

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2024

DATE: March 20, 2024
TIME: 10:15 AM

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm by Stephen M. Fiore.

Those present were Stephen M. Fiore, Esq., Vice Chair; Julie C. Lemay, M.P.H, Member; Diana Ekman, Asst. Health Director; Lindsey Sharp, Health Agent; Suzanne Trasavage, Animal Care & Control Officer; David Neylon, Public Health Nurse; Maria Reddington, Clerk.

There was no public participation.

The Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2024 were approved by a vote of 2-0.

Keeping of Sheep/Goat at Rock Meadow with Joan Teebagy:

- Ms. Teebagy seeks Board of Health approval to continue the Rock Meadow Grazing Pilot Program.
- Up to 10 animals (sheep/goat) will participate in the Program.
- Members of the Conservation Commission approved the Program at their Pubic Meeting held January 16, 2024.
- Ms. Teebagy provided a 2023 Summary Report, and 2024 Proposal Report of the Program.

The Board of Health approved by a vote of 2-0 the keeping of up to 10 sheep/goat in connection with the Rock Meadow Grazing Program.

Save Belmont Wildlife presented by Dean Hickman and Allison Lenk:

- SGARs – Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides – The group seeks to reduce and ultimately eliminate SGAR use in Belmont.
- Current goals are to educate on alternatives, eliminate SGAR use from Town-owned property, and pass a home rule petition to eliminate SGAR use on private land.
- Save Belmont Wildlife conducted walk-throughs of Town-owned property and found there were approximately 30 bait boxes last year, 20 bait boxes are around the hockey rink demo site.
- Julie Lemay asked what are alternative treatments for mitigation? Dean Hickman said bait boxes, fertility control, electronic traps, dry ice.
- Save Belmont Wildlife asks for the Board of Health to support their efforts by signing a Declaration banning SGAR use on Town property, and endorse a home rule petition banning use on private land in Belmont.
- Diana Ekman said comprehensive rodent education is being developed through the MDPH Public Health Excellence Grant awarded to Belmont, Arlington, Brookline and Newton.
- The Board members agreed the Health Department will increase educational opportunities through their departmental webpage and social media outlets, highlighting alternatives to use in place of SGARs, and providing a link to MA Audubon Rescue Raptor webpage.

Body Art Regulations:

- Diana Ekman reviewed the draft of the updated Regulation, which will include an apprenticeship / training section as a separate permit category.

- Department oversight will include:
 - Plan Review
 - Routine inspections
 - Fee Update
- Following a brief discussion, Steve and Julie decided to postpone a vote to finalize the updates to the Body Art Regulations until the March Meeting. The postponement will provide an opportunity for Dr. Allen to review the updates and provide feedback.

The Receipts and Financial Reports were reviewed.

The Director/Assistant Director/Health Agent report was reviewed:

- Housing
 - Receivership of a property is in process according to the AG's Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI). The Agency reports a backlog of cases.
- Rats
 - There have been 3 new complaints received in the office since the last BOH Meeting.
- Social Media
 - Followers increased by 20. Postings this month included the Rabies Clinic schedule, Belmont Wellness Coalition YRBS results presentation, walk-in vaccine hours at Osco Pharmacy.
- COVID-19
 - The MWRA Chart was reviewed.
 - The Health Dept. office received 900 more COVID tests, with an expiration date of 3/25/24.
- Opioid Settlement Funds
 - The next working group meeting is scheduled February 27th.
 - Initial Narcan training will be offered to Town employees.
- Opioid Abatement Community Survey
 - A survey to learn how to best allocate the funding the Town will receive.
 - 45 responses have been received to date.
 - The survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/72ren9fnWE8GfAEt9>
- NEHA-FDA Retail Program Grant
 - Belmont applied for grant funding for the 3rd year. The Application was approved and Newton will be the mentor for Belmont and Brookline.
 - The Towns will work together to create and share policies and procedures to improve food protection programs.
- Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Staffing
 - Second round interviews for the Belmont/Arlington role, and Brookline/Newton role, are complete.
 - Final discussion and employment offers will be confirmed before the next scheduled MPHCA Advisory meeting on February 16th.
- Pure Coat North Update
 - Staff have not received any odor complaints from residents. Staff have also gone by the site but have not detected any odors.

- No Override Impacts to the Health Dept.
 - ~ \$164,000 is proposed to be cut from the FY25 Health Dept. budget.
 - This cut would result in the elimination of the Social Worker shared by the COA and Health Departments.
 - This cut would also result in the elimination of the Animal Care and Control Officer. The duties would fall to a member of the Police Dept.
 - The Public Health Agent position could not be funded by the Health Dept. budget. Following the pandemic, this position has allowed the Health Dept. to be lead enforcement of the Leaf Blower Bylaw, provide in-person inspection for rats, data analysis related to health trends, Opioid Settlement Grant administration, organizing vaccine clinics.
 - \$18,000 would be available for Veterans in need. Veteran benefits paid through the VSO have averaged \$25,500 per year over the last 2 fiscal years.

The Public Health Nurse/Disease report was reviewed. David's report focused on Measles cases and the CDC's Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity Advisory for healthcare providers.

The Youth and Family Services report was reviewed.

The Animal Care and Control Officer report was reviewed.

- Suzanne said there are many reported coyote sightings, it's breeding season.
- Suzanne received a request to amend a previously issued K9 Nuisance declaration for two dogs owned by Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai. Suzanne will draft a letter for review by the Board at the next Board of Health meeting.
- The Court Hearing for K9 Fanto King has been postponed until April 25, 2024.
- Belmont will join Watertown for a Rabies Clinic on March 16th at the Beech Street Center.
- Two cats and a guinea pig were rehomed. This was a law enforcement matter.

The Veterans Services Officer report was reviewed.

Email Rotation:

Julie Lemay will review the emails sent to the Board of Health email address.

The next Board of Health Meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2024 at 9:00 am.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen M. Fiore, Esq., Vice Chair