

**Board of Health Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2021**

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 4:41 pm by Donna S. David.

In keeping with Chapter 20, of the Acts of 2021, the extension of the remote participation portion of Governor Baker's Executive Order from March 12, 2020; - "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" – The Board of Health Meeting of September 13, 2021 was held by Remote Access through ZOOM.

Those present 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; David Neylon, RN, REHS (part of the meeting); Lindsey Sharp, Health Agent; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care and Control Officer; Maria Reddington, Clerk.

The Meeting was recorded.

There was no public participation.

The agenda item concerning a Board of Health recommendation to the Select Board for a vaccine mandate for Town employees was discussed:

- Donna David reminded everyone the Board of Health is charged with the protection of public health.
- Wesley Chin said Belmont schools will institute a vaccine mandate, and in fairness, Town employees should also have a vaccine mandate.
- Julie Lemay generally supports the recommendation of a vaccine mandate for Town employees but it would be beneficial to have Town Counsel available for input as the pandemic continues to be a constantly evolving situation.
- Adrienne Allen said public safety is the benefit of a vaccine mandate. The timing and logistics to institute the mandate need to be considered.
- Donna David would recommend a vaccine mandate to the Select Board for their consideration. The logistics of instituting the mandate should be left to the Town Administration and Human Resource departments.
- There was a brief discussion about possible requirements for testing, waivers, and proof of vaccine status for Town employees.
- Adrienne Allen said full vaccination proof by a certain date would be her recommendation.
- Julie Lemay also said to choose a later date for vaccine compliance. There is a lot of prep work for town administration to get done prior to the effective date of a vaccine mandate.
- Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator said there are 7 unions to negotiate with. Employee vaccination status and a vaccine mandate require impact bargaining, which is unknown until negotiations begin. Town Counsel recommends the Town hit the pause button on implementing a vaccine mandate until guidance is received from the President and/or OSHA. Town Counsel agreed the Board of Health can make a recommendation to the Select Board concerning a vaccine mandate for Town employees.
- Stephen Ades asked how other Towns have accomplished adopting a vaccine mandate. Patrice said it can depend on the relationship with the Union(s), and she does not have access to other Towns' Contract(s).

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- Janet Amdur asked if the Board of Health was considering adding medical and religious exemption language to the vaccine mandate recommendation to the Select Board. Adrienne Allen said her opinion as a physician of internal medicine was there are very limited medical reasons to not be vaccinated. Donna David said she was not aware of a religion not in support of the COVID vaccine, it is a personal preference, which is allowed at this time. The Board members will leave this detail for Town Counsel review.

Motion: Recommendation to the Select Board that the Town of Belmont adopt a vaccine mandate for all Town of Belmont employees. Vote 3-0 (Donna David – Yes; Julie Lemay – Yes; Adrienne Allen – Yes).

The next agenda item concerns amendment(s) to the face covering mandate to include enforcement/fines language:

- Wes said establishments are struggling with employee and customer compliance.
- Wes shared the face covering mandate document onscreen. The proposed edits were reviewed. Some were revised for clarity.
- Residences refer to large apartment buildings having common areas.
- Adrienne Allen asked how issuance of a violation notice would work operationally. Wes said if a complaint was received and Health Department staff were available to confirm the complaint, then a violation notice may be issued, first by warning, subsequent offenses by fines.
- There is a concern that some customers may retaliate against an employee for reminding them of the face covering requirement. Donna David said just as owners and managers of establishments require their employees comply with enforcement of tobacco sale regulations, they can also require their employees to enforce the face covering mandate.
- Wes received public questions: Will the violation schedule have businesses/residents turning on one another, and when can the face covering mandate be relaxed (two weeks of CDC moderate level risk)?
- Stephen Ades said the face covering mandate has impacted his business, he is losing income of \$600 to \$1000 per week because members go to another town that hasn't adopted a mask mandate. He feels the proposed revisions to the mask mandate further impact his business negatively, and the violation schedule steps over the line. Mr. Ades also feels the level of community transmission metric is too strict for Belmont. Middlesex County includes Framingham and Lowell and the data from the CDC will remain high for a long time. Mr. Ades asked the Board to consider what others Towns are doing. Donna David told Mr. Ades that Belmont does network with other Towns, however the Board of Health must do what they see best for Belmont's residents.

Motion: To accept the face covering mandate revisions as discussed, and include a violation schedule. Vote 3-0 (Donna David – Yes; Julie Lemay – Yes; Adrienne Allen – Yes).

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Discussion of policy and procedure for public response to the new Board of Health email address:

- Donna David said it's unclear who is responding to the public's emails using the new Board of Health email address. Donna suggested there be an auto-reply message.
- Questions requiring an immediate response will be answered by Health Department staff, utilizing BOH member's expertise when needed. Public commentary will be confirmed by an auto-reply message, and considered for discussion at a future meeting.

The July 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes were reviewed.

The August 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes were reviewed.

Motion: To approve the Meeting Minutes of July 26, 2021 and August 16, 2021. Vote 3-0.

Donna David – Yes; Julie Lemay – Yes; Adrienne Allen – Yes.

The Receipts report was reviewed.

The Financial report was reviewed. Wes explained the fee paid to Dr. Gellar was to fulfill the requirement to have a Chief Medical Officer sign a medical order for BiNax testing. The State distributed a limited supply of the tests to local health departments in the event there are breakthrough COVID cases, for example, among town employees.

The Direct, Assistant Director, Public Health Nurse and Public Health Agent report was reviewed.

- There were no new housing inspections since the last meeting.
- Staff is working on a substantial public information request for 125 Trapelo Road.
- Rat complaints are down compared to prior years. The Health Department received 2 new complaints this month.
- Adrienne Allen asked about the status of the Grove Street neighborhood rodent situation. Lindsey reports it has improved. There was a discussion about posting the rodent brochure to social media and the Health Department webpage. The department inserted information in the Belmont Light bill in prior years.
- The plan review application process for CalVerde Naturals is complete. The Marijuana Application will be approved pending completion of a list of items. The establishment plans to open next Spring. Another plan review application has been received from Mint. Belmont can only have 2 retail marijuana establishments. Mint plans to open near the same location as CalVerde.
- The Tobacco Control Collaborative received funding to hire a Tobacco Control Director. Belmont Health Department staff will participate in the interview process.
- Pesticides – Health Department staff received a request for the Board of Health to review all pesticide products, and draft regulation for pesticide use. MDAR said state law preempts local Boards of Health from regulating pesticide use on private property. Adrienne Allen asked Wes to place an agenda item for an upcoming meeting to discuss pesticide application on Town owned property.

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Lindsey Sharp provided the following information:

Fully Vaccinated Students:

GRADE	PERCENT VACCINATED
7 th	72.6
8 th	77.5
9 th	79.0
10 th	83.0
11 th	80
12 th	81

Town - COVID Cases:

MONTH	# OF CASES
June	4
July	25
August	94
September (thru 9/12/21)	35

Children - COVID Cases:

MONTH	Age 0-9 years	Age 10-19 years
June	0	0
July	3	4
August	20	12
September (thru 9/12/21)	5	12

The Disease report was reviewed. COVID-19 cases were the only reportable disease number on the report. David Neylon will provide other reportable diseases soon.

The Animal Care and Control report was reviewed. Suzanne Trasavage talked about the Living with Coyotes Presentation with John Maguranis. The presentation was very informative and the timing was right. Residents can watch the presentation through the on-demand feature online at Belmont Media Center. Suzanne also reviewed the report from Tufts Animal Behaviorist regarding “Tallulah” Spencer.

The Veterans’ Services Officer report was reviewed. Bob Upton, VSO, will attend a Board of Health meeting soon.

The next Board of Health meetings are scheduled for October 4, 2021 at 4:30 pm, and November 8, 2021 at 4:30 pm.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna S. David, Chair