

# HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

## MINUTES OF MEETING

July 16, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
Meeting ID 815 3350 7360  
Password 125788

Members Present: Giselle Perez PhD, Christopher Small, and David Smith (Chair).

Others Present: Christine Lee (Public Health Nurse), Leslie Whelan (Health Agent) and Josh Rollins.

This meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm by David Smith. All were in attendance via Zoom.

### **Review and approve minutes from past meetings including 6/26/2020 (Joint Meeting with Wenham) and 7/2/2020.**

Both approvals were postponed.

### **Report from Director, Public Health Nurse, Christine Lee**

Christine Lee announced that there were 37 positive cases of Covid 19 in Hamilton. Four had tested positive for antibodies, which did not mean they were active cases. Of the 41 total cases, there were seven deaths and two residents being traced. Ms. Lee had been reviewing guidelines with the new Gordon Conwell nurse, who would also be assisting with Tb and Flu drive through clinics. If or when students return to Gordon Conwell, the nurse would be responsible for contact tracing. Ms. Lee added that this was the third two-week period when a gap had occurred between positive cases.

### **Report from Health Agent, Leslie Whelan**

Leslie Whelan had posted new information regarding mosquito and tick prevention on the Town webpage and sent a request to Bobby Gates to post information regarding EEE and West Nile Virus on social media. Ms. Whelan was working on a noise complaint, which might be brought to the Board's attention after information was collected from DEP, MA Association of Health Boards and local history regarding the shooting range. Ms. Whelan referred to the chart comparing septic work in spring of 2019 and spring of 2020. There were 26 Title 5 inspection reports this spring (April, May, and June) vs 38 in 2019. Ms. Whelan reviewed four septic plans this year and six last year. There were four soil evaluations this year and ten last year. There were ten construction projects this year and thirteen last year with two inspections per project. Ms. Whelan continued to review building permits and nuisance complaints. Not contained within her submitted report, was the request by the Director of Planning and Inspections to have all Health Department staff give feedback on the current status or perception on where things were in the department. Christine Lee and Ms. Whelan had responded and Bobby Cody and the

animal inspector would also respond. Town administration would review the organization of the department.

**Update on Covid-19 matters from Board Members/Summary of recent conference call with MAPC between Christine Lee and David Smith.**

Dr. Perez had been reviewing research from MGH regarding vaccines. David Smith reported on the MAPC sponsored meeting with Board of Health members and school administration on how schools would manage Covid 19 issues in the coming school year. Mr. Smith noted there were many new superintendents that had recently started their positions. Mr. Smith also noted that complaints had been received regarding seagulls and odors at Brick Ends Farm in the last month. The Board had agreed six months ago to forward complaints to Sean Bowen as his agency, Agricultural Resources was the primary regulator of Brick Ends Farm. Mr. Smith said Town administration would review the Health Department functions.

Christine Lee discussed the need for parents with a full time job to have school in session in the fall and that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was now recommending 3' social distancing. Ms. Lee noted that parents used the schools as a day care even when children were sick. Ms. Lee wondered how a hybrid system would work for children who needed supervision. Mary Beth Ting spoke with Ms. Lee and reportedly noted that children with symptoms would be isolated in the nurse's office where children with medical needs such as diabetes would be double exposed to the virus. Ms. Lee wondered if a mask that claimed to kill bacteria was valid but Dr. Perez did not believe so.

Dr. Perez, who was a parent, was conflicted with in person teaching in the schools due to the fact that there was so much uncertainty regarding the ability to transmit the virus in children. Dr. Perez thought the larger issue was the effect on teachers, who were a high risk population as the viral load increased the likelihood of infection. Dr. Perez said children didn't learn as well virtually in the lower grades and that children who needed access to food and emotional support would be compromised.

David Smith noted the relatively low interest in the virus compared to spring, which he found to be unsettling. Christine Lee thought people were taking a break during the summer as the fall was unsure. Ms. Lee thought there was a need to stabilize for what was likely a negative time in the fall. Ms. Lee added that the Police Department had reinstated the ice cream for safety coupons. Chris Small was worried there was a false sense of security and recalled seeing unmasked and un-distanced customers at cafes in Manchester.

Members discussed their advisory role in the decision making of the Schools reopening. The concern would be amplified if students, administration, or teachers tested positive for the virus. The concept that each town had their own unique scheme was a concern and the hope was that the State would introduce uniform guidelines or advice as to how to proceed. The Board of Health decided to reach out and introduce the Board to the new superintendent to get a dialogue

established. The superintendent was busy developing three plans (in school, remote, and a hybrid), one of which would be implemented in September. Dr. Perez added that in different parts of the State, the decision had been made. Leslie Whelan said Rockport had created a reopening committee that included two members of the Board of Health and suggested that Hamilton replicate the committee.

**Schedule and topics for next Board meetings.**

A meeting would be scheduled with the Superintendent of Schools as an immediate action item. The next Board of Health meeting would be Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 2:00 pm. Leslie Whelan would be on vacation so any septic variance would need to be delayed until the following meeting.

Dr. Perez agreed with the comment offered by Josh Rollins that following guidelines should be maintained to continue what was working to keep residents safe. Christopher Small and David Smith would get the message on all social media platforms as an action item. The message would be that residents should be vigilant while they enjoyed summer.

**New Business**

**Documents submitted.**

Health Agent Report dated, July 16, 2020. .  
Minutes dated 6/26/2020 and 7/2/2020.

**Adjournment**

Motion made by Dr. Perez to adjourn at 2:54 pm.

Second by Christopher Small.

Roll call vote: David Smith – aye, Dr. Perez – aye, and Christopher Small – aye. Unanimous in favor.

Prepared by:

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Marcie Ricker