

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES OF MEETING

October 15, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Meeting ID 86760056676
Password 564199

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

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

This meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by David Smith. All were in attendance via Zoom. Roll call: David Smith – aye, Dr. Perez – aye, Christopher Small – aye, Christine Lee – aye, and Leslie Whelan – aye.

Review and approve Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2020 and May 12, 2020.

Motion to approve the Hamilton Board of Health meeting minutes of October 1, 2020 made by David Smith.

Seconded by Christopher Small.

Vote: David Smith – aye, Dr. Perez, - aye, and Christopher Small - aye. Unanimous in favor.

Motion to approve the Hamilton Board of Health meeting minutes of May 12, 2020 made by Christopher Small.

Seconded by Dr. Perez.

Vote: David Smith - aye, Dr. Perez - aye, and Christopher Small – aye.

Report from the Public Health Nurse, Christine Lee.

The number of Covid 19 cases were 49 confirmed, 12 probable, and seven deaths. Two people were being traced. Cumberland Farms was open for business again, after a concern caused them to post a sign and clean the store.

The Board of Health had received phone calls regarding basketball play at the park. Christine Lee said that any outdoor activity for teens and children was less risky than having the same teens and children inside with their friends. Ms. Lee said Halloween would be a safe activity if done properly with mitigation strategies (masks, 6' distancing, and hand washing). Chris Small disagreed about the young men playing basketball without masks; adding that Essex County may not be experiencing the same consistency of cases as MA. Ms. Lee said positive cases were related to college students who were in close contact with other students or household contacts to those who were health care workers or long term care facility workers. Dr. Perez suggested balancing the risk with the emotional benefits of outdoor activities. Dr. Perez thought limiting the activity might cause community outrage. Mr. Small noted that players were not observing social distancing or mask compliance while the town was still in a pandemic.

Update/Discussion from the Board on development of Covid 19 Metrics for HWRSD.

David Smith recalled that no feedback or concerns had been received since the revised motion had been passed and the new document had been submitted. Christine Lee, who sat on the Covid Task Force, was pleasantly surprised that high school teachers had responded that high school students were wearing their masks constantly. Social distancing was in need of improvement. Surveys were routinely filled out by the teaching staff.

Update/Discussion from Board on Covid-19 DPH conference calls and related matters including planned Public Health Education Campaign.

Leslie Whelan noted that all the towns were experiencing similar struggles. Ms. Whelan informed Bobby Cody that the plexi-glass partitions at bars did not erase the requirement to be 6' apart. Chris Lee noted the suggestion that a town not react to an increase in cases before a three week trend had been experienced.

Members discussed trick or treating. A Halloween flyer had been posted on the Town website. Trick or treating was noted as a medium risk by the CDC. It was suggested that a table with packaged items be placed at the driveway or walkway, allowing residents to remain 6' away from trick or treaters.

Discussion of draft Board guidance on masks and face coverings.

The guidance document, written by David Smith, would be placed on the Town website. The CDC was undecided regarding the use of gators as a replacement for masks. Chris Lee said the DPH precluded the use of neck gators. Dr. Perez added that the American Medical Association also had a guidance document.

Board guidance for Town on Halloween activities

The guidance had been posted on the Town website and social media.

Report from Health Agent, Leslie Whelan

Leslie Whelan reported that the owner of the Hamilton Convenience store had submitted a written plan to the Health Department. The plan outlined what would occur if a similar situation were to present itself. A return label would be placed on the item and the item would be stored in the back room. Staff would be trained regarding the ban on flavored tobacco products. A letter that the fine would be in abeyance would be written.

Five tobacco permit applications had been sent out. Two would be resent due to email address errors. Ms. Whelan would meet with Bobby Cody to review food establishment issues as they related to Covid 19. Food permits would be renewed after the establishment list was verified. Ms. Whelan would work with Greg Bernard regarding septic permit and barn permit renewals.

While cooler temperatures allowed for fewer risks, there was still a threat for EEE and West Nile Virus until a hard frost occurred. It was too cold currently for blue algae that had been a problem in Chebacco Lake earlier in the season.

Schedule topics for next meeting

Christine Lee wanted to discuss strategies for safer holiday gatherings. Dr. Perez wanted to find a way to regain the trust of the community after uncertainties regarding the schools and masks

had occurred. Dr. Perez hoped for a transparent united front of all boards and committees that would help explain why recommendations might change.

Documents submitted.

Minutes dated, 5/12/20 and 10/1/20.

Health Agent Report, dated October 15, 2020.

Adjournment

Motion made by Christopher Small to adjourn at 6:06 pm.

Seconded by Dr. Perez.

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

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

