

**Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2020**

Present:

Sarah Thompson, Chair
Anita Raj, Co-Chair
Bea Brunkhorst
Ann Kiessling
Susan Schwartz

Staff Present:

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

Others Present:

Meredith McCulloch, *Bedford resident*
Stephen Carluccio, *Bedford resident*
Patricia Carluccio, *Bedford resident*
Karen Dunn, *Finance Committee*
Margot Fleischman, *Select Board*
Robert Dorer, *Bedford resident*
Jordan Stewart, *Bedford resident*

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Ms. Thompson chaired.

BOH Meeting Minutes

Dr. Kiessling moved to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2020 meeting as amended; Ms. Schwartz seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0-0 to approve the minutes.

Discussion - Face Covering Order

Ms. Porter started the discussion regarding the face covering order given by Governor Baker, which will be in effect on May 6th. Staying at home is the best preventative measure. Anytime residents venture out for essential services, they will have to wear a face covering, especially when social distancing is difficult. There is a lot of available information regarding the making of face coverings, some of which was included in the daily update. In cases where a resident is not around other people, on a walk for example, and not actively wearing a face covering the resident should have a face covering available in case the resident encounters other people.

The BOH members with glasses commented that sometimes they experience their glasses fogging while wearing a face covering. Dr. Kiessling commented that is the case when a person's breath escapes out the top of the face covering. In order to correct this issue, the nosepiece of the face covering should be bent more. The face covering may not be fitted correctly or is the wrong size. Correcting any issue should keep glasses from fogging.

Dr. Kiessling commented that wearing a face covering does not mean people don't have to social distance anymore. Ms. Porter commented that language regarding wearing a face covering and maintaining social distancing was included in the daily update.

Ms. Schwartz asked about the enforcement of the face covering order. Ms. Porter replied that it is up to each Town to determine the degree of enforcement, ranging from warnings to fines. In Bedford, the Police Department and the BOH have ticketing powers. Ms. Porter believes that with all the other issues that need attention, the Police will instead focus on education regarding the wearing of face coverings instead of issuing tickets.

Ms. Dagle commented that the BOH received a number of calls regarding face coverings, mostly parents asking about various situations and if their children need to wear face coverings.

Ms. Thompson asked what age children are supposed to wear face coverings. Ms. Porter replied that children over the age of two are supposed to wear a face covering, but she is expecting guidance regarding children between the ages of two and five.

Board of Health Action Items - Old and New Business

There were no liaison assignment updates. The IBC meetings have been postponed.

Dr. Kiessling asked if there was an update regarding the second bus stop shelter. Ms. Porter replied that as far as she knows, the second bus stop shelter will be installed this spring as planned. She can get more details for the next meeting.

Ms. Schwartz commented that the Emergency Response Team and Bedford Citizen Corps have been active with the Food Bank, both packaging and distributing the food. There is a week's worth of breakfast and lunch items for students, as well as supplemental items for the whole family ranging from fruits and vegetables to cereal and pasta. Ms. Porter added that the Town's social workers delivered food to 88 households in Bedford last week.

Ms. Raj asked how the coordination was going with the existing Food Pantry. Ms. Porter replied that the food pantry didn't have enough volunteers the first week when Town buildings were closed so the Pantry didn't operate and hasn't operated since then. The Food Pantry has helped with provision of food and bags for the Food Bank. The food bank will operate at least through the end of the school year as the food bank serves a lot of school children. A decision will be made next month as to the next steps for the Food Bank. There are a lot of variables that will influence its status.

Staff Reports and COVID-19 Response Update

Dr. Kiessling asked what happens when the BOH receives notice of a positive COVID-19 test result. Ms. Waksmonski replied that once the BOH receives notification of a case from MAVEN, the State's epidemiologic website that reports cases of a variety of diseases to the BOH, the BOH contacts the person, usually by phone. The outreach informs the resident of the test result if they have not already received their results. The outreach also is to ask how the resident is doing, how they are feeling, and to try to determine the onset and type of symptoms. The resident is also asked about their close contacts, their home situation, where they work if not working from home and how they are handling isolation and quarantine conditions. The resident is contacted regularly to monitor their symptoms. The BOH updates the information online on MAVEN. Quarantine orders are sent electronically. A person can come out of quarantine after three days of being symptom free and after seven days outside the initial date of symptoms. The shortest time for quarantine is 10 days.

Dr. Kiessling asked about asymptomatic cases. Mr. Waksmonski replied that given proper precautions, health care providers can return to work. These cases are also limited in who they can work with in order to protect immunocompromised patients.

Ms. Thompson asked if Mr. Waksmonski has enough help to handle Bedford's cases. He replied that he does have help from the school nurses. Bedford is part of the Community Tracing Collaborative, which is handling the outreach calls for any new COVID-19 patients as part of the transition to the State handling all of the contact tracing. The BOH is keeping track of the higher risk residents such as those in group homes, multiple cases in a single home, and residents of assisted living facilities while the Collaborative handles the simple cases.

Dr. Kiessling asked about patients brought to the VA COVID-19 ward and if they become a Bedford case. Mr. Waksmonski replied that it is reported as a Bedford case if they were tested in Bedford and the BOH is only responsible for contact tracing of those cases. Ms. Porter added that if the patient was part of the outpatient program before it was closed, that case would be part of the Bedford case count.

Dr. Kiessling asked if the VA has different guidelines for quarantine of patients. Mr. Waksmonski replied that he is confident that the VA is following the CDC and State guidance regarding patients and quarantine.

Ms. Porter commented that any staff at various facilities in Bedford that have been tested at the facility is counted as a Bedford case. The Bedford BOH will also contact the resident's home town BOH regarding their status.

Ms. Raj asked if the BOH is seeing any trends in the Bedford cases. Mr. Waksmonski replied that the VA is separate. Hanscom Air Force Base has had a few cases. Most of the Bedford cases are aged 40 or older. Ms. Porter commented that older people are more at risk and there are assisted living facilities in Bedford, so it is to be expected that the majority of cases occur among that age group.

Ms. Thompson asked about testing locations. Mr. Waksmonski replied that most people have been finding test locations on their own. He has only referred a few people to testing sites.

Ms. Schwartz asked about cases when a resident receives a "not positive" test result. She is concerned that it provides a false sense of security instead of realizing that a current "not positive" test result may not stay that way. Mr. Waksmonski replied that if the resident tested was in close contact with a person with COVID-19, they would still be treated as a presumptive positive case even if their test result was not positive.

Ms. Thompson asked if it was being recommended residents get tested twice with both results coming back as not positive before they are considered truly not positive. Mr. Waksmonski replied not at this time. It is different with symptomatic health care workers as they have more stringent guidelines and they need two "not positive" tests before returning to work. A regular resident would have to wait several days between tests and then the test may still miss the disease.

Dr. Kiessling commented that there is a lot of testing potential in the State that is not being used yet, so people should not be afraid of getting tested more than once. Ms. Porter commented that

this testing capacity should also be communicated to the doctors as currently a COVID-19 test requires a physician order.

Ms. Thompson commented that at the hospital where she works, all patients coming into the hospital are tested. Mr. Waksmonski added that the same is happening at Emerson Hospital.

Ms. Schwartz asked about the shingles vaccination program that was being offered before the stay-at-home order was given. There are two shots in the series and she was wondering about the residents who have only received the first shot. Mr. Waksmonski replied that the shots have been postponed. The second shot needs to be received at the most 6 months after the first shot. He commented that the appointments for the second shot were made for two months after the first shot, so there is time to figure out how to get those residents their second shingles shot.

Ms. Porter reminded the BOH that Mr. Waksmonski has been a part-time worker since the Fall as he went back to school, but he is working full-time during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ms. Dagle reported that there are 19 food establishments offering take-out, as well as 7 to 10 retail establishments operating, such as grocery stores and gas stations. There is also one food truck operating. Ms. Porter added that inspections are still taking place. Ms. Dagle commented the inspector also educates these establishments regarding COVID-19.

Ms. Thompson asked if food preparers are wearing masks. Ms. Dagle replied that earlier, masks were not required. The establishments were allowed to make up their own policies and some required masks. Now, everyone is required to wear a face covering.

Ms. Dagle reported that the BOH has received several complaint calls regarding several businesses and making sure the business was in compliance with the Governor's orders. These complaints ranged from concerns over the number of patrons in grocery stores to a store selling hand sanitizer in unmarked bottles. All of the concerns and complaints were discussed with management and education was given as necessary.

Ms. Dagle reported that two Bedford establishments had employees who tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Dagle and Mr. Waksmonski worked with each establishment to make sure all of the proper steps were taken, including cleaning the establishment and contacting other employees that may have been in contact with the COVID-19 positive employee.

Ms. Dagle commented that a lot of educational documents were sent to food establishments, including a guide for employees on when to tell their managers about any possible symptoms. All the documentation should be posted at the establishments.

Ms. Dagle has also sent reminders regarding the 2013 Federal Food Code illness reporting requirements. Since it is an older Food Code, COVID-19 isn't mentioned in it, but given current circumstances, needs to be considered. The employees must report if they are feeling COVID-19 symptoms and the manager is then required to report the case to the BOH.

Ms. Dagle gave an update from last month regarding McDonalds. The establishment has implemented health and temperature checks. Each employee is temperature checked before entering the building before their shift. Ms. Thompson asked if any other establishments were

doing temperature checks. Ms. Dagle replied that she does not know of any other establishment performing temperature checks. She added that she knows of establishments trying to get thermometers.

Ms. Dagle reported that outreach articles have been prepared for residents regarding tick awareness and proper disposal of personal protection equipment. There have been reports of gloves being discarded along Great Road.

Ms. Dagle announced that there will be a blood drive tomorrow at the American Legion operated by the American Red Cross. Blood donations are considered essential services. Ms. Dagle worked with the blood drive organizer to make sure proper precautions are being taken.

Ms. Dagle reported that a complaint was received regarding Bedford Car Wash, which was still operating. The establishment is not considered essential and Ms. Dagle instructed them to close.

Ms. Dagle reported that the food inspector performed nine routine inspections and one re-inspection. She noted violations have decreased, which may be the result of fewer employees present at the establishments.

Ms. Dagle has been doing outreach to the pool permittees, informing them that they will most likely not be opening before Memorial Day so that the owners can plan accordingly. Ms. Thompson asked if there was any prediction on how these establishments will be operating once they are allowed to open. Ms. Porter replied that the main emphasis will be on social distancing, which has proven difficult at other pools and beaches across the country. She is hoping for guidelines from the DPH so that there is consistency across the various pools in Town and neighboring communities. Ms. Thompson also asked if chlorine kills the virus. Ms. Dagle replied that it does as long as it is at the appropriate levels in the pool. She added that pools and beaches are often used by children who find social distancing difficult and that the lifeguards frequently live in other towns. Dr. Kiessling asked if the placement of an Abbott testing device at each pool was considered so that each visitor is tested and the results are available in a few minutes. Ms. Dagle replied that it hasn't been considered, but was a good idea.

Ms. Dagle announced that the May hazardous waste collection event was cancelled. Each year, there are 7 or 8 collection events. Ms. Thompson asked if the Town still had to pay. Ms. Dagle replied that the Town did not have to pay. Ms. Raj asked about the status of the contract with the current hazardous waste company. Ms. Dagle replied that the contract expires at the end of this year and negotiations for a new contract will need to take place once everyone returns to their offices. She added that the next event may be very busy since the May event was cancelled. Ms. Porter added that the State contract has yet to be released, which is used as a basis for the contract.

Ms. Dagle reported that she has a virtual Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) meeting tomorrow with UBC regarding their expansion and a new project. Regular IBC meetings haven't started back up yet, however, the biosafety consultant for the Town will be doing her yearly inspections remotely. Dr. Brunkhorst is considering doing remote IBC meetings as well for the time being. Ms. Porter added that all of the biosafety permit holders are in good standing and their permit application deadline was extended.

Ms. Porter commented that the company inquiring last month regarding the possibility of using empty space in their building to set up a testing site never followed up with the BOH.

Ms. Porter reported that the Town staff are all busy taking care of the Town and supporting each other. Looking forward, tick season has started and in the Fall the BOH will need to address EEE and the next flu season.

Ms. Porter reported that Mr. Jon Mattleman gave a webinar, “Teens, Tweens, and Quarantines”, directed towards parents and caregivers of those age groups. There were a lot of good questions and resources were given to participants. The isolation during this situation can be particularly difficult for this age group. Ms. Schwartz listened to the presentation and commented that some of the information could apply to anyone.

Ms. Porter commended the BOH staff who are working from home. With the good communication set up, the BOH work continues to be completed. The staff have access to the BOH drive, allowing the staff to work at home. Ms. Porter commented that the BOH made sure the framework needed for the staff to work at home was set up back in February.

Ms. Porter announced that the BOH has received some grant funding to help cover the additional staffing and overtime caused by the COVID-19 situation.

Ms. Porter commented on the difficulty getting PPE. Her order of thermometers resulted in being sent the wrong kind. She is also working towards getting face coverings for staff when offices do re-open.

Ms. Porter commented that the social workers have been delivering food to those who can't get to the Food Bank. There is also a fund that is used to purchase non-food items, such as diapers, for those in need. Ms. Thompson asked if face coverings could be placed with the food bags at the food bank. Ms. Porter replied that it would be a good idea if they had some. Ms. Thompson suggested asking for volunteers to make and donate face coverings to the food bank to be dispersed with the food bags. Ms. Thompson also suggested putting a note in the daily update asking for face covering donations.

Ms. Porter commented that May is Mental Health Month. A number of articles are being prepared for residents reminding them of available resources. Eliot has telehealth appointments available. Next week the At-Risk group will meet to discuss any residents who may need extra support. Dr. Brunkhorst asked if all the support groups and resources are still available. Ms. Porter replied that they were still available to take calls and referrals. Ms. Schwartz noted that domestic abuse calls are down, but it is unclear if this is because there are fewer cases of domestic abuse or if the victims can't call since they are at home with their abusers.

Ms. Porter reported that there will be a webinar for the Bedford Citizen Corps volunteers to receive PPE training.

Ms. Porter reported that regarding the blood drive tomorrow, the BOH worked with both the American Red Cross and the American Legion to make sure a building that hasn't been opened for some time is in good condition for the event. This also included making sure there was good flow for people in and out of the building to allow for social distancing.

Ms. Porter commented that she drove by the First Parish Church during their testing event and there were no lines and everything was flowing smoothly.

Ms. Thompson commented that hospitals are concerned with the trend that people are not seeking medical care when they should out of fear of exposure to COVID-19. Ms. Porter replied that there is a note in the daily update advising people to seek medical and emergency help if needed as hospitals are following protocols to keep people from being exposed. Ms. Thompson also commented that people are sometimes staying home too long with symptoms before going to the hospital.

Ms. Thompson asked if the BOH has received any feedback regarding the daily updates. Ms. Porter replied that for the most part, people are appreciative of the messaging. She added that they address concerns as they arise or add language as appropriate. Ms. Schwartz commented that the daily update is sent out through multiple avenues from Facebook to the Bedford Citizen and the Bedford website.

Dr. Brunkhorst asked about the public health interns. Mr. Waksmonski replied that the program was suspended over the summer due to COVID-19. Ms. Porter added that student volunteers are being used for messaging, putting together flyers, doing outreach, and gathering demographic information of the cases in Bedford.

Dr. Brunkhorst commented that she noticed the bullet point on Ms. Porter's report regarding a plan for when Town staff return to work. Ms. Porter commented the Task Force is also looking into how the schools can open in the Fall. Dr. Brunkhorst followed up by asking about the Town Meeting. Ms. Porter replied that at this time, she does not know how the meeting would be arranged. The Town Meeting is required for the running of the Town, but she was unsure if it could be held virtually. Ms. Porter commented that another town was considering asking for the quorum to be lowered. However, that would not keep many more people from attending the meeting. Dr. Kiessling asked about using the rooms in the High School to separate people. Ms. Porter replied that it was suggested and at that point it was determined that it wouldn't be conducive to open government. Ms. Porter added that more discussion is being done. Dr. Kiessling suggested the meeting be held outside. Ms. Porter commented that with the stay-at-home advisory in place, the meeting shouldn't take place, but ideas are being discussed for a possible meeting in June.

At 8:48 pm, Ms. Raj moved to adjourn the meeting of May 4, 2020. Dr. Brunkhorst seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

Order Requiring Face Coverings in Public Places Where Social Distancing Is Not Possible

Director of Health and Human Services Report

Assistant Health Director Report

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Health will be June 8th.

Sarah Thompson, Chair

Beatrice Brunkhorst

Anita Raj, Vice-Chair

Ann Kiessling

Susan Schwartz