

CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
June 3, 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; Vice–Chairperson: Robert Harris; Frederick Cowan; and Claudia Schweitzer. Present from the Health Department: Health Director: Karin Carroll; Assistant Health Director: Max Schenk; Regional Prevention Director: Amy Epstein; Health Inspector: Rachael Beslisle-Toler. Absent: Joe Rosa

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 Ms. Schweitzer that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of May 6, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Harris. **CARRIED.**

MOTION by Mr. Harris that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health Septic Review Subcommittee meeting of May 13, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Cowan read the following report:

"At its meeting on May 13, 2021 the Gloucester Board of Health Septic Review Subcommittee reviewed and approved variances for the following property:

40 Fort Hill Avenue (Map 136/ Lot 41)

Property owned by Susan Whilton Agusti and represented by Dan Ottenheimer, Mill River Consulting.”

Mr. Cowan stated that Mr. Rosa abstained from voting on the variances for 40 Fort Hill Avenue.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Schenk introduced the new Health Inspector, Rachael Beslisle-Toler. He stated that Ms. Beslisle-Toler will focus on housing inspections and will be an asset to the Health Department. He thanked Mr. Cowan, Craig Lopiccolo, and Brian Muleman for their assistance on the interview team.

Ms. Beslisle-Toler stated that she is very excited to be working for the Gloucester Health Department.

The board welcomed Ms. Beslisle-Toler.

Amy Epstein, Regional Prevention Director - Update on Recent Grant Awards and the Youth Prevention Efforts

Ms. Epstein stated that they have a new prevention center at Pond Road. She reviewed their team focus and vision:

- Working Up-stream
- Bolstering Protective Factors to Reduce Risk - Parental Involvement, Availability of After-school Activities, Trusted Adults
- Increase HOPE to Combat ACE: Attachment, Conversation, Literacy, Independence, Mastery

Ms. Epstein stated that they cover seven towns: Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Ipswich, Manchester, Rockport and 12 Sectors: Government Agency, Organizations/Agencies, Youth Organizations, Youth, Civic Groups, Parents, Business, Law Enforcement, Media, Faith Groups, Healthcare, Schools and Monthly Meetings: Youth and Adult.

Ms. Epstein stated that they have three pending grants:

- Tower Foundation Community Change Portfolio: North Shore/Cape Ann Youth Lead Mental Health Improvement Initiative
- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration Mental Health Training: North Shore Mental Health Crisis Intervention Training for First Responders
- Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Early Childhood Opioid Prevention: North Shore/Cape Ann Regional Early Intervention Prevention Initiative

Ms. Epstein stated that the Regional Youth Prevention Network’s mission is:

To create communities conducive to optimal social, emotional health and wellness for all youth by connecting direct service providers to close gaps and share prevention resources and best practices. She stated that the youth coalition is very active and they had 55 youth attend the first meeting. She stated that 33% of high school students in Gloucester reported being depressed in the survey they conducted pre-pandemic.

She stated that the youth coalition came up with a mask campaign to promote the wearing of masks in youths. She stated that the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) is a regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. She stated that the [Youth At Risk Resource Guide](#) is a searchable database that can assist families in finding resources available in Essex County.

Ms. Schweitzer asked how they met during the pandemic. *Ms. Epstein* stated that they made it work through Zoom meetings.

The board thanked *Ms. Epstein* for her presentation and her work. *Ms. Carroll* thanked *Ms. Epstein* for her enthusiasm and her hard work.

Discussion Regarding Cancellation of the BioBot Wastewater Monitoring Contract-

Ms. Carroll stated that the Biobot wastewater monitoring contract will end on July 1, 2021. She stated that as of last Friday COVID-19 and other variants were unable to be detected in the wastewater.

Ms. Schweitzer stated that the wastewater testing was a good predictor.

The board discussed funding and whether they could end the contract on July 1 but jump back on in the fall if they needed to.

Ms. Carroll stated that she will reach out to Biobot to see if they can suspend the account and she will ask administration if the funds for Biobot could be allocated towards something else.

MOTION by Mr. Harris that the Gloucester Board of Health let the Biobot contract expire on July 1, 2021. **Seconded** by *Ms. Schweitzer*. **CARRIED**.

Discussion Regarding Assigning the Chair of the Board of Health as the Authorizing Signatory to All Health Department Grants

Ms. Carroll stated that the public health grants do not go through the Board of Health Chairperson and it is typical for the Chairperson to be an authorizing signature.

MOTION by *Ms. Schweitzer* that the Gloucester Board of Health assign the Chairperson of the Board of Health to be the authorized signatory to all Health Department grants. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED**.

Creation of Search Committee for New Board of Health Member-

Ms Carroll stated that the only requirement for the Board of Health is that there are five members who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council.

The board discussed potential board members such as an EMT or a nurse practitioner.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion: COVID-19 Response Updates - *Ms. Carroll* stated that there are very low COVID-19 positivity rates in the state and in Gloucester. She stated that there is only 1 active case in Gloucester and zero new cases in the last few days. She stated that they do not have anymore planned vaccine clinics at this point. She stated that they do have access to vaccines if residents still need to be vaccinated. She stated that their focus will be to reach out to people who are hesitant to get vaccinated and residents that cannot get to a clinic. She stated that 69% of Gloucester residents are vaccinated and the senior population is around 90% vaccinated. She stated that 50% of 12–17-year-olds.

Ms. Carrol stated that there are five exceptions to the lifting of mask restrictions. She stated that masks are still required on public transportation, in schools, in child-care programs, in health care facilities, in congregate care settings/living situations, and health care rehab services and programs. The advisory is if you are not vaccinated you should still wear a face covering in any indoor setting and if you cannot maintain a six-foot distance to others. She stated that their slogan is masked or fully vaxxed.

Mr. Cowan asked if they could resume the congregate meals at the senior center. *Ms. Carroll* responded that they could resume congregate meals as if it were pre-pandemic.

OTHER DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Tobacco Compliance Checks- *Ms. Carroll* stated that they have resumed tobacco compliance checks and they did have four findings.

Gloucester Dental Center- *Ms. Carroll* stated that the Dental Center has been very busy and the hygienist, who was out on maternity leave, is now back. She stated that the dentist will be out for a few months during the summer and the center will still offer services provided through the hygienist. She stated that they are looking for a dentist to partner with the Dental Center during the summer.

COVID-19 Task Force- *Ms. Carroll* stated that the COVID-19 Task Force has been disbanded. She stated that Carol McMahon is working on an after action report for the entire incident.

Guilfoil Public Relations- *Ms. Carroll* stated that the Guilfoil Public Relation company worked with the Public Health Nurse to produce a beautiful video on vaccine outreach.

Budget 2022- *Ms. Carroll* stated that last week she met with Mr. Schenk, Mr. Rosa, Chairperson Sagall, Frank Cousins (interim CAO), Chris Sicuranza (ACAO), and John Dunn (FO). She stated that they were able to outline and give details about the budget. She stated that they go back before the Budget and Finance Committee next Wednesday.

OTHER CONCERNS OF THE BOARD

Water Quality at Beaches- *Mr. Cowan* asked why the numbers were so high at Pavillion Beach. *Mr. Schenk* responded that he did not know but the numbers probably increased because of the heavy rain. He stated that the creek at Good Harbor was also closed for a period due to high numbers.

Anti-Harassment Policy- *Chairperson Sagall* asked if board members received the anti-harassment policy. The board responded that they did. *Chairperson Sagall* stated that he has some concerns with the document and is not willing at this time to sign them. *Mr. Schenk* stated that if it doesn't get signed it just gets noted in the Personnel Department.

Attorney Fees- *Chairperson Sagall* stated that Ms. Carroll had to hire an attorney and she got a bill for that. He stated that he has made some inquiries on the issue. Other board members were also concerned and suggested she forward the bill to the City for payment.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

MOTION by Mr. Cowan to adjourn.
Seconded by Ms. Schweitzer. **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

____/S/ Bobbi Jo Orlando_____

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

____/S/ Richard Sagall_____

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:

June 3, 2021 Board of Health Agenda
Minutes of the May 6, 2021 BOH Meeting
Minutes of the May 13, 2021 SRSC BOH Meeting
Health Department June Monthly Report