

CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
February 4, 2021
5:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Board members virtually present courtesy of a system organized by the City's IT Department: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall; Frederick Cowan; Joe Rosa; and Claudia Schweitzer. Present from the Health Department: Health Director: Karin Carroll; Assistant Health Director: Max Schenk. Absent: Vice-Chairperson: Robert Harris.

Also present Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken.

The meeting started at 5:30 p.m.

This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a "raise hand" button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.

PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATION

There was no "Public Oral Communication".

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Cowan that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the meeting of January 7, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Ms. Schweitzer. **CARRIED.**

The Minutes from the January 19, 2021 Septic Review Subcommittee were tabled until the next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The January 19, 2021 Septic Review Subcommittee Report was tabled until the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no "New Business".

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION: COVID-19 response updates -

Ms. Carroll stated that in the last week or two, Covid-19 cases have been on the decline locally and state-wide. She stated that the number of hospitalizations and deaths are declining as well. She stated the positivity rate is just below 4%. She stated that cases are very low at the city's senior housing buildings. She stated that there are 61 active cases in Gloucester and only four hospitalizations. She stated that the wastewater positivity rate is also declining. She stated that the company that tests the wastewater said that they should be able to detect the new strains as they appear. She stated that they are concerned there might be an increase in Covid-19 cases if people have Superbowl parties and are traveling and such during school vacation week. She stated that they are also concerned about the new strains coming through in the next couple of weeks. She stated that the vaccination roll out has been very slow and the Department of Public Health said yesterday that they will likely be in Phase 2, Part 1 for all of February and most of March. She stated that the Public Health Nurse, Kelley Hiland, has been leading the vaccine clinics. She stated that clinics started on January 12 at the Rose Baker Senior Center and they have continued to hold at least one clinic every week since. She stated that 500 regional first responders and 220 people from Phase 1 have been vaccinated. She stated that 180 seniors were vaccinated today. She stated that the volunteers and Elise Sinagra, Director of the Senior Center, have been doing a fabulous job. She stated that they are limited to 100 doses per week by the Department of Public Health. She stated that they have been arranging transportation for seniors to get to the clinics and their biggest challenge is to coordinate the clinic information and help people know when and where the clinic will be. She stated that they are working with the Mayor's office to fund a vaccination team.

Ms. Schweitzer asked how seniors know about their vaccinations if they do not visit the senior center regularly. *Ms. Carroll* responded that eligible seniors should call the senior center.

The board thanked the Health Department for all their work around Covid-19.

Other Department Updates -

Ms. Carroll stated that the Dental Clinic's volume has been increasing. She stated that they had a busy fall continuing through December. She stated that the dental hygienist is going on maternity leave and they cannot find a replacement so they will reduce hours while she is on maternity leave.

Mr. Cowan stated that he is still interested in the Mass in Motion work plan and finding funds for a food distribution program this winter for older adults similar to what they did in the summer with the farmer's market. *Ms. Carroll* responded that she will inquire about that.

CONCERNS OF BOARD MEMBERS

Health Department Support- *Ms. Schweitzer* asked how the board can support the Health Department. *Ms. Carroll* responded that Mr. Rosa could follow up with Biobot regarding the testing of different strains of Covid-19 in the wastewater. *Mr. Rosa* responded that he would do that. *Ms. Carroll* stated that the schools are looking for someone to fill a six week appointment to help the schools with pool testing. She stated that the Board's support on the vaccination team would be appreciated.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting will be March 4, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

MOTION by Mr. Cowan to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Rosa **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____/S/ Bobbi Orlando_____

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

_____/S/ Richard Sagall_____

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:
February 4, 2021 Board of Health Agenda
February 4, 2021 Covid Metrics
January 7, 2021 Board of Health Minutes
January 19, 2021 Septic Review Subcommittee Minutes