

TOWN OF WENHAM

BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting of July 22, 2020

Wenham Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, § 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Wenham Board of Health (BOH) was held on Wednesday July 22, 2020 at 8:30 am virtually on Zoom.

The Board of Health makes regulations as it deems necessary for the public health and safety of the Town. The Wenham Board of Health is responsible for the enforcement of State Sanitary Codes, State Environmental Codes and Wenham Board of Health Regulations. Areas of responsibility include: septic systems, housing and dwelling units, food service establishments, private wells and recreational camps for children.

Board of Health members: Gerald T. Donnellan (2021); Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair (2022); Regina Baker (2023);

Call to order: *With a quorum present, Dr. Ting called the meeting to order at 8:36 am.*

Board Members Present: Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair; Regina Baker; Gerald Donnellan

Also Present: Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse; Greg Bernard, Health Agent; Jackie Bresnahan, Director of Administrative; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary

Due to the COVID19 Virus pandemic, and restrictions concerning in-person gatherings ordered by the Governor, this meeting took place virtually on Zoom. Dr. Ting identified that this was a virtual meeting, the meeting was being recorded, and those in attendance.

- COVID-19 (Coronavirus Discussion)

- Review any updated guidance from State or local enforcement of guidance

Police Chief Tom Perkins & Deputy Chief Kevin DiNapoli participated in this discussion.

At the July 15 BOH meeting a Wenham resident requested the BOH consider reopening the beach at Pleasant Pond or at least maintaining the cleanliness of the beach.

Since that meeting, Dr. Ting said he looked at other communities with public beaches and noted the difficulties small towns reported in maintaining the COVID-19 guidelines; one town had to close the beach after one day.

Chief Perkins reported that there was a crowd on the Pleasant Pond beach over the weekend, a majority of those were out of town residents; the safety guidelines for beaches were not being followed. Police Chief Perkins reiterated that the Police Department was not a policy making department and asked the BOH for clear guidance. Although the “beach closed” signs are in place, there are no other indications that the beach was closed and the public was able to access the area.

Dr. Ting referred to the original order from the BOH to close the Pleasant Pond Beach due to health and safety concerns for both the residents and staff. The BOH acknowledged that regulations require the pond be open for fishing, not the beach; there is a limited number of dedicated parking for fishing.

Ms. Bresnahan reviewed that even in a non-pandemic year, the Pleasant Pond beach operates at a significant deficit. This year with the beach closed, no stickers were made available/sold. Also, the Town of Hamilton has chosen to not participate in the Pleasant Pond program as a joint venture with Wenham due to the cost and there are unaddressed operational changes.

Chief Perkins said he has spoken to other town officials, who had a level of unease and a variety of concerns related to opening the beach and there was no support to open the beach this season.

The board spoke in length with the Police and Public Nurse about opening the beach.

This is a small beach area and with 12’ toweling, and operating at 40% there would be a very small number of people allowed. Teenage gatekeepers would be the “front line” and responsible for monitoring residents, physical distancing, face coverings, etc.

Ms. Bresnahan mentioned that the Veteran’s Memorial Pool did not open this year for similar reasons, and observed it would take weeks to organize, hire staff, etc. and the beach would not open until August and the beach closes Labor Day.

The Board focused their discussion on clarifying that the beach was closed.

Ms. Baker noted although she had hoped the beach could be open, the COVID-19 virus was increasing again, and expected to surge in the fall and agreed the importance of physical distancing, face coverings, etc. was very important.

Ms. Baker suggested different signage be installed at the beach. Ms. Bresnahan will confirm with the town’s insurance company what language would be required to close the beach.

Draft

The board members confirmed their previous vote that Pleasant Pond beach remain closed due to concerns with being able to maintain the COVID-19 guidelines as outlined by the Department of Public Health and the Governor's reopening plan and operational costs to the town:

- Construction fencing to be installed around the beach to identify the beach area was closed.
 - The porta-potty will be moved outside of the gate.
 - The gate be kept closed/locked with additional barricades as needed.
 - Additional signage
 - The "beach closed" sign be placed at the entrance to Pleasant Street.
 - Because parking along Pleasant Street has been problematic, to the point where a fire truck could not get through, additional barricades will be used as needed.
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- Updates from the Public Health Nurse

Ms. Ting reported that Wenham had one additional confirmed COVID-19 positive test for a cumulative total of 20 and one additional probable case for a total of 8 probable cases.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released their guidance related to exposure to COVID-19 virus at school, and on the bus, etc. for staff and students.

Ms. Ting observed that some of the protocols differ from the Department of Public Health.

This continues to be monitored. The Hamilton & Wenham BOH continue to meet with the new Superintendent of Schools Mary Beth Banios. There is a community discussion with the superintendent tonight on zoom. The deadline for the school district to submit the reopening plan to the state is July 31, 2020.

Gordon College has informed the town that college students would be returning to campus starting August 15. Each student and faculty would be COVID-19 tested upon arrival and a mass testing /screening is scheduled for August 25-27. The BOH and Public Nurse are working closely with Gordon College.

- Updates from staff, if needed

Ms. Bresnahan reported that mosquito testing has begun. Ms. Bresnahan informed the board that there is new legislation before the Governor to better fight mosquito born viruses with state authorized spraying. This is deemed helpful when multiple communities are involved.

Ms. Bresnahan noted that Town Hall opened to the public on Monday. Residents are still encouraged to do business over the phone or on line. Ms. Bresnahan confirmed there are some signs posted on town hall regarding COVID-19 protocol. Ms. Ting will review and assist with these signs.

With the reopening of town hall, the parking lot doors are used to enter the building with the doors facing Main Street being used to exit the building, staff are working in their offices, wearing face coverings, and physical distancing. There is an abundance of hand sanitizer and wipes available throughout town hall. The conference rooms remain closed to staff and the public. The Selectmen have decided to meet in-person for their next Selectmen's meeting in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. This space is 1000 sq. ft. and can hold up to 5 people following the social distancing guidelines; no staff will attend this meeting. Otherwise, all other boards and committees continue to meet via Zoom.

- Review and Approval of any outstanding minutes – July 15, 2020

There were no minutes submitted to approve at this meeting.

- New business, not reasonably anticipated by the Chair for discussion only.

Ms. Bresnahan informed the board that she would be away the second week in August; a Gordon College intern will provide part time office coverage.

- Next meetings:

- July 28 BOH discussion with Gordon College
- July 29, 2020 3 pm
- July 29, 2020 3:30PM Joint with Hamilton

- Adjournment – *The Board unanimously adjourned by roll call at 9:40 am.*

Respectfully Submitted By

Catherine Tinsley

7.22.2020