

**CITY OF GLOUCESTER  
Board of Health  
Minutes of the Meeting  
January 7, 2016  
City Hall Annex  
3 Pond Road  
Gloucester, MA 01930**

Board members present: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall; Vice–Chairperson: Robert Harris; Frederick Cowan, and Joe Rosa. Present from the Health Department: Public Health Director: Noreen Burke; Manager of Environmental Health: Max Schenk; Public Health Nurse: Kelley Ries; Thorsen Akerley Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector; and Rosalie Nicastro, Food Inspector. Absent: Claudia Schweitzer

*Chairperson Sagall* introduced audience members: Mayor Sefatia Romeo-Theken; Former Public Health Nurses: Chassea Robinson and Sunny Robinson; Lieutenant John McCarthy; City Councilor Paul Lundberg.

This meeting is being recorded by audio in accordance with State Open Meeting Law.

**PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATION**

There was no “Public Oral Communication”.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Cowan to approve the Gloucester Board of Health minutes of the meeting of December 3rd, 2015 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Harris. **CARRIED**. Mr. Rosa **abstained**.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ADDING TO THE NORTH SHORE HEALTH PROJECT’S HARM REDUCTION PROGRAMMING – SUSAN GOULD COVIELLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NORTH SHORE HEALTH PROJECT (NSHP), DON MAIER, M.D. CHAIRMAN NSHP BOARD OF DIRECTORS-**

*Susan Gould Coviello*, the Executive Director of the North Shore Health Project appeared before the board. She presented a PowerPoint presentation on the initiative for a harm reduction and needle exchange program in Gloucester. [E:\PP Final.pptx](#)

*Ms. Coviello* stated that a harm reduction program would be beneficial for the City of Gloucester. She quoted the former United States Surgeon General, Regina Benjamin, “Harm reduction programs which incorporate syringe exchange are widely considered to be an effective way of reducing HIV and HCV transmission among individuals who inject illegal drugs by providing access to clean needles and a safe disposal site. Importantly, there is ample evidence that they also promote entry and retention into treatment.” She stated that the North Shore Health Project already does many of the things that a harm reduction program would do with the exception of a needle exchange program. She outlined the benefits of a harm reduction program:

- Comprehensive program** authorized by a local government and funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide services to intravenous drug users (IDUs) to reduce the risk of several types of potential harms;
- Provides free sterile syringes** to IDUs, an approach that reduces the likelihood that users will share injecting equipment, thus greatly cutting down the risk of the spread of HIV and HCV;
- Safe disposal** of used syringes;
- Provides health and supportive services**, including on-site medical care; screening and counseling for HIV, hepatitis C and STIs; distribution of condoms, food, and clothing; referrals to substance abuse treatment; providing medications to prevent overdose and support drug treatment;

By offering services specifically tailored to meet clients' needs, HRP's help IDUs keep themselves and others safer and healthier. HRP's are able to connect IDUs to health and supportive services that they would otherwise not have accessed.

Benefits include testing for HIV/AIDS and HCV. Gloucester has a rate of HCV that is higher than the state average and is one of the 8 hotspots in MA;  
Provision of clean needles to decrease the risk of disease transmission through shared needles;  
Ready access to counselors to help with access to the Angel program or other routes to decreasing drug use;  
Testing and counseling about health risks of sharing needles.  
Detection, treatment, and education about HIV and HCV will decrease the rate of these diseases in the community, thereby reducing the risk to the population at large;  
IDUs will be educated in ways to prevent disease transmission to others;  
Providing IDUs with counseling can decrease the incidence of addiction;  
Providing a place to exchange needles will decrease the amount of needles disposed of improperly.

Gloucester has become a leader in assisting IDUs through the Angel program, and an HRP would add an important resource to further reduce the impact of IDU. The combination of the HRP and the Angel program would be unique, and the synergy has great potential. It is another tool in the toolbox with which to provide support to those in our community who struggle with drug abuse.

*Ms. Coviello* stated that a Task Force has been formed and thanked members: Sander Shultz, Kelley Ries, Sandy McDonald, Chief Campanello, Liz Whenchel, Alex Doyle, and Sunny Robinson. She stated that there are harm reduction programs in Cambridge, Holyoke, Worcester, Boston, North Hampton, and Provincetown.

*Kelley Ries and Noreen Burke* gave their support for the program.

The board thanked *Ms. Coviello* for her presentation. *Mr. Rosa* stated that gathering as much quantitative data as possible will be useful for issues that are raised in the future.

*Mr. Cowan* stated that residents were concerned when there was discussion about a methadone clinic and their concerns were unfounded.

*Mayor Sefatia Romeo-Theken* stated that she is not in support nor is she opposed at this time for a harm reduction program in Gloucester. She stated that her main concern is the location for a harm reduction program. She recommended that *Ms. Coviello* start presenting the information on the harm reduction program to the ward councilors in Gloucester. She stated that she will attend those meetings and listen to the concerns of residents. She thanked *Ms. Coviello* for her presentation.

*Don Maier*, President of the North Shore Health Project appeared before the board. He stated that he spoke to the Police Chief, the Mayor, and the person who runs the program in Northampton. All of them said essentially the program there has not caused any problems over the years.

*Sunny Robinson* appeared before the board. She stated that she is in full support of the program. She stated a harm reduction program reduces the potential for the transmission of horrific diseases and it brings people into a program setting created to help people move towards addressing their own addiction. She stated that people should refer to the program as a harm reduction program not a needle exchange program.

*Gary Langis* of 381 Washington Street appeared before the board in favor of a harm reduction program.

He stated that he sat on Mayor Menino's Advisory Board in Boston for their needle exchange program and he has worked for New England Prevention Alliance, an independent syringe exchange. He stated that the New England Prevention Alliance provided home delivery service for needle exchange. He stated that he strongly believes that we need to have engagement with a drug user or the program will fail.

*Councilor Paul Lundberg* of 22 Raven Lane appeared before the board. He stated that the harm reduction program builds on the Angel Program. He stated that they have to educate the public and he supports the program.

*Patty Amaral* of Myrtle Square appeared before the board. She stated that she is part of a coalition to make Gloucester cleaner. She stated that she picks up litter around the City and they have needles everywhere. She stated that she is in support of the program.

*Chairperson Sagall* asked the Mayor what the next step for the Board of Health should be. *Mayor Romeo-Theken* stated that she would like the Board of Health to step back and let the North Shore Health Project make the presentations to the councilors and the residents and get feedback from the residents before they take another step.

Ms Coviello asked that a letter of support from the board be sent to Kevin Cranston, Director of the Infectious Disease Division at MDPH.

**MOTION** by Mr. Rosa the Gloucester Board of Health thank the North Shore Health Project for their Harm Reduction Program presentation and we encourage that additional information and opinions be sought from other bodies in the community including the Mayor's Office, the City Council, and the citizenry of the various wards and precincts. **Seconded** by Mr. Harris. **CARRIED.**

TOBACCO CONTROL UPDATES – JOYCE REDFORD, DIRECTOR, NORTH SHORE/CAPE ANN TOBACCO CONTROL PREVENTION PROGRAM –

*Joyce Redford*, Director of the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Control Prevention Program appeared before the board. She stated that the board invited her there to discuss raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 21. She stated that in their collaborative area Salem, Saugus, Swampscott, Danvers, and Peabody have raised their purchase age to 21. She stated that Boston has also changed their purchase age to 21. She stated that 41.9% of the Massachusetts population is covered by 21. She stated that the biggest push back is that some concerns about service men and women but the military has taken tobacco off all their base commissaries. She discussed the concerns with flavored tobacco products. She stated if the board did ban flavored tobacco products the only way a vendor could sell them is if they decide to become a tobacconist and the store would not be allowed to have anyone under the age of 21 enter the business.

The board agreed to hold a public meeting on February 4, 2016 to raise the age to purchase tobacco products or nicotine delivery systems to 21.

The board discussed smoking in outside areas in the board discussed smoking in outside areas in the City, specifically restaurant outside eating areas. The board agreed that the decision to allow smoking in these areas was up to the restaurants, but that no one should be exposed to tobacco smoke unwillingly. The board agreed that these areas need to post a sign explaining their policy.

PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL GRANT EFFORT TO ADOPT THE 2013 FEDERAL FOOD CODE-

*Mr. Schenk* stated that our colleagues in the North Shore region have acquired grant funds to find different communities that want to adopt Federal Food Code, currently they are working under the State Food

Code. He stated that the Federal Food Code is more clear and concise.

Rosalie *Nicastro*, Food Inspector of the Gloucester Health Department appeared before the board. She stated that she is very excited about this. She stated that the Federal Food Code is very clear and it is much easier to work from.

**MOTION** by Mr. Cowan that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the memo that states that the City of Gloucester move forward to investigate and pursue the adoption of the Federal Food Code. **Seconded** by Mr. Rosa. **CARRIED.**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **DUMPSTER BAGS ALSO KNOWN AS "THE BAGSTER" UPDATE –**

*Mr. Schenk* stated that the Health Department has received some complaints regarding the giant green dumpster bags that can be purchased at home improvement stores. He stated that residents are buying these bags and they do not realize there is a \$150.00 fee charged to remove the bags and they sit at homes for months. He stated that since the bags are over 50 gallons they are considered dumpsters and they require a permit to use if residents have them for more than 7 days. He stated that if they see the dumpster bags that have been at a property for more than one week, they will send a notice to the address informing the owner that they need a permit. He stated that other neighboring communities that he contacted have not received any complaints and do not have any regulations for specific to the dumpster bags and no other community has banned them.

The board agreed to let the Building Inspector know that they deliberated and the current regulation covers dumpster bags and if any complaints come in they could use those regulations to remedy the situation.

**MOTION** by Mr. Harris that the Gloucester Board of Health agree to the response to the letter to Bill Sanborn, the City's Building Inspector. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**

### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Presented by Noreen Burke, Max Schenk, & Kelley Ries

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES-** *Ms. Ries* reported that there have been seven investigations this month, one Babesiosis, two Campylobacter, one Salmonella, one Anaplasmosis, and two group A Strep. 67 reported cases of Lyme disease this year.

**FLU SEASON-** *Ms. Ries* reported that the flu clinics have been very successful. She stated that 1900 people were vaccinated thus far which includes the schools. She stated that they have about 150 left and they will have one last clinic at the CATA Training Room on January 21, 2016 from 9-10:30 and 4-6.

*Ms. Burke* stated that *Ms. Ries*, Rosalie *Nicastro*, and Sunny *Robinson* did a fantastic job with the flu season.

**DIAPER DRIVE-** *Ms. Ries* stated that she held a diaper drive to help raise awareness of the need for diapers for children of the community. She stated that they collected 3528 individual diapers and 27 packages of wipes. They were delivered to the Open Door for distribution.

**STAFFING-** *Mr. Schenk* stated that *Thorsen Akerley* started as the Health Department's Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector on January 4, 2016. *Ms. Burke* stated there has been some staffing challenges in the Health

Department and Mr. Schenk has been taking on some extra duties including housing inspections and responding to housing complaints.

**SUBURBAN WILDLIFE EDUCATIONAL LECTURE-** *Mr. Schenk* stated that there will be a forum titled Suburban Wildlife Educational Lecture at City Hall on January 11, 2016 (snow date February 1, 2016) at 7 p.m. He stated that there will be many speakers including Police Chief Campanello, Mayor Romeo-Theken, representatives from Fisheries and Wildlife, and Environmental Police Officers. He stated that the forum will focus on coyotes and other animals that we live with on Cape Ann. *Mr. Cowan* stated that the Mayor has been concerned with children mistaking coyotes for dogs. School Superintendent is developing an educational/prevention program for children.

**GRANTS-** *Ms. Burke* reported that they are still in the transition stage with public health emergency preparedness and the grant monies have all moved to a regional health and medical coalition model. She stated that they will move forward with three substance focus prevention grants: the Opioid Prevention Grant, the Underage Drinking Grant, and the Drug Free Communities Grant.

**CHILDREN'S DENTAL CENTER-** *Ms. Burke* stated that the joint lunch with the Children's Dental Center and the Health Center was cancelled and she hopes that that is rescheduled.

## **CONCERNS OF BOARD MEMBERS**

**HEALTH DIRECTOR-** *Chairperson Sagall* thanked Ms. Burke for her letter of resignation and they need to start the process of looking for a Health Director. He stated that Mr. Cowan and Mr. Harris have agreed to be on a committee to do that.

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETINGS-** *Chairperson Sagall* stated that the next Board of Health Meeting will be on February 4, 2016.

**MOTION** by Mr. Harris to adjourn.  
Seconded by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**  
MEETING ADJOURNED – 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

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Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:  
January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Board of Health Agenda  
December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 Board of Health Minutes  
Harm Reduction Program Presentation  
Board of Health Dumpster Regulation  
Monthly Reports