

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2020

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 5:38 pm by Stephen M. Fiore, Chair.

In keeping with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" – The Board of Health Meeting of June 22, 2020 was held by Remote Access through ZOOM.

Those participating were Stephen M. Fiore, Esq., Chair; Julie C. Lemay, MPH, Vice Chair; Donna S. David, R.N., M.N.; Member; Wesley B. Chin, Health Director; Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer; Maria Reddington, Clerk;

There was no public participation.

Staff provided the following COVID-19 update:

- Positive cases are steady at 230. The number was 229 for 10 days. The number of confirmed deaths is 60. The numbers have stabilized in Belmont. The community must continue using face coverings and practice social distancing.
- The Governor's reopening plan, Phase 2, Part 2, went into effect today. Businesses include food establishment indoor dining, massage/nail/and tattoo studios, personal training, use of dressing rooms, and 50% capacity allowed in offices. All of these include reopening with restrictions.
- Steve Fiore asked if local restaurants need to make a request to the Health Department to have indoor dining service. Wes said the food establishments are not required to make a request to the Health Department. State guidance requires self-certification to be available when requested.
- Steve Fiore also asked about nail salon requirements. Wes said local Boards of Health do not license or inspect nail salons, it is done on the State level. Wes added that any public concerns received by the Health Department would be addressed. As an example, staff received a concern portthat a massage salon was opened prior to the date allowed. Staff spoke with the owner and learned they were simply preparing the space for opening, which was allowed pursuant to the state's directive.
- Wes said Belmont's COVID-19 updates may begin a slow phase out. Updates are currently published weekly. Going forward they will be updated and published every other week. Donna David suggested the updates are a good educational tool for the public and cautioned they shouldn't be phased out too quickly. Steve Fiore suggested a less formal publication, perhaps a FAQ format.

The May 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented by a vote of 3-0.

The Receipts report was reviewed.

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2020

The Director/Assistant Director/Public Health Nurse report was reviewed with the following discussed:

- Seasonal complaints have increased.
- 3 housing complaints received. Staff was able to resolve 2 of the complaints remotely. The last case is an old case, proven to remain a tough challenge for the department. Pursuant to a conference call with a Department of Public Health housing specialist, the case has been referred to the Attorney General's office for review.
- Rodent concerns – Wes reviewed some basic education for residents concerning rodent sightings on their property. If a property owner notices rodent activity, they are encouraged to hire a professional pest control company. This service will provide the best result in mitigating a rodent problem. Diana Ekman reports an uptick of rodent complaints in the Cushing Square area. Suzanne Trasavage has noticed an increase in deceased wildlife near the Town Yard, which may be due to the use of rat poison.
- Food Establishment Inspector, Kylee Sullivan, is unable to provide service in Belmont for the next fiscal year.
- Wes is working with Patrice Garvin to hire a Health Inspector.
- Tiana Watson-McCrory, Youth Commission Coordinator, has resigned. Tiana did a great job during her employment with the Town. It is not known if the position will be filled due to budget constraints. Julie Lemay remarked this is a tough time to be without the position, especially with youth being home during the summer months.
- Staff will inspect 2 more pools this week. Summer camps that will open this year are developing their COVID plans. Some will plan to open during the first week of July.
- Tobacco permits will expire June 30th. There are new regulations to be incorporated into the renewal process. Staff will plan to educate retailers for compliance before issuing new tobacco permits.
- Outdoor and indoor dining is allowed at food establishments. Food inspections should resume near the beginning of July.
- The Farmer's Market has opened. Farmer's Market staff worked hard for the grand opening, and staff is happy to report there were no major issues on that day. Julie Lemay asked if there are enough handwashing stations. Diana replied that staff and vendors are mainly using hand sanitizer. There is no open food and food sampling allowed at this time.
- Staff provide COVID assistance to the following departments:
 - Reopening of Town offices to staff who have been remote working.
 - Belmont Public School/Parents Town Hall.
 - Town Clerk elections.
 - Recreation Department concerning summer camp program, requests for field access by various youth organizers, Payson Park Music Festival, karate studio outdoor classes, etc. Health Department staff advises only, does not make final decision. Steve Fiore asked if playgrounds and fields can be used, and is this a state or local decision. Also, what are surrounding cities/towns doing in this regard? The Recreation Department is gathering information at this time.

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2020

- COVID-19 testing – many insurance companies are not offering coverage for the test, and many insured are being left with an \$80-\$100 bill to pay. Belmont residents can call Tufts Medical Center Testing Site at (617) 636-0019 if they are in need of testing. Testing at Tufts is provided regardless of one's ability to pay.
- Staff has received a number of requests for COVID-19 statistics relating to Belmont. The combined report has some data, but more will be posted in the next weekly update.
- Two Belmont Public School nurses have agreed to assist Public Health Nurse David Neylon over the summer months. They will receive a stipend for their work, which is needed and appreciated.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed. Janet Amdur reported to Wes that she has seen an increase in 1:1 cases. Beginning July 1st, Janet will work part time hours for the Council on Aging. Janet's programming continues to be successful during the pandemic.

The Animal Care and Control report was reviewed. Suzanne Trasavage met with staff from the Recreation Department concerning the reopening of the Off Leash Program (the "Program"). A schedule will be set during Phase III of the Governor's reopening plan, with off leash hours limited from 6:00 am to 9:00 am. Suzanne supports a gradual phase-in of the Program, due to an increase of field use by residents staying at home. Excluding dogs from the fields after 9:00 am will allow other programming use, and keep the dogs off of crowded fields. The Board members agreed with the gradual phase-in of the Program. Suzanne also reports she continues to care for the abandoned turtle at her home as she awaits placement from a turtle rescue organization.

The Veterans' Services Officer report was reviewed. Board members agreed that Bob did a wonderful job coordinating a "virtual" Memorial Day observation. Belmont Media produced a touching video for all to see. The link to the video can be found on the Health Department's Facebook page and Belmont Media's website.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2020 at 5:30 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen M. Fiore, Chair