

**CITY OF SALEM
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
November 13, 2018**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Kirby, Chair, Dr. Jeremy Schiller, Kerry Murphy, Geraldine Yuhas, Datanis Elias, Esq.

ABSENT: Elizabeth Gagakis, Acting Health Agent

OTHERS PRESENT: Beth Gerard, City Council Liaison, Suzanne Darmody, Public Health Nurse, Maureen Davis, Clerk of the Board, Joanne Scott, Attorney Ed Moriarty

TOPIC

DISCUSSION/ACTION

- | | |
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| 1. Call to Order | 7:04pm |
| 2. Approval of Minutes
(October 9, 2018) | J. Schiller motioned to approve the minutes. K. Murphy 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed. |
| 3. Chairperson Communications | Communications will be discussed in item #5. |
| 4. Monthly Reports-Updates | |
| a. Public Health Nurse's Report | Gave flu shots to first responders and DPW.
There is a Hepatitis A outbreak in the homeless and street drug users.
S. Darmody will be vaccinating at Lifebridge on Thursday, October 11 th .
J. Schiller asked about the polio-like viral illness that has been discussed on the media the last few months.
S. Darmody said she hasn't heard anything from MDPH about it.
P. Kirby will write Mary Wheeler to get an update on the syringe service program.
She announced that she is ready for maternity leave any time now and has made arrangements for coverage.
Copy available at the BOH office. |
| b. Health Agent's Report | P. Kirby will ask E. Gagakis any questions members have about items on her report. B. Gerard has questions about the wells for new construction on the report.
Copy available at the BOH office. |
| c. Administrative Report | J. Schiller asked what happens to the money in the budget from Larry Ramdin's absence.
B. Gerard said that money has been allocated specifically for the Health Agent salary. The residual is held for the next person who has the position.
Copy available at the BOH office. |

**d. City Council
Liaison Updates**

B. Gerard reported that CDS in Holyoke Square has been approved for testing marijuana. A marijuana applicant that was slightly too close to a church has decided to withdraw their application because the Building Inspector said no. Councilor Turiel will represent the Council to review applications. ATG will be both medical and recreational. She has not had a single complaint about ATG.

J. Schiller suggested we ask the MAHB if we should be having any involvement and if we should be doing anything proactively.

B. Gerard said MA is leading the way in the prevention of gun violence and cited an article from vox.com.

G. Yuhas motioned to approve the reports. J. Schiller 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

**5. Update/Discussion Regarding
Health Agent Hiring Process &
Inspectional Services Model Task
Force**

Hiring news - The hiring subcommittee chose three finalists. After Lisa Cammarata checks references, hopefully by the end of the week, P. Kirby can send Board members detailed information on the finalist candidates. They will interview the candidates in open session.

Candidates can step out of the room during discussion/voting. There will be a roll call vote. It would be good to have City Solicitor, Beth Rennard, at the interview meeting.

One candidate is currently out of the country but will return next Tuesday and would like to possibly interview then. All members seem to be available. P. Kirby will keep members updated. The other candidates will be interviewed at another meeting, but soon.

Task Force meeting - K. Murphy reported that she and P. Kirby and Lisa Cammarata met with the Mayor, E. Gagakis, S. Darmody and Union representative Sarah Sosnowski on Monday. They discussed the possibility of the use of a public health consultant.

P. Kirby said the Mayor is encouraging the Board not to hire at this time. J. Schiller asked B. Gerard if the City Council has been approached about the ISD model. She said no, they have not been approached.

J. Schiller asked how long it would take to get an ISD model in place.

B. Gerard said it could be a year or more.

K. Murphy said the Mayor thought it would only take 3-6 months.

J. Schiller doesn't think it is a good idea to wait, especially since there is no guarantee that we will have an ISD. Also, E. Gagakis has made it clear she wants the position of Acting Health Agent to be temporary.

G. Yuhas said we need someone to be on the side of the Health Department employees.

J. Scott said this is a proposal by the Mayor. Why tweak anything that is already working well? The City Council will heavily weigh the Board's view on the subject, so she feels we should decide whether or not it is a good idea. She said that years ago the Board made the difficult and brave decision to ban smoking in restaurants. Many restaurant employees were afraid to speak up about the risk to their health because restaurant owners were very upset about it. Ultimately, the Board went against political pressure and chose to vote in favor of the ban because it was a public

health issue. Smoking was banned in other communities after Salem took the lead.

K. Murphy spoke to Cheryl Sbarra, the attorney for MAHB, who said the Amherst model is a good one because they still report directly to the Board. She distributed copies of a memo from Cheryl Sbarra to the Westminster Board of Health about her opinion of the possible restructuring of the Board of Health. It is MAHB's position that an autonomous Board of Health is best suited to perform the six functions of public health governance.

J. Scott pointed out that only the Board has the authority to hire a Health Agent.

E. Moriarty said MA General Law has a special branch of BOH in MA.

J. Schiller said the Board has yet to be given a compelling argument from the Mayor to show why the model she is proposing is superior to the current model for public health. We need more information in order to make an informed decision.

K. Murphy reported that no one from the Building Department was at the meeting with the Mayor on Monday, so we don't really know how they feel. An ISD would really impact the Building Department.

B. Gerard feels we need a head of the Health Department. If the Department is funded with a Health & Wellness Coordinator, then we can see what else we need.

S. Darmody said we need another inspector to help with all the added inspections.

P. Kirby read a note aloud that E. Gagakis sent him reiterating the need for a Health Agent with the proper qualifications.

J. Schiller said we are a weaker Department without a Health Agent. If we hire a strong Health Agent they could help with any future decisions.

G. Yuhas hopes that we could have a Health Agent by January 1st.

E. Moriarty said there seems to be a need for the chief executive to control the Board. There is no efficiency to be had with the proposed change. The Department has clearly been underfunded for years. The Board has many times asked for increased funding and has repeatedly been denied.

P. Kirby feels we need to hire a Health Agent and does not want to miss out on a qualified candidate based on a possible change in structure.

J. Scott suggested if a concrete plan for an ISD is put in place we should have a public hearing. She knows many other people, including past Board chairs and members, who would come and are against ISDs. In fact, previously the whole Board showed up to the City Council meeting in opposition to ISD.

6. New Business/Scheduling of Future Agenda Items

New Business - K. Murphy wrote a letter to the Dept. of Homeland Security on behalf of the Board strongly opposing the proposed public charge rule. The rule proposes adding new programs that would prevent immigrant families from accessing nutrition, health and human services programs thereby drastically undermining public health efforts.

J. Schiller motioned to approve the public charge rule letter that Kerry Murphy wrote. G. Yuhas 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

Scheduling of Future Agenda Items - Moving forward on interviews

K. Murphy will email M. Davis a copy of the letter to put on Board of Health letterhead and members will sign on Tuesday.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

G. Yugas motioned to adjourn. K. Murphy 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

8:52pm

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Davis
Clerk of the Board

*Next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, December 10, 2018 at 7:00pm
At City Hall Annex, 98 Washington Street, 1st Floor, Salem, MA*