

Approved MINUTES

Longmeadow Board of Health Remote ZOOM Meeting 7:00 PM Thursday, January 14, 2021

The remote meeting conducted using a teleconference format was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Dr. Robert Baevsky, Interim Chair.

Dr. Baevsky started the meeting reading the Governors Open Town Meeting protocol defining the guidelines for all Town meetings, as gatherings are suspended since March 12, 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. All the information on this guideline is posted on the Longmeadow Town Website. Members present and responding by a verbal roll call from the Vice-Chair were Dr. Robert Baevsky, Dr. Richard Steingart, Dr. Anastasios Angelides, Dr. Gregory Valania, Dr. Michele Keane-Moore and Christine Beaumont, Associate Member. Lyn Simmons, Town Manager and Chief John Dearborn were also in attendance.

Personal introductions were made by each of the Board members to help them become better acquainted. The minutes of the November 30th meeting of the Board of Health were unanimously approved along with recognition of the notification by the Attorney General regarding the violation of the Open Meeting Law and the referenced email from June 10, 2020. Both motions were made by Tass Angelides and seconded by Richard Steingart.

Election of new officers was undertaken to fill the recent vacancies. By unanimous vote, Dr. Baevsky was elected Chair (motion by Tass Angelides and seconded by Rich Steingart), Richard Steingart was elected vice-Chair (motion by Tass Angelides and seconded by Robert Baevsky), and Anastasios Angelides was elected Secretary (motion by Robert Baevsky and seconded by Rich Steingart).

Lyn Simmons, Town Manager, gave an update on the Board of Health staffing issues, including a brief overview of the failed “shared services” agreement with the Town of East Longmeadow. It was noted that Sharon Smith, the BOH Administrative Assistant, is presently on an extended leave of absence. A search is presently underway for a new Board of Health Director and a fulltime Public Health Nurse. In the interim, town staff will continue to respond to town BOH inquiries. Laurie McCool will be hired as needed for town inspection services.

Lyn Simmons and Chief Dearborn gave a detailed update on the town of Longmeadow’s “COVID Team” and proposed vaccination program. Chief Dearborn is working with the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) and noted that we are presently in Phase I of distribution, with anticipation of moving to Phase II/III (which will include vaccination of town residents) sometime in early March. Current plans include use of the Greenwood Center with significant volunteer support. There is adequate PPE on hand, with available vaccine storage and distribution capabilities. Various aspects of the program were addressed including public notification, timelines, available resources, and coordination with State services. There will need to be physician oversight and Dr. Baevsky mentioned that Dr. Steingart is currently listed as the town’s Vaccination Director.

The town remains at 5.18% of the population with active COVID, but trending downward and more prevalent among family members. After brief discussion, due to the recent COVID surge, the Board unanimously voiced that the town outdoor basketball courts should remain closed. Dr. Angelides mentioned that the issue of both the basketball courts and tennis facilities should be brought back for discussion as the weather improves this spring. Dr. Baevsky mentioned that the Mass.Gov weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report is updated every Thursday for those who are interested in seeing the most current statistics.

Chief Dearborn mentioned that the town is managing resident health and safety issues with one case currently being addressed by social and town services.

Dr. Baevsky gave the Board a brief update on a few of the health topics that the Board has recently addressed including the need to keep a watch out for issues related to the Palmer Biomass Energy Plant being proposed in the neighboring city of Springfield, the continued failure of the Longmeadow water quality studies, and the recent passage by vote of the Board on having the Town's HR department utilize the "short form" for TB screening.

Dr. Baevsky reminded the new members of the Board that they should review the materials on the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (www.MAHB.org) for training as well as reviewing minutes of previous meetings.

It was requested that contact information for the Board members be distributed. Having no further issues to address, a unanimous roll call vote for adjournment was made and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Baevsky, MD
Chair, BOH