

**Meeting Notes from an Meeting of the Peabody Board of Health,  
Regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic, Held remotely via Zoom Video Conference, Tuesday, March 24, 2020  
Participating in the Virtual Meeting: Chairman Bernard Horowitz, Dr. Leigh Ann Mansberger, Thomas J.  
Durkin III, Health Department Director Sharon Cameron, and Recording Secretary Lisa Greene.**

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Subject: Meeting to be called to order

Discussion: BH called the meeting to order at 4:34 and explained that this previously scheduled meeting of the BOH would focus on the Covid-19 Pandemic and to discuss steps to take as a Board of Health. He told that on Friday the BOH had held an emergency meeting during which they had laid out what they wanted the public to do and not do. He asked Sharon Cameron to give an update.

## **BUSINESS**

**Subject:** Covid-19 Pandemic

**Discussion:** Ms. Cameron reported that she had had a meeting with the Mayor and department heads this morning around these issues, and told that things are evolving quickly. She told that as of the last meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> there had been 7,700 cases of the virus nationwide, and as of yesterday that number had grown to 33,000. Yesterday there were 337 reported cases in Massachusetts, up from 236, and reported that there are now 4 positive cases in Peabody, with the first being reported on Friday. She reported that the nurses are busy with keeping in contact with the people who tested positive, and are working with them and their families, making sure family members remain under quarantine for 14 days, and they are doing the contact tracing, which is very time consuming. For this reason they have pulled in additional nursing resources from the school nurses to supplement our public health nurse with this work as it is the highest priority. She added that the nurses have been trained in these matters and in confidentiality, as this information falls under HIPPA privacy law so no names or addresses are being publicly released, except that they have been sharing the addresses of the identified cases with public safety personnel so that they can take precautions when responding to those addresses. They are required by state order to share this information with public safety. She reminded that on Friday the Board ordered the closure of all personal care businesses in Peabody, which includes hair and nail salons; the Governor issued an order requiring these and other non-essential businesses to close on 3-23-20. The Health Dept office has been handling calls from businesses interpreting those orders. She told that most of the inspectors and admin assistant's time is being spent dealing with calls from businesses and giving technical guidance to the community and to other sectors of the government.

BH asked if it was possible to tell the Board, without telling the addresses, if the positive cases were clustered near each other. Ms. Cameron replied that they are not. She reported that there is now widespread community transmission in Massachusetts, that is, we cannot tell how the people got it, as the people infected have not contracted it from traveling abroad or from being in contact with someone who has recently been out of the country. Mr. Durkin asked exactly how do we learn about those who have tested positive. She explained that the state has an electronic reporting system called MAVEN, and all labs and physicians are required to report into MAVEN, and then all public health nurses in the person's community will be notified. Mr. Durkin asked if this is the same system used to give the monthly reports on other infectious diseases, and Ms. Cameron replied that it is.

Mr. Horowitz asked if the city and state are now on the same page with regard to business closures. Ms. Cameron replied that they are, adding that the Governor has now closed all non-essential businesses and advised that people not gather in groups greater than 10 people, as the Board had ordered, so those are now consistent across the state. She said that businesses are working hard to comply, churches are looking at alternate ways to hold services like in cars, and employers are calling with questions about whether employees should be required to have a 14 day quarantine period if they have travelled, or if they have family members who work in health care.

Mr. Horowitz wondered if churches would be allowed under the current order to hold confession. Ms. Cameron replied that under the Governor's order, places of worship are exempt, as long as they are following social distancing guidelines, so that would be allowable provided social distancing guidelines are followed. Mr. Horowitz told that now even at funerals there are new safety protocols in place where workers place the casket and then leave the site, and do not return and lower the casket until after families have left the site.

Mr. Horowitz asked to discuss #3 on the agenda, discussion of additional local response actions, and asked if there are any additional actions the Board thinks we should be taking at this time. Ms. Cameron replied that she doesn't have any other suggestions, but wanted to see if the Board had any thoughts. Mr. Horowitz told that someone had asked about whether a person could be allowed to go alone into a dance studio to practice. Ms. Cameron replied that the Governor's ordinance clearly states that these businesses would be locked down, the actual physical structures closed, so that would not be allowed.

Mr. Horowitz asked what the procedure is for people who are sick with the virus at home, not sick enough to be hospitalized, who is making sure they are not going outside. Ms. Cameron replied that this is part of discharge planning, and the physician who determined that they are well enough to stay at home should be taking into consideration whether the person has supports in place to get supplies while in isolation or quarantine. She added that this is also something that the public health nurse asks about when she calls.

Mr. Horowitz asked if the Board has any other items or suggestions. Mr. Durkin and Ms. Mansberger said that they did not. Mr. Horowitz said that he would look to Ms. Cameron to let them know what other communities are doing and if there is anything further that should be done. She agreed, and said that they really want to be consistent with what other health departments are doing, and said that if any other ideas come from her discussions with them then she would bring them to the Board for discussion.

Mr. Horowitz wondered if we would have to take the next step, sheltering in place, and wondered if other communities had gotten there, and what the number of cases is in different communities. Ms. Cameron said that it is tracked by county, and that information can be found on the Mass.gov page under coronavirus updates. She said that she would send a zoom meeting invite for a meeting next week, and asked what day works, Wednesday or Thursday. All agreed that the group would reconvene on Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00.

Mr. Horowitz thanked Ms. Cameron for all of her hard work during this time, and the Board joined in to thank her. Ms. Cameron thanked the Board and the meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Meeting Adjourned: 4:58 p.m.**