

BOARD OF HEALTH
On-line Zoom Teleconference Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82106418447?pwd=TDZCRG9JMjdrV01TYnJBjNvcHNCdz09>

Meeting ID: 821 0641 8447 Passcode: UvFnI5pD

September 9, 2021 Minutes

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

BOH Members Absent: None

Staff: Merridith O’Leary, Director and Kelly Constantine, BOH Clerk; Melissa Aloisi, Kate Moskos, Wendy Penner, Austin Sanders, Vivian Franklin

Staff Absent:

Public Comment Session: Dr. Levin announced that public comments would be limited to two minutes per person. There were no public comments.

I. Meeting opened September 9, 2021 at 5:33 pm by Dr. Levin, who announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Motion made to open the Board of Health meeting by Laurent Levy, seconded by Cynthia Suopis. All in favor (4-0).

II. Review Minutes

A. Meeting Minutes from August 26, 2021.

Approval of minutes tabled to next meeting.

III. New Hire Introductions: Each person gave a brief description of their backgrounds and current job role. Plan is to have a team member attend each meeting to further present their role and mission.

- a. Kate Moskos, Grants Administrator –background in public administration and accounting
- b. Melissa Aloisi, Database Integration Manager – works on the Health Information Exchange (HIE) database
- c. Wendy Penner, Drug Addiction and Recovery Team (DART) Coordinator – working on expanding the DART program into the Berkshires
- d. Austin Sanders, Regional Database Project Manager – works on the HIE database, and with community partners

IV. Presentation: *H.926 The Massachusetts Schoolchildren Pesticide Protection Act*’ by Carole Horowitz

Carole Harowitz gave a brief description of what [H.926, An Act relative to improving pesticide protections for Massachusetts schoolchildren](#) entails. The bill is currently with the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture of the Massachusetts State Legislature.

The purpose of the H.926 is to narrow the list of acceptable pesticides for use on outdoor grounds of any school, childcare center or school age childcare program in the Commonwealth. Only pesticides considered minimum risk by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and those permitted for organic use will be allowed near schools and childcare centers in Massachusetts, except in the case of a health emergency when school officials could apply for a waiver. H.926 is modelled after successful laws in Connecticut and New York.

Ms. Harowitz is looking for the Board to endorse the bill.

Motion to endorse the H.926 The Massachusetts Schoolchildren Pesticide Protection Act' made by Suzanne Smith, seconded by Cynthia Suopis. All in favor (4-0).

V. Department Updates:

Director O'Leary presented an updated department organization chart and indicated that a new DART coordinator and program assistant would be hired in the near future. Director O'Leary stated she had received notification of a new Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant award. The Board is interested in a one-page information sheet of current grants held within the Health Department. Dr. Levin asked how Director O'Leary has been so successful in bringing other communities to the table. Director O'Leary stated that fostering relationships is key, though certain standards need to be met for regionalization.

The Northampton Health Department was awarded the Massachusetts Department's Public Health Excellence Grant for \$300,000.00/year with the option to renew for three years. This grant is to build up public health nursing capacity for Hampshire County communities. Recently Director O'Leary hired three part-time public health nurses to support this project.

COVID updates. The last 14-day case count was 55, with a case incident rate of 14 per 100,000 for Northampton. There is a sports-related cluster at one of the local schools that has been reported to the state. Dr. Levin indicated that Mass Brigham has a vaccine mandate and employees must be vaccinated by December 1 or they will lose their job. Dr. Levin would like to recommend to City and local businesses that they have a vaccine mandate in place. The letter would be sent to the Mayor and local businesses, to encourage all employees to become vaccinated, and to provide time off to get vaccinated and to weather side effects, as warranted.

Director O'Leary has been meeting with the advisory committee to the superintendent and has supplied the superintendent with language for a mask mandate for the school committee to vote on. The Board discussed recommending a vaccine advisory for municipal employees and businesses.

Motion to compose and distribute to employers in Northampton a letter that we strongly encourage them to require vaccination of employees and staff (paid and unpaid workforce) made by Suzanne Smith, seconded by Laurent Levy. All in favor (4-0).

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

Meeting closed at 7:21 PM.

The next scheduled Board of Health Meeting: October 21, 2021, with the possibility of meeting sooner.
Kelly Constantine, BOH Clerk

BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: **September 9, 2021**

Zoom Teleconference Meeting ID: 82106418447 Passcode: UvFn15pD

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
- August 26, 2021_Minutes
- *H.926 The Massachusetts Schoolchildren Pesticide Protection Act'*