

Town of Belmont
Human Services Subcommittee of Warrant Committee 2019 APR 25 PM 2:37

Minutes of Human Services Subcommittee of Warrant Committee
April 4, 2019

Present: Chairman Robert E. McLaughlin, Members, Michael Crowley, Jenny Fallon,
Lynn Read arrived late

In accordance with the Notice, the Chairman, Robert E. McLaughlin, called the meeting of the Committee to order at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, 2019, in Conference Room 4 of Town Hall.

The subcommittee met with Director Wesley Chin and Assistant Director Diana Ekman. The Director provided the subcommittee with an overview of the myriad of activities that fall within the responsibility and the charge of the Health Department. He advised the subcommittee that this year there has been approximately a 100 percent increase in housing complaints. Many of the complaints involve hoarding and have a mental health aspect that needs to be dealt with. There are also complaints of nuisances, such as not cutting the grass, etc., and it really often involves disputes between two neighbors.

There followed a discussion concerning the Department's responsibility with regard to animal control. Presently, there is a vacancy in the animal control position and the Director and Assistant Director were performing the function. It appeared that this year there were less rat sightings than in previous years.

The Director and the Members discussed the involvement of the new Youth Coordinator and the functions organized by the Youth Coordinator.

The Director advised the subcommittee Members of the effort by the Health Department to educate the youth of Belmont and others of the dangers of vaping. There was a discussion concerning the prevalence of drug use among a percentage of our high school students. The Director advised that they are not issuing any new licenses for a new establishment to sell cigarettes in the hope that eventually Belmont will become a town where cigarettes are not sold. The Health Department is presently prohibiting the sale of any drug paraphernalia.

The process for inspecting Belmont's food establishments was explained and the manner in which any violations should be made public was discussed.

The remainder of the meeting involved a review of the budget and the reconciling of the budget and full-time employees devoted to each of the several functions of the Department.

The Director pointed out that his request for a Town-issued cell phone for himself and his assistant had been denied in previous year and he hoped it would be made available in fiscal year

2020. Presently, he uses his personal cell phone to communicate with his staff and uses his personal phone to take pictures when he is making inspections of either food establishments or dealing with housing issues.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, on motion by the Chairman the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Robert E. McLaughlin,
Human Services Subcommittee Chair