

DATE: June 23, 2021
TIME: 2:30 PM

**Board of Health Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2021**

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm by Donna S. David.

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 May 24, 2021 was held by Remote Access through ZOOM.

Those participating were Donna S. David, R.N., M.N., Chair; Julie C. Lemay, MPH, Vice Chair; Adrienne Allen, M.D., M.P.H., Member; Wesley B. Chin, Health Director; Diana Ekman, Assistant Health Director; Lindsey Sharp, Environmental Health Intern; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer; Maria Reddington, Clerk.

There was no public participation.

Face covering recommendations were discussed:

- CDC update concerning face coverings – distance and unmasked.
- Dr. Allen said lower risk when outdoors, but sharing air is a problem. We are almost to the end of the school year. Children 12 and under are unvaccinated and should wear a face covering.
- Ms. Lemay said Belmont's positivity rates have declined. This can be re-evaluated soon if the numbers go up. Julie agrees no face covering requirement when outdoors.
- Ms. David said the new guidance indicates a strong recommendation for unvaccinated people to wear a mask. Belmont has no means to enforce a policy requiring face coverings.
- Dr. Allen said Belmont is a community that takes care of each other, there are only 3 weeks left in the school year, and we don't want children exposed.
- Mr. Chris Grande does not want a Belmont policy for face coverings to be worn outdoors. Children have a low rate of getting COVID. He said it's too hot to play sports with masks on.
- Mr. Elshad Kasumov, Precinct 6 TMM is in support of continued use of face coverings. Approximately 50% of Belmont is vaccinated, but we do not know the percent of people vaccinated in surrounding towns.
- Ms. Mariola Magovcevic asked that vulnerable children with health issues be considered.

The Board vote for the motion - Strong recommendation that unvaccinated people wear a face covering while outdoors was 2 – 1. Dr. Allen added for the record that she wanted the face covering guidance to be a requirement.

Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator, recognized Health Department staff and Board of Health members for their work during the pandemic. Ms. Garvin also said Town Hall complex buildings will be open to the public beginning June 1, 2021. Signage will be on the door asking unvaccinated people to wear a face covering and social distance from others.

There was a discussion concerning the procedure for scheduling an emergency meeting. A request can be made by email or telephone to the chairperson. Board members will continue the discussion following the Dog Hearing.

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The K9 “Tallulah” Spencer Hearing was called to order for a dog biting incident involving a dog owned by Alissa Spencer of 60 Slade Street. The Hearing was recorded.

- The following participants were present for the Hearing: Alissa Spencer, Juan Heyns, Hernand Romero, Marit van Buuren.
- The Hearing Authority are Donna David, Julie Lemay, and Adrienne Allen. The Panel are Wesley Chin, Diana Ekman, and Suzanne Trasavage.
- Donna David reviewed the rules of the Hearing, with instruction for participants to refrain from using the name of the minor victim during the Hearing. Diana Ekman swore in the participants.
- Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer, summarized her report relating to the incident. The incident took place on May 9, 2021. The minor child required substantial emergency treatment as a result of the attack by Tallulah. Mr. Heyns also required medical attention for a puncture wound.
- Suzanne Trasavage said there were two reports to add to the file – an email from Dr. Born-Weils of Tufts-Cummings Veterinary Medical Center to Alissa Spencer, offering behaviorist evaluation services for Tallulah; and a letter from Dr. Dawn Binder of Cushing Square Veterinary, indicating the attack may have been a result of Tallulah’s hip pain.
- Alissa Spencer said the incident was out of character for Tallulah and there is no excuse for what happened. Tallulah has been placed on medication for a painful hip.
- Juan Heyns said the incident was traumatic, and was not controllable. Mr. Heyns said he does not believe in euthanasia but is very concerned for the safety of the neighborhood.
- Hernand Romero summarized the incident witnessed by his family. The presence of Tallulah causes the neighbors to be nervous. Mr. Romero believes Tallulah should be removed from the neighborhood.
- Marit van Buuren said she can see the effect the incident has had in the neighborhood.
- Donna David appreciates how the parties are getting along, and can hear the pain as everyone shares their account of the incident.
- Julie Lemay and Adrienne Allen said it is a terrible and heart-wrenching situation.
- Suzanne Trasavage said her recommendation is to deem Tallulah Spencer a dangerous dog, require Tallulah to be muzzled at all times, and do not allow a minor person to be in control of Tallulah.
- There was a brief discussion about relocating Tallulah. Suzanne explained there would be restrictions if Tallulah would be relocated to another home, and Suzanne is required to notify the Animal Control Officer of that new location.
- Hernand Romero asked if the decision of the Board could be appealed by him. He said his family have experienced pain and suffering. The decision of the Board can only be appealed by the victim, or the owner of the dog.

The Board of Health Order, by a vote of 3-0, is as follows:

1. Tallulah Spencer is declared a dangerous dog.
2. Alissa Spencer is required to submit an in-person temperament evaluation, by a Board-Certified Animal Behaviorist, within 14 days, to the Belmont Animal Care and Control Officer.
3. No person under the age of 18 years old is to be in possession of Tallulah while outside of the home.
4. Tallulah must wear a muzzle when leaving the front door of the home. The Muzzle Order must be signed.
5. The Belmont Animal Care and Control Officer must receive prior notification if Tallulah is rehomed. Notification is not a guarantee that permission to re-home will be granted.

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The Board voted 3-0 to approve the April 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

The Receipts and Financial reports were reviewed.

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

- A new hoarding case has been brought to the Health Department's attention. The Social Worker and BPD's Community Affairs Officer are working with the occupants. A report of self-neglect has been filed. A clean out of 30+ years of accumulation will be needed.
- The ongoing housing case continues to work with the MA Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative.
- Three rat complaints have been received, which is still a lower number than prior years. Seasonal complaints such as overgrown lawns, open dumpster and electric sanding have also been reported in recent weeks.
- Staff have completed pool inspections at the Belmont Country Club and Belmont Hill Club.
- Staff have begun preliminary review of Day Camp applications. On-site inspections will begin mid-June.
- COVID-19 update:
 - Lindsey Sharp continues to provide weekly video updates which are broadcast on Belmont Media Center's network.
 - Staff have worked with various school departments to provide guidance for hosting in-person events.
 - Discussion with BPS Superintendent and Director of School Nursing to offer a local vaccine clinic for eligible students.
 - Review of Belmont Public School cases and vaccination graphs.
 - Return to In-Person Learning Working Group update.
 - Town buildings re-opening to the public, and face covering recommendation.
- Some questions received in the office....
 - Q. Can club members use the common grill and cooking utensils?
 - A. The standards don't address the issue, but staff suggest one family/party at a time use the grill and supply their own utensils.
 - Q. Do current health regulations permit sharing of outdoor games/equipment, such as large size Jenga, Connect Four, and Ring Toss?
 - A. Current guidance still includes language that shared equipment needs to be sanitized before someone else uses the equipment.
 - Q. Is dancing allowed at events, and is there a requirement to social distance?
 - A. Dancing is allowed. There is no language about social distancing while dancing.
- The State's Contact Tracing program will end. Contact tracing efforts will be the responsibility of local boards of health.

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- Homebound vaccination guidance has changed. Local boards of health will not administer vaccine to homebound residents. Residents will be required to contact the State for an appointment.
- Review Belmont vaccination statistics, broken down by age group.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed.

The Animal Care and Control report was reviewed. The off leash permit orientation meeting had to be postponed. Watertown hired an ACO, and Arlington's ACO has returned to part-time hours.

The Veterans Services report was reviewed.

Consideration for possible emergency meeting discussion resumed:

- In anticipation of face covering guidance changes effective May 29th.
- Concern if town employees are unvaccinated, should masks be required?
- There may be a requirement for in-person public meetings beginning June 15th.
- Can the Town Administrator and Human Resource Director be available to discuss the changes to face covering guidance effective May 29th.
- Require face coverings while indoors, and 6 feet distancing.
- Some employees wear masks if unsure if someone is vaccinated.
- Differing rules can be confusing for the public.
- Cases are going down. This may change, then may need to change rules.
- If face coverings are required, policing will be needed.
- If statistics change, staff can meet with Town Administrator and encourage changes. Board of Health may need to call an emergency meeting at that time.

Brandon Fitts, Assistant Recreation Director, joined the meeting to discuss an inter-state tournament event tentatively scheduled for June 13th and June 20th. The tournament is expected to host 400 youth and family. Brandon is seeking guidance from the Board of Health. Following a brief discussion, it was decided to push back the tournament date by one week, to allow for the school year to end.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2021 at 4:30 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna S. David, Chair
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