the MA Sanitary Code.

Through the PHE grant, Hart and staff have begun to take intervention tobacco training hosted by the American Lung Association that will be implemented in the High School. Suspensions are no longer permitted as a consequence of being caught vaping. In addition to providing vape detectors, the Health Department will also aid in setting up a tobacco intervention and cessation program at the High School. Although effective, the cessation program cannot be mandated and must be completed on a volunteer basis. The program is known to have a high success rate, despite the lack of use in addiction recovery technologies like nicotine, patches, etc.

Hart shared she had originally wished to coordinate a blood drive through the American Red Cross but was informed that they no longer host mobile clinic blood drives, and instead have two permanent locations for blood donations. However, they host Red Cross Ready events to discuss emergency preparedness. The event has been set for January 19th at the Senior Center starting at 11 am. The Health Department will be present and raffling off emergency preparedness kits. Hart mentioned that all the schools in Town have been certified as shelters through the Red Cross. In the event of an emergency, Red Cross would help with shelter operations.

Director Hart reported that she has been working on the assessment of the septic systems for the condos being built on Skinner Woods Estate located on Amherst Rd. Per Hart, the assessment has been difficult to conduct as changes were made to the original plan without notice or approval. The Department also has to redo perc tests to accommodate the changes made to the original plan. The Planning Department also had to intervene as the proposed septic system design will now have to interfere into an area previously defined as restricted to accommodate all the changes made to the original property design and layout. The project developer will have to go before the Planning Board on January 23rd with the new proposal including all the changes made. Collins shared her frustration with this and asked if the developer is likely to face any consequences. Hart shared that penalties and additional requirements would have to be issued by the Planning Board.

Hart shared that the Age and Dementia Committee has released a new resource document for seniors. Director Hart mentioned she was recently asked if she would be a part of an intersectional Department of Mental Health Advisory Board. Upon waiting for background clearance, Hart was notified that South Hadley had been recategorized into the Hampden district although it is demographically apart of Hampshire County. Hart will be reassigned to the Hampden District group instead, where she is already working with Chicopee and Holyoke with the Public Excellence grant.

4. New Business:

(A) South Hadley Human Rights Commission Appointment:

Chair Judge introduced the Human Rights Commission as the next topic for discussion. Hart mentioned Town Administration had reached out to Judge to request that a member of the Board join the Commission. Board members noted that they would need additional information including details on the time commitment prior to committing to join. Judge agreed to follow up with Kristen Maher, the Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator for the requested information.

(B) Health Department Website Update:

Cesar shared that she regularly updates the Department and Town website with emerging public health news and events. This typically includes notices of sewage overflow into the Connecticut River, upcoming COVID-19 vaccine clinics, etc. Chair judge questioned if it was possible to identify the amount of traffic the public health webpage receives. Hart noted that it had been reported that the public health page had received 10,800 visits in the month of November. She attributed some of its popularity to COVID. Hart also mentioned that the website has been reorganized and streamlined with overarching topics on the side margin for easier navigation, including access to the regulations.

(C) Update- South Hadley Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition (Karen):

Karen shared that although she was not present at the last coalition meeting, she would provide an overview of the meeting utilizing the minutes. It was reported that 279 pounds of drugs were turned in for the Drug Take Back Day event. Hart added that the Police station is a permanent location for the collection of unused drugs. Walsh Pio highlighted that the turnout is a testament to the importance of the program. Hart shared that lock boxes were also distributed at the event to help guardians keep drugs and paraphernalia away from minors.

The coalition will be sponsoring a bus to the upcoming cotillion on January 28th to ensure the safe transport of students to and from the event. The coalition presented to the South Hadley School Committee at the December 1st meeting to provide an overview on what the coalition does. The

coalition was invited back later to present data on the use of drugs amongst students over the years.

Collins recalled the presentation that was given outlining the roadmap of the state's efforts targeting behavior health. It highlighted the large amount of funding coming in from the American Rescue Plan for treatment initiatives that will establish behavioral health centers. The centers will provide 24-hour service, urgent care, support for families, etc. The Center for Human Development will oversee the operations for South Hadley.

Walsh Pio noted there have been proposals to modify the coalition's name to include mental health to gain access to the incoming funds, as their current funding source is set to expire soon. Walsh Pio highlighted that the coalition's mission is centered around prevention efforts and has concern that the name change may impact that, as the funding is intended for treatment efforts. Universal prevention strategies are able to target and impact a wider audience in comparison to treatment methods. This is shown in the data as youth drug usage in South Hadley continues to decline over the years with implementation of prevention methods. All avenues for future funding sources will be considered as the coalition looks for sustainability following the ending of their current funding source.

Nurse Couture summarized her time at the fentanyl event hosted in Westfield, MA. Although not well attended, there were knowledgeable vendors and dignitaries present including but limited to representatives from police, fire, state, courts, and providers. There were tables with resources and related literature available to attendees. Emergency Management Directors and detectives told personal encounters on the subject.

Walsh Pio noted that Sue Cooke had send out a zoom meeting link for the next coalition meeting to be hosted on January 11th with supplemental information on fentanyl listed below. The meeting format had been changed to virtual in hopes of increasing attendance. Walsh Pio noted that the topics to be discussed at the next meeting include CADCA, outreach opportunities with the Drama Club and Recreation Department, and staffing changes. Collins shared she would be willing to share information with the families she has contact with.

Walsh Pio noted that there is an 11th grade Health Fair being hosted tonight and hoped it would have a good turnout. Collins shared her delight with the diversity in attendees at the coalition meetings. Walsh Pio noted that the intent of the coalition is to have at least representation from at least 16 different interest groups.

Discussion about cannabis pursued:

Collins questioned if it would be possible to add cannabis as a topic to the next meeting's agenda. She would like to discuss what is going on regionally with the cannabis industry and to gain a better

understanding of the Cannabis Control Commission. Walsh Pio noted she has attended some cannabis related meetings and was pleased to know that South Hadley had passed the bylaw restricting the commercial sale of marijuana, eliminating the applicability of some of the items within the cannabis industry. Chair Judge agreed to put it on the agenda for further discussion. Dr. McKiernan requested that Jernigan send out a reminder to the Board members two weeks prior to a meeting requesting agenda item proposals.

(D) Master Plan Update:

Chair Judge mentioned he felt as though not enough progress had been made in reference to the tasks assigned to the Board of Health by MPIC. Collins objected and shared that she felt that the Board of Health has made noticeable progress on their assigned tasks. Collins and Hart met with a MPIC representative to review the tasks assigned to the Board of Health. It was confirmed that the Board of Health has already made strides on some items, such as the passing of regulations seen with the recent approval of the animal keeping and glyphosate regulations. Collins noted some modifications may need to be made to the monitoring section as the Board of Health does not have access to the technology listed. The Board should review the Master Plan again with attention to their assigned tasks and provide a status update. The Board members requested an updated copy of the Master Plan depicting their assigned tasks as there was previously some confusion on the correct version.

Discussion about Isotope Study pursued:

Chair Judge questioned if there were any follow up actions required for the aquifer isotope study. The researchers will use various methods to identify relative ages of the water sources. The project is estimated to take about a year to complete. The advisory committee must wait for that data to become available prior to reviewing the results and providing commentary.

(E) Health Equity Framework:

Chair Judge introduced the health equity framework document curated by Director Hart as the next topic to be discussed. Collins commended the document and felt as though it effectively conveyed the Board's stance and commitment to health equity. The Board members agreed to thoroughly review the document with the intent of discussing and approving it at the next Board meeting.

5. Old Business:

(A) Glyphosate and Glufosinate Regulation – Board to sign Regulation:

Director Hart mentioned that the Glyphosate and Glufosinate regulation was not signed at the last meeting after it was approved. Copies of the regulation were passed out and signed by the Board members.

(B) Minimum Standards for the Keeping of Animals Regulation – Board to sign Regulation:

Director Hart mentioned that the minimum standards for the keeping of animals regulation was not signed at the last meeting after it was approved. Copies of the regulation were passed out and signed by the Board members.

6. Set Next Meeting Date – (TBD) at 6:00 p.m. at South Hadley Library

The next meeting date was set for February 14th at 6:00 pm in the Trustees room at the South Hadley library. All present members were in consensus with the next meeting date being February 14th at 6pm at the library.

Discussion about use of Round Up at Orchards Golf Club pursued:

Chair Judge shared that it was confirmed by Orchards Golf Club management that Round Up has not been used on the property in the last 5 years.

7. Adjourn the meeting:

Chair Judge mentioned he would accept a motion to adjourn the meeting. Walsh Pio made the motion and Dr. McKiernan seconded it. All members were in consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Monasia Ceasar

As Approved – Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2023

ATTACHMENT A

RECORD LOCATION

Director's Report	BOH File
BOH Meeting Minutes 11.22.22	BOH File