
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 Wednesday December 9, 2020 at 8am. *Due to the COVID19 Virus pandemic, and restrictions concerning in-person gatherings ordered by the Governor, this meeting took place virtually on Zoom. The Chair announced the meeting was being recorded and those BOH members present.*

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

Board members are elected for a three-year term: Gerald Donnellan (2021); Dr. Andrew Ting, (2022); Regina Baker (2023)

Call to order - *With a quorum present, in the absence of the Chair, Ms. Baker called the meeting to order at 8:04am.*

Board members present: Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair (A-8:07 am); Regina Baker; Gerald Donnellan

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

Officials present not participating; Tom Younger, Interim Town Administrator

- Covid-19 Update from Public Health Nurse

Ms. Ting reported the current accumulative (2020) COVID positive case count in Wenham was 90 confirmed cases and 11 probable cases and the total death rate remains at two. Currently Wenham has 15 COVID positive cases. According to the state's color-coded town risk assessment, Wenham has been a red community for two weeks but with the new data "less than or equal to 15 total cases", Wenham will move back to being a green community. Ms. Ting noted information used for this system is retrospective from November 22 – December 5.

Ms. Ting went on to stress the importance of following COVID safe protocol at this critical time including limiting gatherings with people outside your household and to social contact virtually, by telephone, or more than 6 feet apart.

Ms. Ting reviewed the Governors roll back to phase 3 step 1 that limits outdoor gatherings (from 100) to 50 people. Ms. Ting is in communication with the Veteran's Committee regarding Wreaths Across America ceremony December 19.

This also impacts houses of worship and retail / indoor spaces which are limited to 40% capacity. This includes the First Church in Wenham, the Wenham Country Club; as a curtesy, Ms. Ting will notify impacted places in Wenham.

Ms. Ting reviewed the updated quarantine guidance adopted by the state for those who have been in close contact (less than 6 feet) with a COVID positive person for more than 15 accumulative minutes in a 24-hour period:

1. no symptoms with negative test – quarantine and resume normal activities on day 8
2. no symptoms / no test – complete quarantine and resume normal activities on day 11
3. symptoms / no testing– complete 14 days of quarantine and may resume normal activities on day 15

Ms. Ting reiterated that anyone experiencing even mild symptoms such as stuffy nose, scratchy throat, headache, etc. should seek testing:

- Discussion on Hamilton-Wenham testing dates and location

Ms. Ting announced that the Towns of Hamilton & Wenham partnered with Beauport Ambulance Services to offer COVID-19 drive-up testing during December for Hamilton & Wenham residents who are symptomatic or had close contacts with a COVID-19 positive individual (including Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District students and staff). Pre-registration is not necessary but recommended. The drive-up testing is in the parking lot of the Miles River Middle School, 786 Bay Rd, Hamilton. Testing is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the following days:

Wednesday, December 9, 2020
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
Saturday, December 19, 2020

Sunday, December 20, 2020
Wednesday, December 23, 2020
Monday, December 28,

Results can be expected three days following testing from Beauport Ambulance Services.

Additional information is on the town's web site.

Residents without symptoms were advised to go to one of the states stop-the-spread sites.

- Discuss next public health forum - December 14 via zoom at 7 pm.
- Ms. Bresnahan provided the details on the public health forum on December 14.
- Deputy Police Chief DiNapoli will serve as moderator.
 - Interim Town Administrator will be on the panel.
 - Dr. Ting will represent the BOH on the panel if Ms. Baker is not available.
 - A BOH meeting will be posted that evening.
 - Questions will be accepted in advance and during the forum via chat.

- Discuss additional guidance on closure or limiting use of public buildings

The Board discussed in length if town offices/buildings accessed by the public should be closed to the public due to the rise in COVID positive tests. It was noted that Town hall has limited the hours it is open to the public.

Ms. Bresnahan identified the most public interaction with staff is at the Permitting Office, Town Clerk counter and Finance Department.

Options discussed included by appointment only, have people wait in car and call from parking lot to be let in, encourage residents to use the drop off box outside, keep town hall doors locked and install a video doorbell.

Mr. Younger noted only one local town hall was closed to the public, otherwise most town halls have limited public hours.

Mr. Younger has not discussed in detail if staff feels safe in town hall at this time. All departments operated remotely during the shutdown last spring.

The Board agreed that town hall remain open to the public with limited hours. This will be reconsidered as needed or unless the governor changes inside guidance protocol.

- Updates from staff, as needed

Mr. Bernard reported activity in his office slowed down the past week.

Ms. Bresnahan noted that some of the public nurses appointed to assist with the contact tracing work in schools etc. and no longer able to work for the town and additional nurses need to be recruited but the challenge is the CARES Act money used to pay the nurses ends December 31. Ms. Bresnahan is working on the budget to include additional Public Health Nurses after December 31.

- Approval of outstanding minutes: December 2, 2020

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the meeting minutes of December 2, 2020

- New business, unanticipated by the Chair (for discussion only)

Dr. Ting informed the board he received an email from Hamilton BOH chair David Smith regarding the school metrics.

Dr. Ting will follow up with Mr. Smith and report back to the board at the next meeting.

- Schedule next meeting: Thursday December 17 at 9 am
- Adjournment: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at 8:44am*

Respectfully Submitted By
Catherine Tinsley
12.9.2020