

**Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Conference Call  
April 11, 2022**

Present:

Susan Schwartz, Chair  
Maureen Richichi, Vice Chair  
Bea Brunkhorst  
Ann Kiessling, partially  
Anita Raj

Staff Present:

Heidi Porter, Director of Health and  
Human Services  
Katharine Dagle, Assistant Health Director  
Julie Genova, Community Health Nurse  
Margaret Root, Recording Secretary

Others Present (based on Zoom ID):

Bedford TV  
Ian Worstell, Tobacco Inspector

Farrukh Chaudhry, 439 Great Rd  
Additional Unidentified Bedford resident

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Ms. Schwartz chaired the meeting. Ms. Richichi moved to open the meeting. Dr. Brunkhorst seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 4-0-0 opened the meeting.

Ms. Schwartz made a statement: “Pursuant to a bill signed into law by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021, continuing suspension of certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law through July 15, 2022, this meeting of the Bedford Board of Health will be conducted via remote participation. Persons who would like to listen or view this meeting while in progress may do so by Zoom or by phone. This meeting will also be recorded and the recording will be available on the Board of Health website alongside the minutes. All votes taken by this body shall be by roll call vote.”

Public Comment

Ms. Schwartz opened the meeting to any public comments.

As there were no public comments, Ms. Schwartz closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

BOH Minutes - Review and Vote

The BOH reviewed their meeting minutes from February 28th, March 7th, and March 21st, 2022. Dr. Kiessling moved to approve the February 28th and March 21st minutes as presented and the March 7th minutes as amended; Ms. Raj seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 approved the meeting minutes from February 28th, March 7th, and March 21st, 2022.

Ms. Richichi moved to take the agenda out of order and move the discussion with Ms. Julie Genova forward. Ms. Raj seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 approved taking the agenda out of order.

Discussion with Julie Genova, Community Health Nurse

Ms. Julie Genova, the new Community Health Nurse, has been working for Bedford since the beginning of February and has been getting to know everyone. Ms. Genova has met with the Minuteman Services, Bedford school nurses, the social workers for the Health and Human Services

Department, the Bedford Housing Authority, local pediatrician Dr. David Geller, MA Public Health Nurses, MA DPH, DESE, epidemiologists in Boston, and officials with Carleton-Willard. Ms. Genova has also done some blood pressure screenings for the Council on Aging (COA) and has started talking with the COA about initiatives. Ms. Genova has also met with the Mass Health Officers Association in mid-March which allowed her to network with other officials working across the State. Ms. Genova is planning on meeting with the BOH on Hanscom Air Force Base and has talked to the school nurses regarding Base students. Ms. Genova is also planning to meet with the VA towards the end of April. Ms. Genova has met with the Edinburgh Center, who is in charge of the management of the group homes in Bedford.

Ms. Genova has sent out the summer camp application letters and applications are due April 25th. Once the applications are received, the Department will have a better idea of which camps will be in Bedford, allowing for inspections to start being scheduled.

Ms. Genova reported that Impact Melanoma, a non-profit organization based out of Emerson Hospital, will be supplying four sunscreen lotion dispensers. They will be placed on May 16th at the High School field house, the tot lot, Springs Brook Park, and the Depot.

Ms. Genova reported that flu vaccine for the fall has been ordered.

Ms. Genova commented that recently there has been a slight uptick in COVID-19 cases in Bedford. The situation will be monitored. Ms. Genova reached out to Ms. Tracy Fernald, the nurse leader at the public schools, and the schools are monitoring positive cases, including those who tested positive using the at-home antigen tests. Ms. Genova commented that positive tests through those antigen tests aren't included in MAVEN. One of the schools had an uptick in cases last week that has since come back down. She plans to continue to monitor the situation and encourages residents to take advantage of the multiple antigen testing options available. She also encourages the students at school to take advantage of the pool testing program through the schools.

Dr. Kiessling asked Ms. Genova if she has an office. Ms. Genova replied that she has an office in the Health Department, which is on the second floor of the Town Center.

Dr. Kiessling asked Ms. Genova if she has her own phone number as well. Ms. Genova replied that she does have her own phone number, which she leaves when she needs someone to directly respond to her. Otherwise, calls go through the Health Department main number, which seems to be easier for residents.

Dr. Kiessling asked Ms. Genova if she has a set schedule. Ms. Genova replied that she is in the office every day but does leave to do home visits or attend meetings.

Dr. Kiessling asked about residents scheduling flu shots with the Department. Ms. Genova replied that if a resident wanted a flu shot outside of flu clinic hours, they can contact the department and she will make an appointment. Ms. Genova added that she has already done something similar for a resident who requested the shingles vaccine.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked Ms. Genova if she had come across any courses or strategies to increase the COVID-19 vaccination rate. Ms. Genova replied that she hasn't taken any courses but increasing

the vaccination rate is about marketing and messaging. The messaging should include the efficacy and safety of the vaccine and put out the messaging to every outlet available.

Ms. Schwartz asked if Ms. Genova was hearing a common theme from the various groups and officials she has been meeting with, besides COVID-19. Ms. Genova replied that she thinks the pandemic decreased interactions between people and many conversations included discussion on how Ms. Genova could help the various groups of people. It is time to start figuring out how to start coming out of the pandemic, think of the things before the pandemic, and increase face-to-face interactions. Many groups have been so busy dealing with the pandemic that they haven't thought beyond COVID-19 needs. Ms. Genova added that the other public health nurses found it refreshing to talk about other public health initiatives to work on beyond COVID-19. Hopefully things will start going back to normal as COVID-19 becomes endemic.

Ms. Richichi asked about other communicable diseases in the community. Ms. Genova replied that there are a few flu cases, even some cases with both the flu and COVID-19, either at the same time, or one right after the other. There have also been five cases of tick-borne diseases in Bedford since Ms. Genova started working. Some cases are older infections that are finally being diagnosed and treated. Ms. Porter commented that an older tick-borne infection isn't helpful with designing programming or preventive measures.

Ms. Raj commented that it was difficult determining who the homebound or isolated residents were and to keep them in mind as Ms. Genova is meeting with the various group representatives. The library has a list of homebound residents in order to drop off books, and the community nurse would visit homes to give vaccines for those who couldn't get to a clinic. Most elderly people still live in their own homes. It is difficult to determine a group's needs if it is difficult to identify who is in that group. Ms. Schwartz added that the Food Bank also has a list of homebound residents in order to deliver food to them. Ms. Porter added that initial outreach has been started using those sources of information. A current list of homebound residents would be useful.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked about the community dinners and the hope that a grant, if awarded, could be used to hire a coordinator. The dinners would be a good way to get people together. Ms. Porter commented that Bedford was awarded a smaller grant of \$5,000 which will allow four dinner and discussion events between now and the end of the year. Ms. Porter had the first discussion with the social workers and Youth and Family Services (YFS) Department today regarding the dinners. The dinners will be on the same night as the Food Bank, transportation to the dinner will be available, and child care will be offered.

#### Hearing - Violation of Bedford Tobacco Regulation and 105 CMR 665

Ms. Richichi moved to open the public hearing regarding the Great Road Gulf at 349 Great Road. Ms. Raj seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 opened the public hearing.

Ms. Dagle commented that Mr. Ian Worstell, the Regional Tobacco Control Compliance Inspector, and Mr. Farrukh Chaudhry, the owner of the Great Road Gulf, were in attendance. Mr. Chaudhry expressed that he would like to discuss the situation with the BOH.

Ms. Dagle reported that Mr. Worstell conducted a tobacco sales compliance check at Great Road Gulf at 349 Great Road on March 7th, 2022. To do this, Mr. Worstell hired a buyer to conduct the compliance check. The buyer was 18 years old and not a resident of Bedford or any other towns

within the collaborative. The buyer asked to purchase Blackwoods Original cigarillos. The buyer was asked for ID, at which point the buyer said he did not have his ID with him. The sale was completed and the buyer paid \$8.49 for the cigarillos.

The sale was in violation of State and local law for selling a tobacco product to a person under the Minimum Legal Sales Age, specifically Bedford Board of Health Restricting the Sale of Tobacco Products and Minimum Standards and the State Regulation for Minimum Standards for the Retail Sale of Tobacco, Section D.1 and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, 105 CMR 665.0101(A). The State Regulation states, “No person shall sell or provide a tobacco product to any individual younger than 21 years of age, as verified by said person’s valid government-issued photographic identification.” Bedford’s BOH Regulation states “No person shall sell tobacco products or permit tobacco products, as defined in the regulation, to be sold to a person under the minimum legal sales age; or not being the individual’s parent or legal guardian, give tobacco products, as defined in the regulation, to a person under the minimum legal sales age. The minimum legal sales age in Bedford is twenty-one (21).”

Ms. Dagle also provided information regarding tobacco permits in Bedford. Tobacco permits expire annually on December 31st. Renewal applications are sent out in early November. Ms. Dagle commented that Great Road Gulf submitted their application, which was received on November 17th, 2021.

Dr. Kiessling asked how often compliance checks are performed. Ms. Dagle replied that compliance checks are done annually. Mr. Worstell added that checks are performed once per fiscal year per community. Ms. Dagle added that the compliance checks for a town are completed in 48 hours. Bedford doesn’t have many tobacco permit holders, so Mr. Worstell typically completes the checks in 24 hours.

Ms. Dagle recommended that the BOH follow the regulations and enforce the \$1,000 fine as required by the State’s Minimum Standards and suspend the tobacco permit for 14 consecutive days, as required by the Bedford BOH regulations. She recommended the permit suspension begin at 12 AM on Monday April 18th and end at 12 AM on Monday May 2nd. Regulations also state that all tobacco products must be removed from the establishment at the close of business the night before the suspension begins.

Mr. Chaudhry commented that it is unfortunate that he is addressing the BOH under the circumstances. He considers himself a productive part of the Bedford community for the past 16 years and is a small business owner. Mr. Chaudhry commented that removing the tobacco products during the suspension and explaining the situation to his customers will damage his reputation. He added that by submitting a tobacco application, they are promising to be a responsible part of the community and will abide by the BOH regulations.

Mr. Chaudhry commented that with COVID-19 and the labor shortage, he has had trouble finding qualified employees. All of his full-time employees go through the TIPS alcohol training for the establishment’s liquor license. The training also covers carding patrons before the purchase of alcohol or tobacco products.

Mr. Choudhry explained that the person who sold the tobacco products during the compliance check was on their second shift of work and the person who was supposed to train the new hire called out

sick. With the shortage of employees, Mr. Choudhry works 12-hour days and has difficulty finding enough staff.

While agreeable to paying the fine, Mr. Choudhry asked the BOH to show some leniency regarding the permit suspension, to either shorten it or cancel it. He commented that Business is difficult under current circumstances. Mr. Choudhry added that precautions have been taken to make sure this situation doesn't happen again. Any products requiring ID for purchase will not be able to be purchased unless the ID is scanned into the system. Previously there was a bypass option, which was used by the new employee when the buyer couldn't produce their ID.

Dr. Kiessling asked Mr. Choudhry if this was his first instance of selling tobacco to minors. Mr. Choudhry replied that he had an issue about seven years ago at which point he paid a fine and his permit was suspended for a week.

Mr. Choudhry commented that he has a good relationship with Ms. Dagle and Bedford. His establishment has passed previous compliance checks and this year, the compliance check occurred when someone not yet trained was behind the register by themselves when they shouldn't have been there alone. Mr. Choudhry sincerely apologized for the situation and commented that he is open to any recommendation from the BOH or Ms. Dagle could make to keep this from happening again.

Dr. Kiessling asked Mr. Choudhry for an estimate of the cost to his business of not selling tobacco products for two weeks. Mr. Choudhry replied that his business sells almost \$1,000 in tobacco products per day. He added the suspension would also affect the traffic that comes into the store as many customers who purchase tobacco products also purchase other items. Mr. Choudhry believes the effect on customer traffic will linger as customers will go to other stores during the suspension and not return after the suspension is lifted due to all the other options to purchase tobacco products and other items. He estimated a direct loss of revenue of \$15,000 to \$20,000 on top of the \$1,000 fine. Including supplemental losses, Mr. Choudhry estimates his loss of income at \$20,000 to \$30,000. He also has over \$30,000 worth of tobacco products to move out of the premises, which is a large undertaking, taking four or five people three to five hours to move.

Mr. Choudhry commented that after the compliance check, he was embarrassed by the treatment afterwards as he was served twice and a large notice was placed on his door. He felt the situation should have been handled differently instead of in front of customers and employees.

Dr. Brunkhorst commented that in the past, the BOH has been able to work with the establishment on the dates of the suspension to help reduce some of the effects. With school break coming up, that may be a good time for the suspension as traffic would be lighter that week. Dr. Brunkhorst added that the BOH doesn't support tobacco products, so the regulations are stringent. Ms. Porter commented that the school break was considered when determining the suggested suspension dates.

Ms. Raj commented that the many hours spent revising the tobacco regulations resulted in regulations meant to make an impact, including raising the purchase age to 21. While the State regulation increased the fine from \$300 to \$1,000, the main impact will be the permit suspension. Ms. Raj apologized, but part of selling tobacco products is to make sure everyone is carded.

Ms. Richichi asked if the 14-day suspension has ever been altered or adjusted for circumstances. Ms. Dagle replied that she and Ms. Porter had asked the MA Association of Health Boards (MAHB) and the MA Municipal Tobacco Control Director about the 14-day suspension. Since it is written into the regulations, the length of the suspension can't be shortened.

Dr. Kiessling asked Mr. Chaudhry how he was notified of the violation. Mr. Chaudhry replied that the first time, a constable from the Concord court house came to the establishment when Mr. Chaudhry wasn't there. The constable asked the employees some questions and left a letter. The second time the constable came was the same. The third time the constable came, the notice was posted near the register and the constable told the employee that Mr. Chaudhry had to contact the BOH. Mr. Chaudhry felt that the situation should have been handled differently in a less criminal manner, perhaps through a phone call or email.

Ms. Dagle appreciated Mr. Chaudhry's comments. She added that since this violation involved a hearing notice, the notice is served in a specific way. In this case, the constable had to return twice because he had forgotten to post the notice.

Ms. Richichi asked what exactly is publicly posted at the establishment. Ms. Dagle replied that the constable was asked to serve or post the hearing notification. If the constable is unable to serve the papers to the owner directly, the notice is then posted. The business owner then contacts the Health Department to see if the notice can be removed.

Ms. Schwartz asked if the 14-day suspension has to be consecutive. Ms. Porter replied that practically the suspension should be 14 consecutive days given the volume of tobacco products that have to be removed from the store before the suspension starts. Ms. Dagle replied that the regulations do state the suspension be 14 consecutive days.

Dr. Kiessling asked for an estimate on how many times per year does a compliance check result in a violation. Mr. Worstell replied that there were four violations found in the coalition during the compliance checks for this fiscal year. This is the only hearing out of the four violations this year.

Dr. Kiessling asked why this violation resulted in a hearing while the other violations didn't have a hearing. Ms. Dagle replied that this violation required a hearing due to the suspension of the tobacco permit. Other towns don't have a suspension written into their regulations, only fines. Ms. Porter added that the hearing also allows for the establishment with a violation to address the BOH.

Mr. Chaudhry commented that the suspension is very severe and unjust compared to other towns that only have a fine, especially for a first offense. A warning or a fine would have sufficed in alerting the owner of a problem and to make sure regulations are followed. Mr. Chaudhry added that currently, a lot of businesses are struggling, so the 14-day suspension is especially unjust. Many towns have a fine for the first offense. He added that he understands it is written in the regulations and would like the regulations to be looked at again. Two weeks will devastate a business and shortening a suspension to even a week would still hurt a business.

Ms. Richichi confirmed that the BOH is unable to amend the suspension to shorten the length. Ms. Dagle confirmed that since the suspension is written in the regulations, the BOH can't go against its own regulations. Ms. Porter added that the regulation would have to be re-written.

Dr. Kiessling asked about a variance. Ms. Dagle replied that a variance can't be written for an enforcement action.

Ms. Raj commented that the regulations were revised over the course of a year with guidance from MAHB. Ms. Porter added that a public hearing was held regarding the new regulations.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked about the possibility of this violation being a second offense. Ms. Porter replied that the previous violation recalled by Mr. Chaudhry was an FDA inspection as she doesn't recall a fine being imposed by the Health Department during her tenure. Records could be checked to confirm this is the case. Ms. Porter only recalls one other establishment going through the hearing process.

Ms. Dagle commented that a second violation had to occur within a period of 36 months after the first violation in order for it to be considered a second violation. As no other violations have occurred during that time frame, this violation is a first violation.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked how many compliance checks were done in Bedford and how many violations were found. Mr. Worstell replied that six compliance checks were performed in Bedford, with just this one being found in violation.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked about previous violations in Bedford and if checks were done during the pandemic. Ms. Porter replied that Bedford was due for a compliance check last year when the personnel changed. Establishments were allowed to meet Mr. Worstell and worked with him for a while before the inspections and compliance checks started again.

Dr. Kiessling asked if the pandemic could allow for any exemptions. Ms. Porter replied that there are no methods for exemptions in the regulations. Ms. Raj added that the permit is for the sale of a sensitive product. Ms. Porter added that in addition to MAHB, Town Counsel was also consulted, whose recommendation agreed with following the regulations.

Ms. Schwartz asked Mr. Chaudhry, given that the BOH can't change the duration of the suspension, if the suggested two-week period was agreeable for the suspension or if he had a different time period in mind. Mr. Chaudhry requested some time to consult with his business partners. Ms. Dagle replied that the motion would have to be phrased to allow for the dates to be determined. Ms. Porter added that the motion can allow for the dates to be determined as long as the BOH didn't have a strong opinion on the time. Ms. Dagle and Ms. Porter suggested including a deadline in the motion to serve the suspension. Mr. Chaudhry commented that discussion with his partners could determine a time when enough staff would be available to help remove the product and he could have dates in a couple of days.

Mr. Chaudhry again suggested the regulations be changed to allow for a warning and perhaps a fine for the first offense. This would allow for violations to be addressed before a permit is suspended.

Ms. Raj made the motion: "I move that the Bedford Board of Health suspend the Permit for the Sale of Tobacco and Nicotine Delivery Products at TUF Enterprises, LLC, DBA Great Road Gulf located at 349 Great Road in Bedford for fourteen consecutive days to be determined and completed by May 31st, 2022, require tobacco products to be removed from the retail establishment at the close of business the day before the suspension, and enforce a fine of \$1,000.00 to be paid within

twenty-one days of receipt of the Order to Correct letter.” Ms. Richichi seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 suspended the Permit for the Sale of Tobacco and Nicotine Delivery Products for the Great Road Gulf.

Ms. Richichi moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Raj seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 closed the public hearing.

#### Nomination of Animal Inspectors

Ms. Porter commented that annually, the BOH has to nominate animal inspectors to administer the barn inspection program on behalf of the MA Department of Agricultural Resources. The inspectors also cover the kennel licenses.

Ms. Raj made the motion: “I move that in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 129, Section 15, the Bedford Board of Health nominate the following three Town Employees as Inspectors for Animals for the year ending April 30, 2023: 1. Mike Leskowski, Inspector of Animals, Bedford Police Department; 2. Katharine Dagle, Assistant Health Director; and 3. Heidi Porter, Director of Health and Human Services.” Dr. Brunkhorst seconded the motion. A roll call vote of 5-0-0 approved the animal inspectors.

#### Reports - Staff and BOH Liaisons

Ms. Dagle announced that the Health Department will be hosting a low-cost rabies vaccination clinic on April 23rd for Bedford residents. Countryside Veterinary Hospital in Chelmsford will administer the vaccination for cats and dogs. The clinic will be held at the DPW from 9 am to 11 am and pre-registration is required.

Ms. Dagle reported that April 23rd will also be the first Household Hazardous Waste Collection event of the season from 9 am to 2 pm. Pre-registration is required. The collection season is from April through November and there is one collection event each month.

Ms. Dagle reported that seven routine food establishment inspections and four re-inspections were completed in March. Two complaints were received by the Health Department, both regarding food establishments/food safety, and are currently being investigated.

Ms. Dagle reported that she has completed a food establishment plan review for The Residence at Bedford, 242-244 South Road. More information will be submitted once the establishment is further along in the construction process.

Ms. Dagle reported that she and Ms. Porter attended multiple training sessions, allowing them to keep up with their continuing education requirements.

Ms. Dagle and Ms. Porter met with the DPW to discuss compliance with new requirements from the MA Division of Water Pollution Control. The new requirements involve informing residents of sewage discharges and overflows into the surface waters of MA. Municipalities must be in compliance by July 6th. Ms. Porter added that some communities have combined sewer systems that handle both sewage and water from catch basins. These combined systems frequently overflow during storms. Bedford doesn't have a combined sewer system, but a possibility in Bedford is the sewage pump stations lose power or the backups fail, causing sewage to back up at a pump station and flow into wetlands. Historically, wetland surface water affected by sewage was treated with



chlorine, but this practice was discontinued when the wetlands were being affected by the chlorine. The new part of the regulations require residents to be informed of overflow in order for residents to avoid the area for a length of time. The initial notification of any overflow or discharge will be announced through the DPW website and the BOH will provide the public notification.

Ms. Dagle reported that Biosafety IBC meetings are starting to take place this month and especially over the next two months. Ms. Porter commented that there has been an increase in biosafety permits in Bedford. Previously, the number of applications were static, so the budget for the process and inspections has been static. Ms. Porter added that additional funds may be needed to cover the difference, but she won't know for certain until towards the end of the fiscal year. With additional buildings under construction and office buildings being renovated into lab space, Ms. Porter expects the number of permits to increase with time.

Dr. Brunkhorst commented that another consideration may be the need for more IBC community representatives.

Ms. Porter reported that the last round of antigen COVID-19 test kits are being distributed. Ms. Porter handed out about 300 at Town Meeting and they are also available at various Town offices and the library.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked about getting more funding to buy another batch of test kits. Ms. Porter replied that Bedford has a large number of tests. With the regional partners, Bedford received 34 boxes of 90 about three weeks ago.

Ms. Richichi asked about messaging reminding Medicare recipients that they can receive test kits for free each month. Ms. Porter replied that messaging can include that, as well as the test kits through the mail.

Ms. Schwartz asked if the messaging will also include ventilation. Ms. Porter replied that the usual mitigation strategy messaging will be put out, with a bit more emphasis on testing, ventilation, and contacting a doctor if a person tests positive to see if they should be on medication.

Ms. Porter commented that messaging will continue to encourage people to test themselves before visiting vulnerable people. There are religious holidays coming up, proms, weddings, and school break. The messaging will also contain information regarding waning immunity with time after getting vaccinated.

Ms. Porter reported that Ms. Genova is working on a COVID-19 booster clinic after the CDC recommended a second booster for adults 50 or over. While Ms. Porter hasn't received many inquiries about booster shots, a reasonable number will be offered.

Ms. Porter commented that the print version of The Minuteman is being discontinued, which affects the BOH and Health Department with legal notifications of meetings and regulations. The MA General Law requires that a print newspaper be used for those notifications.

Ms. Porter reported that Bedford is a collaborator on two regional grants with 6 other communities. The first, the Public Health Excellence grant, is to add staff such as a public health nurse, inspectional staff, and an educational outreach person. The second is a Contact Tracing grant,

which is looking like epidemiologists will be hired for the contact tracing team. This will be very helpful for data interpretation, starting with the Middlesex County dataset. So far, one very qualified epidemiologist has been interviewed and a grant coordinator has been hired.

Ms. Porter commented that de-escalation training was held just before the BOH meeting. A little over a dozen people attended. Mr. John Mattleman will again present his Question, Persuade, Refer training. This suicide prevention training will be at the library from 6 to 7 pm on April 27th. Pre-registration will be required to keep the number of attendees at an appropriate level. If there is a lot of interest, a second session could be held. Ms. Schwartz added that pre-registration information is on the YFS website.

Ms. Porter reported that the Dashboard has been updated to reflect changes in messaging. The wastewater data continues to be updated. Wastewater data is being seen as an important metric in tracking COVID-19 trends.

Ms. Porter worked with YFS to put out outreach on World Happiness Day and National Drugs and Alcohol Facts Week.

Ms. Porter attended the final Mosquito Control for the 21st Century Task Force meeting. All of the recommendations from the Task Force had to be submitted to the legislature by the end of March. There were 158 work hours spent on developing the recommendations. The legislature will now look over the recommendations, decide which will be most impactful, and which has funding. Ms. Porter had made a recommendation requiring access to basic mosquito control services, including surveillance, education, and a menu of services available.

Ms. Schwartz commented that Ms. Porter's mosquito task force recommendation was a good idea because no community is an island and mosquitoes don't know boundaries. Ms. Porter commented that it is also a matter of funding. Communities either voluntarily pay for mosquito control, like Bedford, or the money is coming off from the State funds sent to each community. It is important for towns to have access to equal levels of services and from there, neighboring states should also have similar programs as mosquitoes do not stop at boundaries.

Ms. Porter commented that she expects to hear from East Middlesex Mosquito Control either late this week or early next week on when helicopter spraying will take place. Helicopter spraying didn't occur last year due to weather delaying the spraying until it was too late to spray. All other mosquito preventatives are on track such as the use of larvicide in the catch basins. The Department has also been able to educate residents on mosquito bite prevention.

Ms. Richichi reported that Healthy Bedford is moving forward on the intergenerational area project. Safe Routes to school will occur in May, including the bike rodeo. Ms. Porter and Ms. Hall are looking into adult tricycles and partnering with Bikeway Source for rentals. The Health and Human Services Department hopes to hear about the Shared Street grant this week.

Ms. Schwartz reported that YFS is working on anxiety and alcohol diversion programs. Ms. Porter added that there is a lot of outreach for both programs. Many of these programs, including for anxiety, are intergenerational. Ms. Porter is working on making the information cross-posted between the YFS and Health Department websites.

### Health Department Responses - Overview

Ms. Porter commented that Dr. Kiessling had requested to discuss genetically engineered mosquitoes. With Dr. Kiessling no longer in attendance, Ms. Porter suggested tabling the topic until the next meeting.

Ms. Porter commented that another responsibility of the Health Department is the issuance of burial permits, or disposition permits. These permits are for anyone who dies in Bedford and is now all done electronically. Once all the proper signatures are collected, the paperwork is sent to the Town Clerk's office, which would then issue the death certificate.

### COVID-19 Response - Data Evaluation, Mitigation Review, and BOH Discussion

Ms. Porter presented the spreadsheet of COVID-19 metrics for Bedford. The Positivity rates have increased by 50% in a month. Ms. Richichi commented that hospitalization rates are holding steady.

Ms. Porter commented that the booster rate is now being included on the Dashboard. Currently, the booster rate is 58%. Booster shots are being promoted as part of the mitigation strategies and a booster clinic is planned to be held in a few weeks. The clinic can also give out first and second doses for those wanting the vaccine.

Ms. Porter commented that the uptick in cases at one of the schools was focused on one classroom in particular. Parents of those students were kept informed and there was a lot of household spread. Ms. Porter added the additional messaging to those families included a focus on testing as well as suggesting masking if possible. The past week has been relatively stable, but Ms. Genova will monitor the situation and inform the BOH if any actions should be taken. Ms. Porter added that the schools have been really good with taking action as needed.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked if the class had to shut down. Ms. Porter replied that the class continued as there weren't that many cases. The situation wasn't similar to Concord's situation with a large increase in cases. Lane School had an uptick in cases, particularly in one classroom. The case counts have been going down over the past few days.

Ms. Richichi commented that the next BOH meeting is after school break and the religious holidays, so it will be interesting to see what the number of cases do. She added that people tend to travel more in April than in February.

Ms. Richichi commented that she is hearing more in the media about the vulnerable population, including the immunocompromised, and what society is doing for them.

Ms. Schwartz reminded Ms. Porter and the other BOH members that if anyone finds cause to call a meeting before May 9th to please let her know. The BOH can have a meeting in-between if needed.

### Open Discussion/Old Business

Ms. Schwartz commented that the Select Board will be discussing the return of in-person meetings and she would like the BOH members' opinions.

Dr. Brunkhorst commented that she is fine returning to in-person meetings and is really interested in the hybrid option. The hybrid option would allow for as many people who want to attend to attend, especially if there are restrictions on the number of people who can attend in-person.

Ms. Porter commented that until July 15th, remote participation is allowed for all parties. Regardless of the Select Board's decision, after that date, the BOH needs to decide how the public will participate in the meeting. The May and June BOH meetings can still have a remote participation aspect. Using the Select Board room would allow for a hybrid option.

Ms. Raj commented that the meetings on Zoom allowed for a wider public attendance and she expects returning to in-person meetings would result in a decrease in attendance. It would be nice for people to attend remotely, but that may require a staff member to handle the technology during the meeting. Ms. Raj added that pre-COVID-19 people who wanted to talk to the BOH found a way to talk to the BOH.

Ms. Porter commented that either she or Ms. Dagle would handle the equipment for a hybrid meeting and the technology would already be in place for that type of meeting.

Ms. Richichi commented that she would welcome the opportunity to meet in-person again. A hybrid option would allow for residents who can't attend to still participate in meetings. Ms. Richichi added that there is a different quality and energy with in-person meetings.

Ms. Schwartz agreed with Ms. Richichi and added that there have been effects of isolation on many people. Meeting in-person is different from meeting virtually.

Ms. Porter commented that she is fine with having in-person meetings, especially since she has been in the office interacting with the public all along. Ms. Porter added that the Select Board meeting schedule will have to be looked at to make sure the room is available for BOH meetings. Mondays work well for everyone, so Ms. Porter will look to keep the meetings on that day. The schedule could get tricky ahead of Town Meeting as the Select Board meets more frequently beforehand. If the technology isn't in place, meetings can continue on Zoom.

Ms. Raj commented that there has been a lot of discussion on social media regarding tick mitigation, including companies that spray and tick tubes. Ms. Raj has been directing residents to the BOH website for tick mitigation information.

Ms. Porter commented that this summer, there should be one or two interns, and ticks will be one of the projects they work on. Some survey work needs to be done to figure out where people are picking up ticks and determine where the next tick barriers are needed.

Ms. Porter commented that with the transportation budget not passing at Town Meeting, the bus stop shelters will be affected. Currently there is one in the works at the corner of Pine Street and Great Road. There is also another shelter being planned in front of the former Papa Gino's, but Ms. Porter has to check with the Planning Director on who is responsible for paying for the shelter. Ms. Porter knows the new owners will allow access to the site, but she is unsure who is responsible for each part of the installation.

At 9:11 PM, Ms. Richichi moved to adjourn the meeting of April 11th, 2022. Dr. Brunkhorst seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 4-0-0.

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

Director of Health and Human Services Report

Assistant Health Director Report

Great Road Gulf Hearing Summary

Great Road Gulf Order to Correct and Ticket Hearing Notice

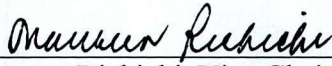
Animal Inspectors Proposed Motion

Monthly COVID-19 Data Since August for Bedford, Middlesex County, and Region

The next scheduled meetings of the Board of Health are May 9th, and June 13th.



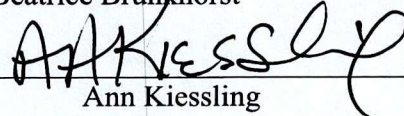
Susan Schwartz, Chair



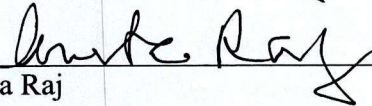
Maureen Richichi, Vice Chair



Beatrice Brunkhorst



Ann Kiessling



Anita Raj