

JOHANNA RAVENHURST, Chair  
TONY JUDGE, Vice-Chair  
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC 1, Clerk  
JESSICA COLLINS  
DR. CHRISTINE MCKIERNAN, MD

SHARON D. HART, Public Health Director

## Board of Health Minutes

May 11, 2021

As Approved – June 8, 2021

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

*The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:38 p.m. by Chair Collins.*

### 1: Acceptance of Minutes:

Chair Collins stated she would accept a motion to approve the minutes for the March 9 2021 meeting.

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

Walsh Pio: Aye  
Ravenhurst: Aye  
McKiernan: Abstained  
Judge: Aye  
Collins: Aye

### 2: Executive Session:

Chair Collins accepted a motion to move into Executive session for the purpose of litigation under Massachusetts General Law 30A Section 21. The meeting will reconvene after the session ends.

Judge made the motion to move into Executive session and Walsh Pio seconded the motion. A roll call was then taken:

Walsh Pio: Aye  
Judge: Aye  
Ravenhurst: Aye  
McKiernan: Aye  
Collins: Aye

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### **3: Board Reorganization:**

Sharon Hart explained the need for reorganization within the board as elections just took place. The various positions: Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk must be voted on.

Jessica Collins expressed her gratitude for the learning experience bestowed upon her while being the Chair. She is ready to step down after two years and continue to grow and learn as a member of the Board.

Walsh Pio mentioned she would be happy to continue on as the clerk. Judge expressed his willingness to stay as Vice Chair. Johanna Ravenhurst said she would be happy to serve as Chair.

Jessica Collins stated she would accept a motion to appoint the annual positions of the Board to be the following: Johanna Ravenhurst as Chair, Tony Judge as Vice Chair, and Karen Walsh Pio as Clerk. Christine McKiernan seconded it. A roll call was taken:

Tony Judge: Aye  
Karen Walsh Pio: Aye  
Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye  
Christine McKiernan: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye

Jessica Collins continued to facilitate the meeting, with Johanna agreeing to start running meetings next month.

### **4: Announcements and Open Forum:**

Monasia shared the first question left on the google forum. A community member voiced concerns about the lead concentration of the water faucets found in the back of classrooms at Mosier Elementary. Although it was below the 15 ppb, the readings still showed a concern with a screening of above 1 ppb. Have the faucets been turned off?

McKiernan replied that she was under the assumption that all drinking faucet usage had been suspended due to Covid. Monasia mentioned that as of May 10<sup>th</sup> drinking water fountains can resume activity per the governor's orders. Director Hart verified that she would check with the Superintendent

on the status of the faucets but believes that most of the faucets in the back of the classrooms have been designated as hand washing sinks only. The point of contact for facilities would now be Viv Price.

Another concern was raised about the recent influx of encounters with bears in town. Kathy Davis shared residents have witnessed bears in yards during the day at an unusual rate. They are unaware of safety protocols and standards. Residents are looking to get information and help. Would the Board of Health address a situation like this?

Director Hart responded that bears are not within the BOH range. Residents must seek out the help of a professional animal specialists for removal. However, the Board can issue out informational advisories to provide residents with some safety guidance on bears.

Collins shared about her personal encounter with a bear, in which she called the police. An environmental officer spoke with Collins and provided her with tips that should be included in the public memo. The tips mentioned were to shoot the bear if they are charging and destroying property, placing ammonia/chlorine-soaked rags around bear ridden areas, and using a blow horn (as bears are sensitive to sound).

Karen Walsh Pio expressed concern about shooting them as she remembered cops were unable to shoot a raccoon on her property due to proximity of other homes. Director Hart advised that the shooting of animals should be left to the discretion of the police department. Residents should not take it upon themselves to shoot the bears.

Hart agreed to work in conjunction with police department to create and distribute a safety memo on bears. Collins agreed to send contact info of the police officer she spoke to. Hart will stay in contact with community members and provide informational support.

## **5: New Business:**

### **COVID Update:**

Sharon Hart provided the overall numbers of COVID occurrences over the past month. There were only 4 new cases, no contacts. There has been a decrease of occurrences with the case numbers being 10 and 11 from the previous weeks. The age groups impacted were two fifty-year-olds, a 16 year old, and a 9 year old. No hospitalizations were required with any of the cases.

Tony Judge asked if there was anything that could be done to get more people vaccinated.

Sharon Hart mentioned she was open to suggestions. Currently, the efforts towards executing vaccinations have included: signage at the commons, reaching out to religious centers, getting people signed up for the clinics in Northampton and at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee, MA. Recently, clinics have been unable to fill appointment slots. As the vaccine becomes more available the recipient pool has decreased. The next target group is 12–15-year-olds. With the recipient pool decreasing, Northampton may begin to limit clinics.

Dr. McKiernan mentioned that the inclusion of data may be helpful to provide insight on where vaccination efforts are needed. If we were able to see what high risk populations have yet to receive the vaccine, specific clinics could be administered to service that group.

Director Hart mentioned that the numbers may be available online for the congregate care vaccine numbers. Within town, efforts have been made to address the homebound community as well as those in the Housing Authority.

Dr. McKiernan highlighted that little to no efforts have been made to inform the 12-15 year old target group and their families on the vaccine. The Board of Health should take advantage and provide the necessary information, so parents can make informed decisions for their children. Various media outlets should be used to get the information out.

Jessica Collins asked if school nurses are responsible for getting this messaging out to schools.

Hart answered by saying the nurses receive messaging from the state and then disperse it among the schools. The state also directly oversees the vaccination of all congregate care settings.

Director Hart provided introductions of those that work within the department. This included: Monasia Ceasar, the Compliance Specialist; Jennifer Jernigan, the Assistant Director, and Marge Bernard, the public health nurse.

Dr. McKiernan is interested in reviewing the incoming case numbers on a more in depth basis, to make sense of the risk level associated with certain settings. For example, compare the number of students in school vs. remote to the case numbers. This analysis could provide some insight to the efficiency of the safety practices being practiced in schools.

Hart shared that state epidemiologists analyze common occurrences and clusters to identify problem areas used to improve safety protocols. Monasia then helps these business establishments to create, implement and adhere to applicable safety standards. Hart recognized the tremendous efforts and work.

being done by Marge and the 4 nurses at the schools. They have worked extremely hard doing thousands of contact tracing calls for the town and schools and deserve to be recognized.

### **Mobile Convenience Plus-E-Cigarettes- Request to Speak at next Meeting**

Jennifer Jernigan recalled receiving an inquiry from the owner of the Mobil gas station seeking the opportunity to speak at the next meeting. He wants to bring forth his concerns and propose that the town modify its latest tobacco regulation and allow for the sell of e-cigarettes.

Other towns allow it, and his business has been negatively impacted since the regulation was instated.

Director Hart mentioned e-cigarettes sales are only allowed at adult retail establishments. Adult retail establishments can only sell tobacco related products and nothing else. There is currently one permit issuance available for use in the town.

Jessica Collins asked if there needs to be a vote or would the chair determine final agenda items.

Director Hart mentioned it would be up to the chair to finalize agenda topics.

Walsh Pio expressed concern on that topic as she has served on the South Hadley Drug Coalition for 16 years. The data collected helped lead to the current ban. The data highlighted the negative impact of e-cigarettes on the youth. The data was thoroughly reviewed and considered heavily when making the decision. If the Board were to consider hearing from Mobile, we should also consider bringing forth the youth to present the ill impacts e-cigarettes has on teens.

Tony Judge questioned why the board would consider hearing such a proposal when a lengthy review was already conducted prior to instating the ban. Is there a legal obligation to hear his proposal?

Collins and Ravenhurst agreed it would be great to get clarification on what the Board can object to hearing out.

Director Hart stated she would reach out to administration to get clarification.

### **Public Health Concerns- Fossil Fuel Burning Plant**

Sharon Hart shared that the Board received a letter urging for the Board of Health to provide a recommendation or lack thereof for the fossil fuel electric plant in Peabody, MA.

Judge expressed his disapproval for the project and urged the board not to get involved.

Ravenhurst questioned the relationship between the fossil fuel electric project and the Board of Health.

Dr. McKiernan believed the letter was asking the board to take a stand on the issue and express those views to SHELD. Prior to the board doing that, more information would have to be received on the impacts and alternatives to give a well-informed response.

Walsh Pio suggested inviting a representative from SHELD to an upcoming board meeting to provide insight and further explanation on the project. To her understanding, SHELD has already signed a contract. SHELD could provide more details on the project, the associated risks, and the level of commitment involved.

Collins agreed it would be a good idea to invite SHELD to a meeting prior to issuing out a recommendation. The messages issued out by the Board of Health have great influence, and deep consideration must be taken before making them.

### **What Health Departments Do and Board of Health Member Roles**

Collins questioned if Mike Sullivan was present at the meeting. She was hoping to receive some clarification on the role of the Board of Health during the pandemic as well as Director Hart's numerous roles within the town. During the pandemic there has been confusion surrounding the covid-19 town decisions. It was always stated in conjunction with the Board of Health although the board was not involved in the decision making. She believed the emergency preparedness aspect took precedence over the situation. The media conveyed the Board of Health's involvement in a confusing way. Collins will send a follow up email to Sullivan to reschedule for June.

### **Emergency Order to Vacate-13 Riverboat Village -Ratify**

Sharon Hart mentioned that there was a unit fire at Riverboat Village. She was called to the scene and condemned the unit. Hart was looking for the board to ratify the condemnation. Walsh Pio made a motion and Judge seconded it. A rollcall was taken:

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye

Tony Judge: Aye

Johanna Rvenhurst: Aye

Dr. Christine Mckiernan: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye

Hart reported an update that the cleaning had begun at 13 Riverboat Village.

### **Emergency Order to Vacate-11 Silver Street-Ratify and Update**

Hart mentioned there was another fire at 11 Silver St. There is an illegal apartment with an occupant above the garage in the back of the property. The building commissioner reported to the scene and documented the illegal apartment. Hart and Jernigan issued the condemnation notice to the homeowner. The owner expressed she was unable to speak at the time but gave permission for the garage to be placarded with the notice. An attorney reached out on behalf of the homeowner, stating it is not a board of health issue and only related to the Building department. The town counsel is responding to that matter. Hart is looking for the board to ratify the condemnation. Collins will accept a motion to ratify. Walsh Pio made the motion and Ravenhurst seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye  
Tony Judge: Aye  
Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye  
Dr. Christine Mckiernan: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye

### **6: Old Business:**

#### **Update to Columbia/Eversource- Pesticide Regulation**

Tony Judge was looking to remind Eversource that they may not use Round Up on town property as they remove shrubbery and undergo their powerline project.

Director Hart mentioned she emailed Amy Henderson of Columbia the latest pesticide regulation and was told that it would be forwarded to the appropriate internal department.

#### **Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

Jessica requested the status of this matter. She recalled the presentation by Apio Consulting about the surveying being conducted in town hall. She also mentioned the statement issued by the Select board on this topic. What action if any is the Board of Health doing regarding racism in town.

Dr. McKiernan highlighted there were various anti-racism initiatives happening separately within the town. Kiernan believes this approach is not sustainable. One main town initiative with clear objectives, goals, and a mission statement would be much more effective, and subcommittees could extend from that.

Walsh Pio recalled an original group of members from different sectors of town being established to bring forth equity and social justice issue within South Hadley. Walsh Pio is not sure what the status of this group is and their associated efforts are. She remembered Sarah Etelman being a part of it.

Jessica Collins agreed to reach out to Sarah Etelman and Mike Sullivan regarding an updated status on the anti-racism surveying/efforts in town.

#### **7: Set Next Meeting Date-(TBD) at 4:30 p.m. Virtual using Zoom**

Jessica Collins set the next Board of Health meeting for June 8, 2021 at 4:30 pm.

Dr. McKiernan mentioned that the website listed the Board of Health meetings to be on the first Tuesday of the month.

#### **8: Adjourn Meeting**

Collins stated she would accept a motion to adjourn the meeting. Walsh Pio made the motion and Ravenhurst seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye

Tony Judge: Aye

Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye

Dr. Christine McKiernan: Aye

Jessica Collins: Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Monasia Ceasar  
Health Compliance Specialist

**ATTACHMENT A**

<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>RECORD LOCATION</b>
Mobile Convenience E- Cigarette Proposal Request	BOH File
Tobacco Regulation	BOH File
Public Health Concern Fossil- Fuel Burning Plant Email	BOH File
Emergency Condemnation Notice 11 Silver Street	BOH File
Emergency Condemnation Notice 13 Riverboat Village	BOH File