

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

April 11, 2023

As Approved May 16, 2023

Present: Tony Judge, Chair; Karen Walsh Pio, Board of Health Clerk; Stephan Frantz, Board Member; Jessica Collins, Board Member; Sharon Hart, Public Health Director; Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Public Health Director; Monasia Ceasar, Health Compliance Specialist; Maureen Couture, Public Health Nurse; Nate Therrien, Master Plan Implementation Committee; Michelle Theroux, Master Plan Implementation Committee

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Judge.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the February 14, 2022, Meeting:

Chair Judge introduced the minutes from the 02/14/23 meeting and questioned if there were any comments or changes to be made. No changes were brought forth to the Board. Collins mentioned she was not at the last meeting and could not vote on the meeting minutes. Because there was not a quorum, the Board members decided to postpone the approval of the minutes until the next meeting.

2. Announcements and Open Forum:

Chair Judge asked if there were any notions to be considered for the open forum. There were no notions brought forward for consideration.

3. New Business

A. COVID Update:

Director Hart shared there were little to no cases coming in and follow up is set to end as of May 11th. The wastewater testing has also shown the dramatic decline in COVID cases. The UMass nurses will be hosting a vaccine clinic at the Council of Aging on April 14th. Walsh Pio questioned if the FDA had approved the second booster. Hart noted that she had not received such notice yet. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has issued information regarding the redefinition of COVID deaths and how that may impact future data.

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Chair Judge questioned if the Department had the capacity to quickly administer vaccines if the need were to arise. Hart and Couture noted that the Department has the capacity to set up a clinic quickly with the use of third-party vendors like Walgreens. The third-party vendors would bring and administer the vaccine as well as process all the corresponding paperwork. Judge asked if the older population would receive priority with receiving the vaccines. Hart shared that it would depend upon the virus at hand and referenced H1N1 as an example.

Frantz virtually joined the meeting.

B. Emergency Order to Vacate- 76 Alvord St, 100 Abbey St, and 13-15 Canal St

Chair Judge introduced the ratification of three emergency orders to vacate as the next topic for consideration. Director Hart shared that both 76 Alvord St and 100 Abbey St were condemned due to disconnection of utilities and the condemnation of 13-15 Canal St was the result of a fire. Frantz expressed his concerns about condemning a unit due to failure of providing payment. Hart noted that typically the utility provider has made several attempts to collect payment or start a payment plan prior to alerting the Health Department. The Health Department must condemn dwellings that are deemed uninhabitable, including the lack of utilities. Collins added that the occupants are typically not displaced, and restoration of utility services are made rather quickly after issuing the order. Chair Judge mentioned he would accept a motion to ratify the emergency orders to vacate. Collins made the motion and Walsh Pio seconded it. A roll call was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye
Jessica Collins: Aye
Tony Judge: Aye
Stephen Frantz: Aye

All Board members were in consensus.

C. Emails- Town provided emails

Chair Judge presented the town provided emails as the next matter of business. Director Hart mentioned that the town pays for an allotment of town issued emails. It has been noted that some email accounts are not being used. Hart advised Board members to either utilize their town issued email or notify her of their choice not to so that their email slot can be reassigned to someone else. Judge and Walsh Pio shared their inability to access their town email and agreed to follow up with IT on gaining access. Jernigan verified that Board members were able to access the meeting documents sent via email.

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Walsh Pio noted she had issues accessing the link with the agenda packet but believed it to be a technological issue with her personal computer. Therrien questioned if the Board member's email addresses are listed on the Department's webpage for constituents to reach them. Director Hart shared that Board members' email addresses are not listed as all inquiries are preferred to be funneled through the Department staff to avoid violating the open meeting law and helping to keep everything organized. Collins emphasized the importance of utilizing the town email for Board of Health purposes to avoid having your privacy compromised in the case of a legal situation.

D. Master Plan Update

Chair Judge introduced the Master Plan update as the next topic of discussion and shared that Director Hart and Collins have overseen the efforts on this. Collins noted that one of the board's assigned tasks and responsibilities included regulatory duties, in which the Board enacts, adopts, and updates regulations regularly. The rental registry, livestock, and glyphosate and glufosinate regulations were shared as examples. Therrien mentioned that Boards should be updating the report with such information to keep the plan moving along as well as to keep the public informed on the progress. Therrien also shared that challenges, issues, or setbacks should also be brought forth. Collins proposed having Ceasar generate the update utilizing the meeting minutes.

Therrioux clarified that MPIC is asking relevant boards and committees to report biannually with summarizations on progress made and barriers they have encountered. These reports will be reviewed by MPIC, planning, and Town Administration to identify reoccurring issues, potential opportunities for collaboration, and improvements that could be made. Often, budgets and lack of resources are identified as commonalities seen amongst the different groups. There are two forms of reporting regarding the Master Plan. One of them includes in person conversations with MPIC representatives on the board's progress and the other being the submission of the updated matrix.

Theroux asked if the Board has faced any challenges when trying to complete their assigned tasks and responsibilities. Director Hart shared that most of the grants coming in are targeting environmental justice groups. The Rental Registry will aid the Department in getting a better understanding of the population and potential resources that would benefit vulnerable populations. The registry would also help with future mapping of the town including the location of environmental justice groups in relation to liquor stores, grocery stores, and causes of deaths. The Rental Registry was sent to Town Counsel for review and Town Counsel added the appeal process which is usually separate.

Director Hart mentioned that several communities have asked to join the 31 communities already a part of the tobacco coalition. Limitations such as staff shortages and funding must be considered. A retail store regulation has been drafted. The regulation would mandate tobacco retail stores to establish a

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lithium battery take back program. The regulation is being reviewed by legal to check if it can be implemented seeing as the batteries are concerned hazardous wastes. Hart noted she is seeking to work with South Hadley Schools on potentially educating students and parents on mental health and addiction. Research has shown 42.7% of smokers start with depression and anxiety and can be linked to their inability to cope with negative feelings or not being appeased.

Collins also shared that the Board has faced challenges and raised the permitting issues with Skinner Woods and the 3 Corners Store as examples. Collins proposed that improvements in communication could help mitigate situations where multiple permits across various Departments are being issued. Collins mentioned that there were times when the Board of Health had strong feelings regarding a topic but no governing authority. Theroux and Therrien both replied that the Master Plan supports intersectionality and will facilitate such interactions. Therrien recalled when the Board of Health proposed provisions to the Planning Board for E-ink regarding air quality monitors that were adopted. The Board can help to signal or alert the necessary parties of such issues or things that they believe to be of valid concern. Collins agreed to update the matrix accordingly and submit it for review.

Therrien emphasized the importance of informing MPIC of the issues that the Board members encounter and proposed communication as a potential area of concern. Collins shared the progress she has witnessed as a resident in Town with communication. Hart shared the Department's methods of communicating information to the community. Therrien noted that the Board should mention anything hindering them from doing so.

Director Hart shared that the Department will be beginning a new initiative in which focus will be placed on a different chronic disease. Couture shared that the initiative would bring forth awareness and educational resources regarding emerging chronic diseases in the community. Therrien added that one of the objectives includes identifying key issues in town as it relates to diversity and inclusion. Walsh Pio highlighted the efforts of the Drug and Alcohol Coalition and their programming relative to drug use prevention amongst the youth. Hart added that the Department recently participated in the panel for the Age and Dementia friendly group, hosted Narcan training at the Senior Center, and facilitated a stop the bleed training at town hall. Hart is also working towards setting up life saving stations in town buildings and coordinating training for that as well. Therrien shared that the updated matrixes will be made public and shared with the Town Administrator, Selectboard, Planning Board, School Committee, etc.

Theroux and Therrien reiterated that boards and committees should bring forth successes and challenges that they've encountered while conducting business. MPIC is preparing to meet with the Town Administrator, Selectboard, and Planning Board to report on the status of the respective boards and committees. A common trend amongst boards and committees is the difficulty associated with

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tracking one's success and lacking the metrics to do so. Walsh Pio highlighted the importance of keeping data to prove the efficacy of implemented programs as done in the Drug and Alcohol Coalition. Theroux and Therrien thanked the Board for their time and noted they look forward to seeing and reviewing their updated matrix.

Theroux and Therrien exited the meeting.

E. PFAS Discussion

Frantz proposed enacting a regulation that would restrict the town from purchasing known PFAS products as they are very harmful. Collins added she would be willing to hear additional research on this topic. Hart noted the potential difficulty with passing such a regulation, citing budgeting barriers and legal constraints. The wastewater treatment plant is looking to begin monitoring PFAS concentration levels. Hart proposed that Frantz gather some data and present his findings at the next meeting for further consideration. Frantz agreed to do so.

F. Proclamation in Support of Asthma Awareness Month

Director Hart introduced Nurse Couture to discuss Asthma Awareness month. Couture mentioned that under the direction of Hart, she will be developing programming as a part of the Department's initiative to target chronic diseases every month. The initiative will bring forth exposure and education about common chronic diseases that are impacting the community. Couture has conducted research on the prevalence of asthma, common triggers, mitigation strategies, and outreach services available. This information will be made available on the town website. Couture has connected with officials from the town library and schools in hopes of discussing ways in which this information can be conveyed to the children and their families.

Collins noted the importance of this work as asthma can be very costly for the healthcare system. Collins shared there is a Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition and Holyoke has recently allocated ARPA funds to acquire Healthy Home services for the city. Director Hart proposed that the Board members accept the proclamation declaring May Asthma Awareness month in sign of support of the initiative. Collins suggested adding in healthy inequity to the proclamation. Chair Judge shared he would accept a motion to accept the proclamation would the understanding that the requested information would be added. Collins made a motion and Walsh Pio seconded it. A rollcall was taken. All Board members were in consensus.

Nurse Couture left the meeting.

G. Rental Registry- Update

Chair Judge introduced the Rental Registry as the next topic of business. Walsh Pio questioned if the regulation overlapped with the Planning Board at all. Hart noted that the Rental Registry had little crossover with the Planning Board, except verifying if the rental unit is zoned properly. Director Hart shared that the regulation was reviewed by Town Counsel and a few minor grammatical errors and appeal process were added. Collins questioned if whether the Rental Registry was supporting the landlord or the tenant from an equity lens. Director Hart and Ceasar both shared that they believed the Rental Registry helped to support both the tenant and owner, as the owner would have to attest to the standards of the unit as well as provide relative information and resources to the tenant.

Collins mentioned the difficulty that some tenants face when reporting housing issues as they fear the possibility of being homeless. Walsh Pio expressed the importance of protecting the tenants' rights against housing injustices and equity. Director Hart shared the State Sanitary Code protects tenants against the raising of rent and termination of a lease for 6 months following a report being made to the Health Department to prevent landlord retaliation. Hart highlighted that the Town Counsel modeled the appeal process found in the Sanitary Code for the rental regulation. Hart noted this would be new for the town. Ceasar prompted the Board members to vote on the issuance of the Rental Registry regulation. Collins made a motion to do so, and Walsh Pio seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye

Tony Judge: Aye

Jessica Collins: Aye

Stephen Frantz: Aye

All Board members were in favor.

4. Old Business:

A. Glufosinate/ Glyphosate Regulation-Sign

Hart mentioned that the regulation was previously approved with the understanding that the requested changes would be made and just needed to be signed. The Board members decided to vote on it again. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye

Tony Judge: Aye

Jessica Collins: Aye

Stephen Frantz: Aye

All Board members were in consensus. Hart passed the regulations around to be signed.

3. New Business:

H. Remote Meetings- Policy and Practice

Walsh Pio shared she was interested in clarifying the remote meeting policy as she believes the state had recently issued the approval for an extension of remote meetings. Director Hart noted that the Selectboard had recently enacted a remote meeting policy and practice for the Town and suggested that the Board review it. Director Hart clarified that the Board of Health must adhere to the remote meeting policies and procedures enacted by the Select Board.

Hart reviewed the policies and procedures before the Board, noting that Board members must request the ability to participate in a Board meeting virtually in advance to the Chair with reasoning as to why being physically present would be reasonably difficult. Collins questioned if the Select Board issued this policy to ensure that constituents had access to these meetings. Hart replied she believed it was targeted more towards enabling the Board members to be present to vote on various matters. Ceasar suggested that community accessibility may have been one of the key reasons as to why the state extended their approval of hybrid and or virtual meetings.

(4) Old Business:

(B) Health Equity Policy Framework

Director Hart proposed that the Board members vote on the Health Equity Framework. Chair Judge made the motion and Walsh Pio seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye

Tony Judge: Aye

Jessica Collins: Aye

Stephen Frantz: Aye

All Board members were in favor.

Proposal for Next Meeting Topic

Walsh Pio proposed adding ticks as a potential topic to be discussed at the next Board meeting following the suggestion from a constituent.

(C) South Hadley Human Rights Commission

Collins shared that although originally nominated for the position, she will be unable to fulfill that obligation at this time. She in turn suggested the appointment of a colleague of hers, Jonencia Wood. The Board members supported Collins' suggestion. Chair Judge questioned if the recommended candidate was a South Hadley resident. Collins confirmed she was not and that she was unfamiliar with the residency requirements. Hart agreed to follow up on those requirements.

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

The next meeting date was set for May 16th 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 May 16th at 6pm at the library. There was a reminder that the Board will have to restructure at the beginning of the next Board meeting following the election results.

Discussion about the South Hadley Drug & Alcohol Coalition

Walsh Pio suggested that an update on the Coalition be added to next meeting's agenda as a topic for discussion. Chair Judge agreed to do so. Collins questioned when the youth survey results would be available for review. Walsh Pio reported that the turnaround for the survey results is typically within two months.

7. Adjourn the meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully,

Monasia Ceasar

ATTACHMENT A

RECORD LOCATION

BOH Meeting Minutes 01.10.23	BOH File
Director’s Report	BOH File
Glufosinate/ Glyphosate Regulation	BOH File
Health Equity Policy Framework	BOH File
Rental Registry Regulation Draft	BOH File
Master Plan Status Update Instructions	BOH File
Health Department and Board of Health Action Items	BOH File
2.14.23 Board of Health Meeting Minutes Draft	BOH File
Remote Participation Policy	BOH File
Open Meeting Law	BOH File