

TOWN OF WENHAM
Joint Hamilton & Wenham Board of Health
Meeting of May 15, 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 joint meeting of the Wenham Board of Health (BOH) with the Hamilton BOH was held on Friday May 15, 2020 at 5pm. In response to the Covid19 Virus pandemic, the Massachusetts Governor closed all non-essential businesses and issued stay at home advisory. To comply with the Governor's orders, this meeting took place virtually on zoom video.

- Wenham call to order –*With a quorum present, Dr. Ting called the Wenham BOH meeting to order at 5:03pm.*
Board members present: Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair; Regina Baker; Gerald Donnellan
Maribeth Ting, Public Nurse; Jackie Bresnahan, Director of Administrative Services; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary
Officials present not participating: Selectman Harrison
- Hamilton call to order - *With a quorum present, Mr. Smith called the Hamilton BOH meeting to order at 5:03pm.*
Board members present: David Smith, Chair; Dr. Giselle Perez; Christopher Small
Present not participating: Tim Manganaro, Hamilton resident

Identify that this is a virtual meeting, the meeting is being recorded, identify all attendees.
The Chairs identified that this was a virtual meeting, the meeting was being recorded, all could be heard, and votes would be taken by roll call.

Abbreviation used
DPH Department of Public Health
BOS Board of Selectmen
H & W Hamilton and Wenham

COVID-19 (Coronavirus Discussion)

○ Update from Wenham Public Health Nurse
Ms. Ting reported that Wenham has 18 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 and two COVID-19 related deaths.
Ms. Ting went on to say that Wenham is receiving an increase in requests for restrictions to be lifted and for parks, playgrounds and trails be open to the public. There is also a number of residents wanting the face covering order to be lifted and an equal number of complaints that people are not wearing face coverings.

Mr. Ting noted that Wenham extend the emergency order through the Governor's emergency order including that a face covering be worn based on the physical distance guidelines if unable to maintain 6 ft distance outside in public. The Wenham BOH recently provided COVID-19 safety guidance to the Wenham Country Club with the Governor opening golf courses.

Ms. Ting noted that the DPH continually updates their response to COVID-19. Recently the DPH posted new testing guidelines of persons eligible for COVID-19 testing. Those with symptoms should be tested using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or other nucleic acid amplification methodology. It is also recommended that if an antibody testing is ordered that it be done in conjunction with the molecular diagnostic test
Ms. Ting observed that in advance of the Governor's reopening plan, enforcement may need to be provided to local BOH.

○ Update from Hamilton Public Health Nurse
In the absence of Hamilton's public nurse, Mr. Smith provided an update. Hamilton has 24 COVID-19 positive cases and 8 COVID-19 related deaths.
He noted that Hamilton has also received calls to open the athletic fields, parks, and library. The face covering order remains in line with the Governor's order that face covering of the nose and mouth be worn when people are unable to maintain 6 ft physical distance when outside in public.

○ Update from the Hamilton Board of Health
Mr. Smith spoke in detail on the possibility that the BOS will hold a town meeting, tentatively on June 20.
Mr. Smith observed that there is a working group in the process of creating a plan for town meeting to recommend to the BOS at their Monday meeting.

On a side note he said the plan may be to hold the town meeting outside on the football field at the high school under a large tent with no sides. There are many logistics to be considered such as parking, entering, exiting, seating, microphones, etc.

Mr. Ansaldi mentioned that he heard the governor's first phase to open non-essential business may include construction, manufacturing, places of worship and beaches; graduations may be allowed with specific guidelines. Mr. Smith added Pingree School and Gordon Seminary are holding graduations and have submitted their protocol to minimize exposure.

The board members went on to discuss how to maintain low risk exposure balanced with the mental health of residents to be outside. The boards will work together to devise criteria to relax the present restrictions; the main concern is more with the virus on playground structures and equipment.

- Update from the Wenham Board of Health

Ms. Ting addressed public pool concerns with the current pediatric risk and the connection of COVID-19 with Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome. She stressed that this is not an innocuous infection and it is now mandatory to report Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in children. Ms. Ting stressed that although children do not appear to be as impacted by COVID-19, there is an associated risk and the public needs to be educated.

The Wenham BOH reviewed the protocol for the Library's proposed lending program and is working with the director to get resources for cleaning supplies. Recently the library bagged books set aside for the book sale and left curb side for pick up. Even though this was successful from the public's point of view, the board had concerned that books would be shared. The director had placed notices in each bag for safety protocol.

If the governor opens places of worship, the boards were uncertain how this would impact the stay at home advisory of not more than 10 people meeting in one place. The details were unknown and this will be addressed when there is more information.

The Wenham BOS have not decided on a date for town meeting. Mass General Law does not allow a town meeting to be held outside of a town's borders. Pending any legislation to change current laws, the BOS is considering all options to safely hold town meeting.

There was a side discussion regarding the boards concerns that residents with COVID-19 or symptomatic are prohibited from town meeting (voting), and that fewer senior residents would attend, residents without child care would not be able to attend and the voting body would be different. It was noted at this time electronic voting is not allowed.

The boards agreed that a representative from each board serve on a sub-committee to prepare suggestions and guidance to the board for the joint reopening of parks, playgrounds, trails, athletic fields, recreation areas, the pool, etc.

Dr. Perez and Regina Baker agreed to serve on this committee. A joint meeting will be scheduled in mid to late June to hear the recommendation of the subcommittee working group.

VOTE: The Wenham Board of Health voted unanimously by roll call vote to create a joint subcommittee with the Hamilton BOH to prepare a recommendation to the H&W BOH regarding the reopening of public parks, recreation area's and trails and to designate Regina Baker as the BOH representative.

VOTE: The Hamilton BOH voted unanimously by roll call vote to designate Dr. Perez to the joint working group to recommend to the Hamilton and Wenham BOH how to address the reopening of athletic fields, parks, recreation areas etc. with Wenham.

- Any unanticipated COVID-19 related discussion
 - The Wenham Board of Health has a public forum scheduled for Thursday May 21.
 - The Hamilton BOH is planning to hold a public forum the following week.
 - Ms. Ting cautioned that COVID-19 is an ongoing discussion and both short term and long-term planning needs to be considered into the summer and fall. She recommended, and it was agreed, that the H & W BOHs meet jointly through this crisis. A joint meeting will be scheduled in June.
- Adjourn – *The boards voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 pm*

Respectfully Submitted By
Catherine Tinsley
5.16.2020