

BOARD OF HEALTH
Hearing Room, Second Floor, City Hall: 210 Main Street
February 25, 2020 Minutes

BOH Members Present: Joanne Levin; Suzanne Smith; Cynthia Suopis; and Laurent Levy

BOH Members Absent: None

Staff: Merridith O’Leary, Director and Melissa Roberts-Cote, BOH Clerk

Staff Absent: None

Meeting opened February 25, 2020 at 5:32 pm by Joanne Levin

I. Public Comment Session: No Public Comments

II. Review Minutes

A. Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2020.

Motion: Approved as amended: Motion made by Laurent Levy to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Suzanne Smith. All were in favor (4-0).

III. Discussion:

A. Health Department Coordinators Update

Loren Davine, Coordinator for the Hampshire Public Health Coalition (HPHPC) and Hampshire County Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) spoke to the Board about the emergency preparedness planning that she is doing with HPHPC and MRC. The planning is county wide within Hampshire County assisting local communities with their specific emergency preparedness focusing around sheltering, and emergency dispensing. The Regional Shelter for Northampton/Hampshire County is located at Smith Vocational Agricultural High School, which Ms. Davine oversees.

Ms. Davine explained that part of her position is to create relationships with stakeholders in order to support the work that might be needed within the community by recruiting volunteers to assist in case of a true emergency. The American Red Cross is one of the stakeholders that would send volunteers should the Regional Shelter open for an emergency; the MRC has their own volunteers with a variety of skillsets to assist. UMASS Nursing Program has embedded the MRC into their curriculum. The UMASS Nursing Program students are required to become MRC volunteers as part of their education. The number of MRC volunteers is 800, including 600 students; and 200-250 community members, the majority of which are nurses.

Emergency Dispensing Sites (EDS) are another area that falls under the umbrella that Ms. Davine coordinates. If there is a public health emergency, the MRC can dispense medication or administer vaccines to the public. Ms. Davine indicated that it was important to have the right accommodations, such as location, space, supplies, parking and volunteers or staff. The HPHPC has a Public Health Trailer that is used for smaller scale needs, such as a location to examine patients. Cooley Dickinson Hospital used the trailer in 2019 during the measles outbreak for examining patients. In 2017, 11,000 people were vaccinated at EDS during a Meningitis B outbreak, with 50 stations set up, and it took less than 10 minutes to be registered

and vaccinated. The Hampshire County MRC received an award for the work done stating they were instrumental in the Meningitis B response.

Ms. Davine discussed the required mandated reporting to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) regarding which shelters are open, when emergency dispensing is occurring, and all of the drills conducted in preparedness planning. Ms. Davine addressed how drills are an essential part of the job and requires extensive planning. The MRC is required to run drills of various types such as preparedness, registration, sheltering, web EOC drills, and emergency dispensing drills. They conduct exercises to ensure that preparedness plans are solid and proficient. Unified messaging through the Hampshire County is something that the MRC is working on with all communities. MRC wants to ensure that all communities receive the same message across the county.

Ready to Respond is a \$2,500.00 dollar grant that was awarded to the MRC this year. The grant funds will assist with community trainings. The trainings will cover stop the bleed, CPR, and Narcan overdose prevention. The trainings will start in April, May and June.

B. Tobacco Regulation Debriefing

Dr. Levin addressed the Board that she did not feel that the process for the Tobacco Hearing on January 16, 2020 was as collaborative as it could have been with owners of businesses selling tobacco products. She stated that she and Director O'Leary met with Guarang Patel, owner of Bird's Store in Florence, after the hearing to hear about his business and learn how tobacco and lottery sales are what allows him to keep the doors open. Director O'Leary felt that Mr. Patel was very insightful with his business ideas and how things could look going forward. In January, many people vocalized that they want their corner convenience store to be there for simple things like, milk, tobacco, lottery, and other items. Mr. Patel stated his business is like a community center where people stop by for coffee and will congregate to talk to one another and check in with him. Dr. Levin indicated that she would like to revisit this in the future.

Suzanne Smith noted that working on the two tobacco regulations at the same time may cause confusion. It was noted that more work on the enforcement aspects of the smoke free downtown initiative needs to occur.

Director O'Leary listed the steps taken to educate the public and the license owners on the proposed changes in the tobacco regulations. These initiatives included letters to merchants, inviting the public to hearings, sending four mass mailings and summarizing all the comments sent to the Health Department. It was noted the Board of Health proposed regulations and public comment sessions were occurring in tandem with changes at the state level.

C. Vaccination Update

Joanne Levin spoke about the Community Immunity Act proposal that standardizes and centralizes exemptions to vaccines. This will require private and public schools to report their numbers and exemptions, which will be made public, allowing people to know what the rate of immunity is in our schools. The proposal does not take away medical and religious exemptions

but requires paperwork that is reviewed and needs to be approved by Department of Public Health (DPH). Parental exemptions required approved by DPH, which may reduce religious exemptions.

D. Board Discussion: Future Projects

Board discussion regarding future projects that the Board would like to work on going forward- was initiated by Joanne Levin. A discussion ensued regarding starting projects now or waiting until the fifth Board Member has been selected. Joanne Levin stated after speaking with Mayor Narkewicz there were no applications for the fifth Board Member. Director O'Leary confirmed this and stated she was hoping for an applicant with expertise other than medicine. Director O'Leary will post the position on the Board of Health Social Media and send a copy of the link to the Board Members.

IV. Department Updates:

- Pulaski Park Update: Director O'Leary would like all of the components (signs, smoking hut, and advertisement) to be in place prior to the police and health agents conducting the tobacco free education in the park. The signs are in the Health Department waiting to be installed by Central Services Department. She would also like to put an advertisement in the newspaper prior to any education in the community to advise them of the initiative. The tobacco free education in the park is currently on hold until all of the key components are in place. The smoke free workplace regulation will need to be reviewed with regard to enforcement section, if citations are warranted.
- Suzanne Smith inquired about Coronavirus (COVIR-19). Director O'Leary will be meeting with the Public Health Nurse to discuss how to proceed should there be any outbreaks in Northampton. Joanne Levin advised that Cooley Dickinson should be contacting the Health Department as well.
- The Health Department sponsored a Municipal Training with a focus on Stop the Bleed, Automatic External Defibrillation (AED), and Narcan training. Fifty-six municipal staff attended the training. Trainers were John Garriepy, Deputy Chief of EMS, Michele Farry, Assistant Program Coordinator for Hampshire Hope and Joe Healy from Bound Tree Medical.

Meeting Closed: Motion to Close Meeting: Motion made to close the Board of Health meeting by Cynthia Suopis, seconded by Suzanne Smith, all in favor (4-0)

Meeting closed at 7:22 PM.

The next scheduled Board of Health Meeting: March 19, 2020
Melissa Roberts-Cote, BOH Clerk

BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: February 25, 2020

Hearing Room, Second Floor, City Hall, 210 Main Street

Meeting Document List

The following documents were available to the Board of Health during their scheduled meeting.

These documents are available for review at the:

Northampton Health Department, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060

- Meeting Agenda
- January 16, 2020 Minutes
- Tobacco Regulation
- Community-based Vaccine Education Focusing on Risk Perception
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