

Town of Mansfield
Board of Health
February 10, 2022 Minutes

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Mission Statement: The mission of the Mansfield Board of Health is to protect, preserve and improve the public health, environment, and wellbeing of our citizens through the enforcement of federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, education and promotion of sanitary living and working conditions, and protection of the environment from disease and pollution.

Present: Antonia Blinn; Chair, Graham Wilson; Clerk, Michael Healey, Amy Donovan-Palmer; Health Agent, Jess Aptowitz; Select Board Member, Steve Schoonveld; Select Board Member

Absent: Ryan Maxwell, Kasia Frenette

I. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Antonia Blinn.

II. Review of Robert's Rules of Order

Ms. Blinn reviewed the process for motions and discussions on a topic.

III. COVID-19 Update

- COVID cases year comparison – comparison shows spike due to omicron.
- Past week – 44 COVID cases, Same period 1 year ago – 43 cases
- Vaccine Distribution by age – looking to see people continue to get booster shots
- CDC Transmission Level – all MA counties still listed as high, over 24 cases per week is threshold for high-risk category.
- Percent positivity – 11.57%, continues to drop, goal is to be around 4%
- Average daily incident rate continues to decrease.
- Hospitalization rates – hospitalizations lag behind increases in positive cases

Ms. Blinn reminds everyone that despite the town mask mandate being rescinded, wearing a mask is still good practice. DESE made decision to not renew mask mandates in schools, current mandate ends February 28th.

IV. Reassessment of current BOH orders regarding mask mandate(s)

Board reviewed the mask mandate for municipal buildings in Mansfield. Mr. Healey asks what Governor Baker's message is regarding masks. Ms. Blinn responds that it was a joint message that the DPH encourages people to wear masks indoors but leaving it up to individual entities. Mr. Healey asked if we have seen a tendency for towns to rescind municipal building mask mandates. Ms. Donovan-Palmer responds she has not heard anything specifically. Ms. Blinn noted that many towns have rescinded their town-wide mandates, but she did not see any mention of rescinding municipal building mandates in those towns.

Motion to rescind the mask mandate for the municipal buildings as voted on September 2nd, 2021 Board of Health meeting effective February 28th, 2022 made by Mr. Healey. 2nd by Mr. Wilson.

Discussion: Ms. Blinn appreciates the date being consistent with schools ending date. Mr. Healey states that senior citizens and those who utilize the Council on Aging feel alienated by the mandates. He hopes people will still wear masks. There have been very little Council on Aging events in the past two months. Mr. Healey supports we go back to helping and supporting people. Ms. Blinn stated we forget sometimes that we forget that our healthcare system is most effected,

and that until there is good capacity in hospitals again, health center mandates are still in effect. Mr. Wilson states that he likes the date to potentially reduce confusion between school mandates and the town municipal mandate. Ms. Donovan-Palmer acknowledged the staff at the COA for their consistent work with the Health Agent to keep people safe. Ms. Blinn asked if there has been any recommendation from our Town Manager regarding the mandate. Ms. Donovan-Palmer states he is leaving it up to the Board of Health.

Vote passes 3-0.

V. Hemp Wraps and Tobacco Regulations

Ms. Donovan-Palmer presented information regarding hemp wraps and how Mansfield tobacco regulations apply. Resident inquired with Ms. Donovan-Palmer whether the new flavored hemp wraps fall under our Tobacco Regulations. Ms. Donovan-Palmer states that they do not fall under our tobacco regulations because they do not contain nicotine or tobacco, so anyone can purchase them. Therefore, the question was brought forward. Ms. Donovan-Palmer checked with Sarah McColgan, at the Mass Health Officers Association to ask if she has any information. Based on response, hemp wraps do not fall under the tobacco regulations. MS. McColgan suggested some changes to our regulations:

- Change 1: Add definition for rolling papers
- Change 2: Add to the definition of flavored tobacco product enhancer

With these changes, the town's tobacco regulations would include hemp wraps. Ms. Blinn stated that when we were revisiting our tobacco regulations, there were some great fact sheets that discussed flavored tobacco products. Ms. Blinn states that there is not much information on this product as it is so new and asks if Sarah McColgan can provide more information. Mr. Healey stated that he has no issue looking at the recommendations from the state, but he believes our current regulations do in fact cover these hemp wraps. Mr. Healey is not opposed to adding the changes to make the distinction clear. Mr. Healey feels we do not need a public hearing for this. Mr. Wilson stated he doesn't think it needs a public hearing and would like to see input from an outside professional. Mr. Healey asks how store owners are treating them. Ms. Donovan-Palmer says that our inspector has seen them around town, but he does not know how they are being handled at the current time. Ms. Donovan-Palmer is going to reach out to Sarah McColgan to see if she can speak to the board at either the March or April meeting. No motions presented.

VI. Plant & Environmental Impact Assessment and Community Health Impact Assessment/Letter to Governor Baker Regarding Peabody Peaker Plant

Ms. Blinn summarized that in December BOH meeting, the Board of Health learned about the new electric peaker plant in Peabody. Presentation was made at that meeting by the Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility shared information with us at that meeting.

Select board member Steve Schoonveld addressed the board. He states he is speaking for himself as a commissioner of the MMED. Mr. Schoonveld states we should support projects like this as we need to update our infrastructure to provide ample power when needed. Updating infrastructure replaces aging, less efficient infrastructure. Mansfield has its own peak power plant. Mr. Schoonveld states a lot of the statistics presented for this is based on aging, less efficient infrastructure. Mr. Schoonveld hopes that the Board supports the project.

Motion to not send a letter to Governor Baker regarding supporting the termination of the Peabody Peaker Plant Plan by Mr. Healey, 2nd by Mr. Wilson.

Discussion: Mr. Healey volunteers to work with the electric department to put together a letter in

support of the Peabody Peaker Plant Plan with the MMED.

Vote passes 3-0

Motion to nominate Michael Healey to work with the MMED to create a letter in support of the Peabody Peaker Plant Plan by Mr. Wilson, 2nd by Mr. Healey.

Discussion: Ms. Blinn asked if it makes sense for Ms. Donovan-Palmer to work in conjunction with the board member and the MMED to draft the letter. Mr. Schoonveld stated it is not a bad thing.

Vote passes 3-0

VII. Department Updates

Bristol-Norfolk Public Health Partners Coalition Grants Update: still moving forward, one step closer to having a signed contract. Mr. Healey asks if the contact tracing position is going forward. Ms. Donovan-palmer states it is but it is changing a bit to focusing on clusters and high-risk areas.

FOG: No updates. Carol Dunn, volunteer, has helped enter information

PFAS: No updates

Website/Social Media: Still putting out a lot of information regarding COVID-19.

Housing Inspections: some challenging inspections in terms of being labor intensive. Having a regional housing inspector will be a great help.

Grant Applications: No updates

Ms. Donovan-Palmer states that for a new intern, she wants to meet with the intern to find out what they are interested in and develop projects around that to ensure they get as much out of the position as the town does.

VIII. Visitor Comments

NONE

IX. Items Not Known 48 Hours Prior

Mr. Healey shared that he watched the Industrial & Development Commission meeting prior to the Board of health meeting. The IDC feel they could be a resource to the BOH in terms of communicating to businesses in town if issues arise.

Ms. Blinn brought up PFAS in our community, and important communication regarding the installation of the new PFAS treatment system. Ms. Blinn was connected to BU School of Public Health and has a few professors interested in working with us. They have identified a student to work with us to pull information together. Ms. Blinn wishes to have this as a formal agenda item in April.

X. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn at 9:00pm made by Mr. Wilson, 2nd by Mr. Healey**

VOTE 3-0 PASSED



Clerk



Date