

CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
September 2, 2021
5:30 p.m.
3 Pond Road
CATA Conference Room

Board members present: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall; Vice–Chairperson: Robert Harris; Frederick Cowan; Joe Rosa; and Claudia Schweitzer. Present from the Health Department: Interim Health Director: Max Schenk and Health Inspector: Rachael Belisle-Toler.

The meeting started at 5:30 p.m.

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

PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATION

Patti Page of 3 Tidal Cove Way appeared before the board. She stated the Mayor has authorized an ad hoc committee for community pesticide reduction. She stated that she would like a Board of Health member to join that committee. She stated that she spoke at the School Committee meeting recently and the schools have Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPMP). She stated that Joe Lucido at the DPW is an IPMP coordinator and no plans have been filed since 2019. She stated that when treatments are done the public should be notified. She stated that the Protection for School Children Act is coming up now in legislation and they are looking for support from local Boards of Health to pass the bill.

The board agreed to put this item on the October Board of Health agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of August 5, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Rosa.

The Board of Health Septic Review Subcommittee minutes of August 26, 2021 were tabled until the October meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Septic Review Subcommittee Report - The Septic Review Subcommittee Report was tabled until the October meeting.

Board of Health Board Member Search Committee Update - *Mr. Rosa* stated that they have two M.D. candidates that are potential Board of Health members. He stated that both candidates will be interviewed by the Mayor.

Board of Health Interview Committee Update - *Ms. Schweitzer* stated that they had chosen five candidates to interview for the Health Director position and have picked two finalists to move onto the second interview. The board discussed having a member from the community join the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Board of Health Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair -

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer to nominate Joe Rosa as Chairperson for the Gloucester Board of Health. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**

Claudia Schweitzer for Joe Rosa
Rob Harris for Joe Rosa
Joe Rosa for Joe Rosa
Rich Sagall for Joe Rosa
Fred Cowan for Joe Rosa

Chairperson Rosa accepted the nomination as Chairperson for the Gloucester Board of Health.

MOTION by Mr. Cowan to nominate Claudia Schweitzer as Vice-Chairperson for the Gloucester Board of Health. **Seconded** by Mr. Rosa. **CARRIED.**

Claudia Schweitzer for Claudia Schweitzer
Rob Harris for Claudia Schweitzer
Joe Rosa for Claudia Schweitzer
Rich Sagall for Claudia Schweitzer
Fred Cowan for Claudia Schweitzer

Claudia Schweitzer accepted the nomination as Vice-Chairperson for the Gloucester Board of Health.

The board thanked Dr. Sagall for his many years of service on the Board of Health.

Proposed Order to Require Face Coverings in City Buildings to Include the Following Provisions:

“All staff and members of the public entering or working in any City owned and operated facility must wear a face covering. Face coverings should be a minimum of two layers and must be worn over the individual's nose and mouth.”

“All employees must wear a face covering indoors when interacting with the public and when they are within six-feet of a co-worker in common areas, enclosed work spaces, or vehicles.”
“The only exceptions to this requirement are those younger than age 2 years of age, or those who have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering.”

Mr. Cowan stated that it concerns him that the proposed order is only for city-owned properties. He stated that he does not want to be tied to a mandate that discriminates and that it should be city-wide or nothing.

The board discussed the proposed order.

Mr. Schenk recommended that the board move forward with this measure with the additional recommendation to the administration that the Board of Health’s preference would be to have a city-wide public space face mask requirement.

Dr. Sagall stated that he would agree with the proposed order if it were clear that this is a first step and look into mandatory vaccinations for city staff.

Mr. Harris stated that he does not want to mandate a mask order and would like it to come from the administration rather than the Board of Health.

Mr. Schenk stated that the administration cannot mandate the order without the Board of Health.

The board agreed to have administration reiterate the all call and recommend the use of masks inside all public buildings.

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer that the Board of Health approve the proposed order to require face coverings in city buildings with the following provisions:

“All staff and members of the public entering or working in any City owned and operated facility must wear a face covering. Face coverings should be a minimum of two layers and must be worn over the individual's nose and mouth.”

“All employees must wear a face covering indoors when interacting with the public and when they are within six-feet of a co-worker in common areas, enclosed work spaces, or vehicles.”

“The only exceptions to this requirement are those younger than age 2 years of age, or those who have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering.” with the amendment that language that was included in the Smart 911 call urging the public to wear a mask in all public buildings be also integrated into the final document. **Seconded** by Dr. Sagall.

CARRIED 3-2.

Update on Good Harbor Creek Bacteria Levels and Investigation Results - *Ms. Belisle-Toler* stated that she has been working closely with DPW and the Engineering Department to eliminate city infrastructure that could be contributing to the source of pollution at the creek at Good Harbor Beach. She stated that they have eliminated any City sewer lines as the source of the pollution. She stated that they are fairly confident that a private sewer is not the source of

pollution either. She stated that Bill Gillis from DPW has done extensive testing on the marsh. She stated that the cause of the repeatedly high levels of pollution is still unclear. She stated that moving forward there are two things that she would suggest, one being continuing to sample off season because she is not satisfied with the frequency of testing that the State mandates since the conditions fluctuate rapidly and she would like to test bi-weekly rather than weekly next season.

Chairperson Rosa stated that Ms. Belisle-Toler should put a proposal together for how often she would like to do testing next season.

Mr. Cowan stated that at the last meeting he mentioned port-a-potties in the area. He stated that he was referring to port-a-potties on private properties. *Ms. Belisle-Toler* stated that they have looked at port-a-potties in the area and she is not convinced that a port-a-potty would be enough to cause the level of pollution that they are seeing.

Mr. Harris stated that he is concerned with the pump station at the end of Hartz Street. *Ms. Belisle-Toler* stated that they have checked out the pumping station.

Ms. Schweitzer stated that she would like something written in the newspaper regarding the issue. *Mr. Schenk* stated that they can work with the Guilfoil Public Relation company to get something written up.

Update Re: Mosquito Spraying Opt-Out Plan for the City of Gloucester -

Patti Page of 3 Tidal Cove Way appeared before the board. She stated that Gloucester and Rockport opted out of the State Mosquito Spraying. She stated that a State Task Force was formed and she has been attending the Task Force meetings. She stated that somebody from the City of Gloucester should also be attending the Task Force meetings because they are creating policy now for next year. She asked the Board of Health to send educational information to the Mayor and to ask her to disseminate the information to residents.

Mr. Schenk asked Ms. Page to forward the meeting link to the State Task Force meeting. He stated that a Health Department staff member will attend the meetings.

Marcia Hart of 2 Fremont Street appeared before the board. She stated that she listened to the Task Force meeting today and wrote down some information from the meeting. She stated that there have been 114 cases of EEE in the State since 1938 and there have been 63 fatalities of EEE in that same timeline. She stated that there have been 12 fatalities from West Nile in the last 20 years. She stated that after the Board of Health reads the report from the Task Force they may want to include how important the opt-out option is to the community of Gloucester.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Response Updates - *Mr. Schenk* stated that there are 21 active cases of COVID-19 in Gloucester. He stated that there are zero hospitalizations. He stated that the positivity rate is 2.75% and 1964 tests were performed. He reported the following vaccination statistics for Gloucester:

12-19 Years 68%
20-29 Years 72%
30-49 Years 86%
50-64 Years 85%
65-74 Years 93%
75 + Years 91%
Gloucester Total: 76%
State Total: 71%

Mr. Schenk stated that he has been in discussion with Erin Kirchner from Essex regarding a regional booster for first responders.

Ms. Schweitzer stated that she read online that Manchester and Rockport had clinics for booster shots but did not see that Gloucester had one. *Mr. Schenk* responded that he has been in conversation with Senator Tarr's office on the issue.

Mr. Schenk stated that Amy Epstein is leaving the Health Department. He stated that Jess Scola will be stepping in as the Interim Prevention Director. He stated that he attended a meeting with Ms. Scola and the Tower Foundation. He stated that they have a \$150,000 grant from the Tower Foundation which is part of a broader \$450,000 grant.

Mr. Schenk thanked Paul Russo from the Community Development Department who has been helping the Health Department navigate through the purchase order system while Jenna Newbegin is on maternity leave.

Update Regarding Status of the Gloucester Children's Dental Health Center - *Mr. Schenk* stated that the Dental Center building will be closing on September 3, 2021. He stated that they will maintain a mobile hygiene program. He stated that they are going through the process of getting the necessary equipment for the mobile program. He stated that they will pilot the program for six month. He stated that Vaness Doucette who has been the hygienist will be coming on as a Public Health Hygienist which will allow her to do the work without an order from a dentist.

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND OTHER DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Mr. Schenk stated they will hire a part-time person to do contact tracing at the schools.

Mr. Schenk stated they renewed the contract with Biobot for 26 more weeks.

Ms. Schweitzer asked about Amy Epstein's position. *Mr. Schenk* stated that when the new Health Director is hired, they will fill Ms. Epstein's position.

CONCERNS OF THE BOARD

Thank You- *Dr. Sagall* thanked Mr. Schenk for making his time as Chairperson of the Board of Health easier. *Mr. Schenk* thanked Dr. Sagall for his many years as Chairperson of the Board of Health.

Plumbing Inspector- *Mr. Harris* stated that he accepted a position with the City as the Plumbing Inspector. He stated that it may be a conflict of interest to be on the Board of Health. *Mr. Schenk* stated that he would confirm if it is a conflict of interest.

After Action Report- *Mr. Cowan* stated that the COVID-19 After Action Report is a public document. He stated that he would like the document posted on the Health Department website.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

MOTION by Mr. Harris to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Rosa. **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____/s/ Bobbi Orlando_____

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

_____/s/ Richard Sagall_____

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:

September 2, 2021 Board of Health Agenda
Minutes of the August 5, 2021 BOH Meeting
Health Department September Monthly Report