

TOWN OF WENHAM
BOARD OF HEALTH
Meeting of June 10, 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 June 10, 2020 at 8:30AM virtually on Zoom.

- Call to order: *With a quorum present, Dr. Ting called the meeting to order at 8:31AM.*

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 Services; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary; Fire Chief Kavanagh; Deputy Captain Jeff Baxter; Police Chief Perkins; Police Captain DiNapoli; Bill Tyack, Director Department of Public Works; Sean Timmons, Director Joint Hamilton Wenham Recreation. Present not participating: Selectman Harrison

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, all could be heard, and votes would be taken by roll call.

- COVID-19 (Coronavirus Discussion)
 - Update from Public Health Nurse

Ms. Ting reviewed the updated COVID-19 web page, which now includes presumed cases.

Confirmed cases: 19 (reduced from 20 with one being a probable case)

Probable cases: 4 (Probable cases are defined by the following criteria: an epidemiologic link to a confirmed case and the presence of symptoms in the absence of confirmatory PCR testing, OR a positive serologic (antibody) test and a history of illness or epidemiologic) There are no new COVID positive cases since the last update.

Ms. Ting expressed her concern with an increase in positive COVID-19 cases as public area's begin to reopen and reiterated the importance of physical distancing, face coverings, and hand washing.

Ms. Ting requested that the board begin to discuss plans for the fall flu clinic, and suggested the board consider a drive through clinic this year.

- Update from the Board of Health
- Follow up from Joint Meeting with Hamilton Board of Health
- Follow up from updates from the Governor and State DPH
- Discussion on COVID-19 response
- Any unanticipated COVID-1 related discussion

The Governors' phase 2 opening was released Monday and included outdoor / indoor recreation such as pools, health care facilities, playgrounds, organized sports, etc.

The board discussed in length what would be required to open the playgrounds and public use of the playground structures. The board members agreed to meet jointly with Hamilton and coordinate playground openings. It was noted there is minimal guidance from the Governor on playgrounds.

In accordance with CDC guidance, outdoor areas, like playgrounds and outdoor fitness areas, generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection. Cleaning is required on high touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, including grab bars and railings, tables and benches, should be frequently cleaned. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.

Wenham has playground structures located in Pingree Park, near the library, and at the Buker School.

Mr. Timmons noted it is not realistic to clean playgrounds every day, especially maintaining a cleaning schedule on weekends and the same with public restrooms. He mentioned that most towns are struggling with how to open playgrounds.

The board questioned officially opening playgrounds, although it is obvious that the public is already using playgrounds.

Ms. Ting observed there is confusion on opening parks but not playground and recommended the board increase public education regarding playgrounds. The board considered a volunteer group for cleaning but had concerns that this would not be maintainable for the duration of months needed. Dr. Ting questioned if used at your own risk may be an option.

Chief Kavanagh said playgrounds are already being used "at your own risk" as he has observed that signs and caution tape appear to have been removed. Mr. Timmons will speak with DPW about resigning and taping playground structure areas until a decision is made.

Approved 7.1.2020

Dr. Ting asked for a joint meeting with Hamilton about playgrounds and deferred this discussion. He stressed his concern with the virus spreading and mentioned that just last week an unofficial prom was held (in Texas) and 13 teenagers got COVID-19. Ms. Ting reiterated the need for public education to continue and be available to Wenham residents in print, posted on the web page, put out on social media, and video to run on HWCAM and You Tube. Ms. Baker agreed and to stress that the virus still needs to be taken seriously to avoid a spike in cases.

Mr. Timmons spoke on the closure of the Veteran's pool at Patton Park for the 2020 season and that the Recreation Department would offer smaller classes at the recreation center, using tents outdoors.

Mr. Timmons asked the joint BOH meeting include to allow organized youth sports to begin; this should be in conjunction with opening public bathrooms or given that bathrooms would not be able to be cleaned in accordance to the guidance, possibly providing porta-potties. There is strict protocol on cleaning bathrooms.

Mr. Timmons explained that after looking into the guidance for opening pools, it was not fiscally possible to break even with the limitations of public pool operations during the pandemic and he had reservations if the protocol could be maintained during the season.

Ms. Bresnahan mentioned that Gordon College has an indoor pool which is under phase 3, but the college does not seem to be interested in opening the pool. Ms. Ting questioned the youth swim team that uses the pool and if it would be available for them to use.

The pool at The Maples is outside and considered semi private, only for residents, but still is under the guidance. The Maples has been provided the opening information but it is not known at this time if they plan on opening the pool this year.

Captain DiNapoli reported there were no issues related to the trails opening or parking along Route 97 but people were swimming and using the beach at Pleasant Pond. Ms. Baker said she observed a large group of about 48 people at the beach. Police Chief Perkins noted the posted signs were unofficially removed and the sawhorses placed behind the shed allowing access to the parking lot.

A discussion followed on the best way to control Pleasant Pond Beach. Mr. Ting very much wanted to open the beach for a swim at your own risk and trust that the public would physical distance the required 12 feet and just leave if there were no open spaces. Ms. Bresnahan reminded the board that the town was in a fiscally challenging year with overrides and budget cuts and there was no funding for the beach in FY21; even with sticker sales and Hamilton participating, the beach operates at a loss. She further questioned a teenage gatekeeper typically responsible for confirming stickers being tasked with controlling a closed beach. The police are monitoring the beach. It appears non-residents are using the beach. The police were not in favor of enforcing the face covering order at this time.

Ms. Bresnahan observed the finance committee and board of selectmen should be involved in this discussion as the board of health cannot resolve this issue without financial backing of the town.

The public nurse stressed the importance of public information to be released on social media, via robocall, and on HWCAM.

Staff from Police, Fire, DPW, Recreation all left the meeting 9:25 am.

- Updates from staff, if needed

Mr. Bernard said he had a meeting with Department of Public Health in preparation for mosquito season.

Ms. Ting is working with town staff on the elections and will provide training for the election workers and asked for input from the board.

Ms. Bresnahan noted there is a team assigned to address the details to assure elections and town meeting are (COVID-19) safe. Tentatively, town meeting will be held outside, under a tent, at Pingree Park. The selectmen's June 16 agenda includes finalizing the date, time and location.

- Review and Approval of any outstanding minutes - June 3, 2020

Vote: The board members unanimously voted by roll call to approve the June 3, 2020 minutes.

- Next meeting- Ms. Bresnahan will coordinate the next meeting and a joint meeting with Hamilton.
- Adjourn – *The board voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 9:38 am.*

Respectfully Submitted By
Catherine Tinsley
6.10.2020