

DATE: March 24, 2021
TIME: 2:29 PM

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
November 23, 2020

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 5:10 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 November 23, 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; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer; Lindsey Sharp, Environmental Health Intern.

There was no public participation.

The Dog Hearing was called to order at 5:11 pm for a dog incident involving 2 dogs owned by Shiva Ayyadurai of 69 Snake Hill Road. The Hearing was requested by JoAnn Daskalakis of Belmont, victim of the incident. The Hearing was recorded.

- The following participants were present for the Hearing: JoAnn Daskalakis, Joseph Presti, Esq., Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, Michelle Jeffalone, Joseph Brodigan, Esq.
- The Hearing Authority panel consisted of Wesley Chin, Diana Ekman, Suzanne Trasavage, Stephen Fiore, Julie Lemay, Donna David.
- Stephen Fiore reviewed the rules of the Hearing. Diana Ekman swore in the participants.
- Suzanne Trasavage provided an opening statement, summarizing 13 prior incidents involving the dogs, Geronimo and Sequioia. She also said the dogs were not licensed in 2020, and there are no rabies certificates on file.
- Mr. Presti, Attorney for the victim JoAnn Daskalakis, provided a summary of the October 8, 2020 dog incident. Ms. Daskalakis was talking by phone to her sibling when she and her dog were attacked by Geronimo and Sequioia. The sibling on the phone called Belmont Police Department for assistance. The dogs ran away upon arrival by the police. Approximately one hour later the dogs returned to Ms. Daskalakis' backyard and continued to run through the neighborhood. As a result of this incident and his review of more than 13 prior incidents involving Geronimo and Sequioia, Mr. Presti said the dogs fall under the description of dangerous dogs and encourages the Board to deem them as such.
- Mr. Brodigan, Attorney for Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, owner of the dogs, said the owner takes full responsibility for his dogs. Dr. Ayyadurai has taken substantive steps to keep them from escaping the property in the future including installation of more secure fencing as shown on a plan, installing an auto-close gate at the vestibule, installing a dog runner in the yard, hiring a dog walker and dog trainer.
- Participants and the Panel discussed details of prior incidents, best practices to prevent future incidents, and recommendations the Board may order.
- Stephen Fiore adjourned the participation portion of the Hearing at 5:33 pm.

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Lisa Gibalerio, Prevention Specialist and Belmont Wellness Coalition Program Coordinator was welcomed to the meeting by Stephen Fiore. Lisa shared with the Board information related to the Wayside Multi-Service Center grant, specifically an MOU requirement that the Health Department was being asked to sign. The Board members appreciate all the work being done by Wayside but they feel the MOU is onerous. The Health Department is confined by limited resources and cannot sign the document.

Diana Ekman summarized the request by 67 Crestview Road to connect to town sewer. The Board voted 3-0 to approve the Town Sewer Connection and Abandonment of Current Subsurface Sewerage System at 67 Crestview Road.

The Board voted 3-0 to approve the October 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

The regular meeting agenda was paused to allow deliberation of the Dog Hearing.

- Suzanne Trasavage understands the fear experienced by Ms. Daskalakis but recommends the dogs, Geronimo and Sequoia, be deemed nuisance dogs.
- Further recommendations include a written letter from Mr. Brodigan outlining the remedies discussed during the Hearing; engage the services of a Tufts behaviorist to include an official report to Suzanne Trasavage; engage the services of a dog trainer to include direct communication to Suzanne Trasavage.
- Donna David asked if the Board could reserve the right to change their determination based on reports from a behaviorist and/or trainer.
- Julie Lemay suggested Teri Bright of MSPCA be contacted for her assessment.
- Suzanne Trasavage said COVID-19 will likely delay the delivery of services of a behaviorist and trainer.
- Steve Fiore said the Board would have the right to change their determination based on new evidence received and reviewed.
- The Board voted 3-0 to:
 - Declare Geronimo and Sequoia Ayyadurai nuisance dogs.
 - 30 day deadline to provide proof of behaviorist and trainer services rendered. If services cannot be rendered within 30 days, provide proof of a scheduled appointment.
 - All other recommendations discussed by Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer.

The Animal Care and Control Officer report was reviewed. Suzanne reports batch notices were mailed to owners of unlicensed pets in Belmont. Suzanne may provide a ZOOM chat meeting in January for new pet owners, set up as a question and answer format.

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The Temporary Emergency Regulation #3 of the Select Board and Board of Health was reviewed. The Regulation will supplement the State's Order #55 by requiring the public, age 2 and older, to wear a clean face covering while indoor or outdoor in public spaces. The Regulation will also require all entry doors of businesses open to the public to post signage that face coverings and social distancing are required. Staff at these businesses must enforce the requirement.

The Board voted 3-0 to adopt Temporary Emergency Regulation #3.

The Receipt and Financial reports were reviewed.

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

- In person housing inspections are suspended due to COVID-19.
- The Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative continues to work with an ongoing housing case. An attorney from the Attorney General's office will work with the homeowners to set goals to resolve the housing issues.
- Nuisance complaints are down which is normal for this time of year.
- Tobacco Hearings follow-up – Cheryl Sbarra, Attorney for MA Association of Health Boards, was contacted by Health Department staff for guidance with Star K's tobacco violation. Ms. Sbarra confirmed the Board of Health decision is final and can only be overturned by Star K winning a court decision. The business owners have been given the opportunity to enter a payment plan with the Town Treasurer. Also, #1 Food Mart will be issued a letter giving the owner 7 days to respond concerning their unpaid fine.
- Lindsey Sharp provided an update of rodent complaints, noting the trend of complaints is similar to last year and are generally isolated incidents.
- Michael Patti, Youth Commission Coordinator successfully coordinated grab and go Halloween treat bags within 2 weeks of the start of his employment. Michael is now working on spending down \$3200 in grant money from Mount Auburn Hospital. The time to spend the funds expires December 31st. Michael is contacting Mount Auburn Hospital to discuss an alternate use of the funds, focusing the request on assisting those in the community experiencing food insecurity. In other Youth Commission news....Dr. Alper resigned as a member of the Youth Commission. He successfully assisted the newly formed commission off the ground. Board members expressed their appreciation for all his good work.
- COVID-19 – Health Department staff continue efforts to address the needs of the public:
 - Thanksgiving/Holiday Season – The message to the public is they are safest at home. Guidance includes traveling and quarantine requirements, and the importance of face coverings and social distancing.
 - The updated dashboard – This is a live dashboard, auto-updated when new data is added. Wesley thanked Lindsey for her dedication to this project, and said Lindsey adds a great dimension to the department.

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- Assistance to the schools includes development of safety plans, possible school-wide testing, request for PTO's to temporarily halt in person events.
- Jay Marcotte, DPW Director offered use of the sign boards throughout Town to relay COVID related reminders to the public. The signs seem to be quite successful and reach a large number of people. The department thanks Jay Marcotte for his assistance.
- The annual Tree Lighting ceremony has been cancelled.
- The Lions Club tree sale is allowed to proceed, with a COVID plan in place.
- Lindsey Sharp said self-reporting of COVID-19 cases is up. This is a positive trend, as test result reporting can be delayed.
- In budget news – the FY22 budget will be level funded, with increases only for contractual services, i.e., Sealer of Weights and Measures, Mosquito Control Program. Each department was asked to further provide budget models to include a 10% and 20% reduction in the event the vote for an override fails. A 6 hour per week, per employee reduction was the only cut that satisfied the request.
- The State notified the Health Department of a grant award of \$80,000 to fund contact tracing efforts. The funds allowed the department to continue Lindsey's full time employment. The department is also in the process of hiring additional contract tracers and an assistant for the public health nurse. Special thanks to Town Administrator Patrice Garvin and State Representative Dave Rogers for their efforts in obtaining the award.

The Veterans' Services Officer report was reviewed. Bob pulled together a special Veterans' Day celebration by offering a grab and go breakfast with the Beech Street Center and coordinating a rededication ceremony at the U.S. flagpole in Waverley Square.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen M. Fiore, Chair