

BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

July 13, 2020

TOWN BUILDING

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Present by remote roll call were John G. Schuler M. D. (JS), Arne Soslow, M. D. (AS), Brian McNamara (BM), Robert DeFrancesco DMD (RD), Susan Green (SG), Chair, Julia Junghanns, (JJ) Director of Public Health, Ruth Mori MSN, RN (RM) Public Health Nurse/School Nurse Leader.

SG: Roll call to open meeting: JS – yes, AS – yes, RD-yes, BM- yes and SG - yes

6:00 p.m. Review and Discuss 3 models for reopening schools-prepare BoH statement(s) with recommendations and considerations and potential vote on statement(s) Graduation plans

Jeanne Downs, Chair of the School Committee wants to have some statements or guidelines from the Board of Health on the school reopening plans because, like the artificial turf decision, it was helpful to get some guidance from the BoH. For today's meeting, SG will try to represent the information shared by Marnie Roitfarb, former school physician about Marnie's interpretation of DESE and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidance that she presented to the School Committee.

BM thinks BoH role is to support decisions of the School Committee (SC). Thinks the SC is putting the cart before the horse to ask our opinion in advance. JS feels that that SC has already asked the BoH, but they need to come up with their approach based on DESE guidelines. JS doesn't the BoH want to approve or disapprove of the SC decision- JS doesn't see that as BoH role. SG agrees.

AS thinks it would be useful for BoH to provide recommendations to the SC to help the SC craft their options. He thinks the largest decision is 3' vs. 6' distancing. He wants to know if the BoH supports the 6' standard? JS: If they go to 6', does the SC need to go to two sections? BM thinks we should be at 6'. SG said that Marnie mentioned that the APP and DESE standards say 3' would be appropriate with other measures like masks, hand hygiene and social distancing, not even considering ventilation. AS disagrees with DESE and AAP. He would like to see 6' distancing and all-in but it involves more work and innovative thinking.

BM: If there is data supporting the 3' distancing, he would like to see it. SG: Marnie says that there was data supporting the 3' based from WHO, even without masks. RM: The CDC went to 6' distancing about 10 years ago. 3' distancing is well-documented. Students don't have the ability to broadcast germs past 3' until puberty. AS says he reviewed the appendix of the DESE guidelines regarding 3' distancing and said it was just 5 articles. WHO represents different societies and the US isn't the same.

JS wanted to understand what it would entail in terms of physical space and staff in order to have 6' distancing. SG: Based on teacher comments, it seems the schools would not be able to accommodate 6' distancing in the existing classrooms. Teachers don't want the 3' social distancing. They are uncomfortable. BM feels we need raw data on class size, physical space etc. before making recommendations.

RD asked how other countries have dealt with return to school asked if Marnie discuss that. SG said Marnie didn't discuss other countries. Board discussed how other countries are and are not relevant to the situation in the US.

AS: Feels that teachers should not be providing their own masks but Wayland should supply surgical masks. RM said teachers would have masks from home and certain high risk groups would get N95s. SG: Can you teach in an N95? RM: It would be difficult. RD: There are three levels of masks. What level masks are the teachers going to have? RD says he wears an N95, with level 3 mask over it with a shield and it is very difficult to breathe. AS: Tight seal from surgical mask isn't available, the loops stretch. SG: Maybe we could make a recommendation on masks for teachers to the SC. JS: We need to get a handle on which teachers will opt out of teaching if they have preexisting conditions?

SG said the 3' distance in the AAP report opened the possibility for the SC to recommend an all-in approach, otherwise hybrid was the only option for in-school. AS: What percentage of kids would not be going to school during COVID? A survey administered by the SC indicates that so far 500 families responded and 20% would not attend school. This data will help inform the models the SC recommends.

The Board would like to see a comprehensive plan from the SC including ventilation, 3' vs 6' distancing, outside classrooms etc. plus number of children in each classroom. Would like more details than the initial Powerpoint SC provided.

JS said the Facilities person (Ben Keefe) said the desks were 3' apart but students are actually 4.5' feet apart when at desks. AS said students were working at tables which would mean they would potentially be closer together than 3'. RM walked through at The Children's Way to see if they needed more desks or if tables could work.

RD said there are three big topics we could talk with Jeanne – airflow, masks and classroom configuration. AS thinks that SC could price out and look into availability of modular units. SC will be hiring an engineering firm to do HVAC evaluation of the schools. BoH decided that Susan Green should talk with Jeanne Downs as the next step to share what BoH said during the meeting today.

BM asks if the Superintendent is asking us for guidance and recommendations? He doesn't think that is the BoH job. The guidance comes from the state. AS likened it to a builder coming in asking for comments on a septic plan. The point is that there is a plan – the BoH wants to see a detailed plan from the SC before providing comments. We could provide only follow-up questions at this stage.

JS thinks Wayland ought to be able to provide testing for students and staff who are symptomatic. Thinks need access to rapid tests. DPH guidance says close contacts are encouraged to test. RM said it would be great if we had places we could send people.

JJ talked about the graduation plans where pods will be social distanced 12' apart with masks. Thinks the plan looks solid.

7:12 p.m. Updates and discussion: Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation

RM said there are continued probable cases. Her estimate is that there are 5 cases, or up to 7 or 8 cases. These are community residents who are getting antibody testing. Last week's confirmed case was a duplicate. There are no new confirmed positive cases. RM only sees positives tests but not negative

results, so doesn't know the total number of people who tested. No one has been hired to take over the HS nurse position.

7:16 pm AS left the meeting.

7:20 p.m. Updates and discussion on Governor Baker's Phased reopening plan

There isn't much new. We are in Phase III plan. Restaurants are reopening. Coach Grill is planning to do outdoor dining. Intern is reaching out to nail salons but have not heard from them regarding certifications and checklist. Have been in touch with Camp Chickamee to support them regarding the applicable guidance. Other camps are going well. The certifications from businesses are trickling in.

7:24 p.m. General Business ☐ Approve bills, approve minutes May 1, 2020, Set next meeting dates

BM made a motion to approve the May 1, 2020 minutes. SG second. BM-yes, RD-yes, SG-yes, JS-abstain.

Next meeting: July 20, 2020

7:30 p.m. Public comment

No comments.

SG: Motion to adjourn the meeting, second RD roll call JS yes BM yes RD yes SG yes. All in favor.

Adjourned 7:32 p.m.

Submitted by Board of Health member Susan Green.

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