

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 4, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Meeting ID 89193863175
Password 444402

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

Others Present: Christine Lee (Public Health Nurse) (5:42) 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, and Leslie Whelan – aye.

Review and approve Meeting Minutes of October 15, 2020.

To be considered at the next meeting.

Report from Public Health Nurse, Chris Lee.

One person at the high school had tested positive and had exposed a team who were on the school bus outside of school. Chris Lee noted the two Emergency Medical Team deaths that had occurred recently. Grief counseling would be offered the night of the meeting. Rachel Lee agreed to be the next public health nurse. There were 57 confirmed cases, 12 probably cases, and 7 deaths in Hamilton due to Covid 19.

Motion made by David Smith to express the Board of Health's deep gratitude for exceptional service given by Christine Lee during the pandemic. The message to commend Ms. Lee for her exceptional service above reasonable expectations would be communicated to the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen.

Dr. Perez seconded.

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

Members discussed that residents should go outside to lessen the effects of Covid 19. Dr. Perez offered to share tips and recommendations for better mental and physical health. Residents should be encouraged to reach out to others to avoid isolation as part of a public education campaign.

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

David Smith referred to the Governor's Orders 53, 54, and 55 and the complications and differing interpretations associated with them. Mr. Smith noted that the orders issued indicated

that anyone was required to wear a mask as soon as they exited their own property and that a curfew was set between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am. Businesses needed to close by 9:30 pm. The rationale was that groups of 10 to 30 people were congregating after that time and the disease had spread as a result. Groups were limited to ten indoors and to 25 outdoors.

Discussion of draft Board guidance on masks and face coverings.

The language would be changed regarding wearing of masks in outdoor public spaces and outdoor spaces. A summary of Orders 53, 54, 55 had been posted on the Town website.

Guidance for Holiday Gatherings.

Members discussed the implications of the Governor's new orders and how they would affect holiday gatherings. The Department of Public Health had issued recommendations for Thanksgiving and other social gatherings. Members discussed potential alternatives to staying indoors, such as fire pits and ice bars.

Community perception of public health efforts around Covid 19

Members discussed the Board of Health's transparency as well as a trust in all public bodies. Another Town forum was suggested in an effort to address concerns. The effort might cause more problems than would be solved. It was noted that residents' emotions would cause internal and external challenges. Members suggested having residents put forth questions in advance of the meeting. The questions could be combined to have a communal answer. Members discussed that the previous forum was less productive than they had hoped.

Report from Health Agent, Leslie Whelan

Leslie Whelan reported that she had sent out 30 food establishment renewal applications. Tobacco permits had been issued. The animal inspector was working on an updated list of animal permits and renewal applications will soon be sent to existing barns. Ms. Whelan would work on septic permits (septic haulers, installers, Title 5 inspectors, and Operation and Maintenance inspectors for alternative systems) the following week. Between the categories, there were 30 installers, 10 pumpers, five to 10 maintenance providers, and 12 to 15 Title 5 inspectors. Applications, which were sent out via e-mail, were due back by December 1, 2020. Updates to the Board of Health webpage had been made regarding radon testing and well water testing for private wells. Bobby Cody would review the food licenses before Ms. Whelan distributed the permits.

As the meeting occurred, it was announced that the Hamilton Wenham Regional High School would be held fully remote in response to the information that one person had been tested positive. The decision was based on the Schools not having enough staff to education the students. Members discussed the implication of following mitigation strategies and that best practice would have been to carpool if not to provide for individual transport of students to a given location.

Documents submitted.

Minutes dated, 10/15/20.

Adjournment

Motion made by Christopher Small to adjourn at 6:28 pm.

Seconded by David Smith.

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

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

