

Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
November 20, 2023

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

DATE: January 9, 2024  
TIME: 9:13 AM

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm by Adrienne Allen.

Those present were Adrienne Allen, M.D., M.P.H., Chair; Stephen M. Fiore, Esq., Vice Chair; Julie C. Lemay, M.P.H, Member; Wesley Chin, Health Director; Diana Ekman, Asst. Health Director; Lindsey Sharp, Health Agent; David Neylon, Public Health Nurse; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care & Control Officer; Maria Reddington, Clerk

There was no public participation.

The Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2023 were approved by a vote of 3-0.

The Receipt and Financial reports were reviewed.

The Director/Assistant Director/Health Agent report was reviewed:

- Housing – Wes made note there are a significant number of active housing cases.
  - Case 1: Another property was referred to the Attorney General Abandoned Housing Initiative. A demand notice was sent by this Agency on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Roy Epstein, Select Board Chair asked the Health Department to make a request to the AG office to place the property in receivership. The AG's office response was the process is lengthy and complicated.
  - Case 2: Staff were called to this property today. Hoarding conditions were so excessive that the entry door had to be removed in order that emergency personnel could gain entrance to the property.
  - Case 3: Staff have been called to another property, with the occupant suffering from mental health related issues. This inspection is scheduled for tomorrow.
  - Case 4: Staff continue to work on a 2 family, owner occupied property. The unit in question was abandoned by the tenant. The unit is filled with trash, and the tenant is not responsive to any requests to clean up.

Dr. Allen encourages staff to reach out to Board members if support is needed with any complicated housing matters.

- Rats
  - Lindsey Sharp reports there were 6 new complaints received.
  - The owners of the Leonard Street commercial building are providing weekly pest control reports.
  - Staff reached out to the Academic Public Health Corps for assistance in translating rodent notice materials. The Spanish translation was done by them, other language translation was outsourced. Due to cost only the Armenian and Chinese letter portion of the materials were translated.

- Social Media – Topics shared this month included vaccination clinics, Veterans’ Breakfast, vaping community forum hosted by the Belmont Wellness Coalition, availability of COVID and flu vaccine at the Health Department for under-insured/uninsured residents, safe turkey thawing tips, and RSV illness prevention information.
- COVID Updates
  - The North System MWRA COVID-19 Wastewater Tracking Report was included in the report.
- Opioid Settlement Funds
  - Jennifer Hewitt, Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director, explained to Town Meeting members there was an administrative error in setting up a fund for appropriation of the opioid settlement funds. Another vote will take place at the Spring 2024 Town Meeting.
  - A draft of the opioid abatement community survey was reviewed by Board members. Board members commented the survey was thorough. It was also suggested to ask vaccine clinic attendees to complete a survey while they wait for a vaccine.
- Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant
  - The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was reviewed and approved by Town Counsel. The Board of Health Chair will need to sign the MOU.
  - There is a plan to hire 2 Public Health Specialists – 1 to service Arlington/Belmont, and 1 to service Brookline/Newton. Interviews for the positions will begin in January.
- FY25 Budget Meetings
  - Wes and Dr. Allen met with the Select Board to review the departmental budget. The meeting focused on the Public Health Agent position, currently paid for with ARPA funds.

The Public Health Nurse report was reviewed. The report shared information about Norovirus outbreaks in food establishments.

The Disease report was reviewed. Of note, 2 flu cases.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed. The Giving Tree will be displayed November 17<sup>th</sup>. Janet Amdur, Youth and Family Services Coordinator, reports there are 13 gift requests and she expects more requests soon after Thanksgiving.

The Animal Care and Control Officer report was reviewed. Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care & Control Officer, summarized details of the Off Leash Permit 6-month pilot program. Some changes to the Program include not allowing dogs on the field at Winn Brook (it is too difficult to enforce), field availability rules for the Program, and allowing on-leash dogs on the fields.

The Veterans Services Officer report was reviewed. Bob coordinated another successful Veteran’s Day breakfast at the Beech Street Center.

Email Rotation:

Julie Lemay will review the emails sent to the Board of Health email address.

The next Board of Health Meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024 at 5:00 pm. If needed, the Board will meet via ZOOM on December 11, 2023.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne Allen, M.D., M.P.H., Chair