

**CITY OF GLOUCESTER**  
**Board of Health**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**January 7, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**Remote Meeting Via Zoom**

Board members virtually present courtesy of a system organized by the City's IT Department: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall; Vice–Chairperson: Robert Harris; Frederick Cowan; Joe Rosa; and Claudia Schweitzer. Present from the Health Department: Health Director: Karin Carroll; Assistant Health Director: Max Schenk.

Also present Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

The meeting started at 5:30 p.m.

This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (\*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a "raise hand" button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.

**PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATION**

There was no "Public Oral Communication".

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Cowan that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the meeting of November 5, 2020 as written. **Seconded** by Ms. Schweitzer. **CARRIED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Schweitzer that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the meeting of December 10, 2020 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.** Mr. Harris **abstained.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports for December.

**NEW BUSINESS**

UPDATE: Cape Ann Mass in Motion, Jennifer Connelly, Grant Coordinator -

*Jennifer Connelly*, Grant Coordinator appeared before the board. She stated that the Mass in Motion program has received over \$390,000 in grant funding. She stated that this summer they kicked off a community engagement project for Cape Ann and they have started to reach out to people for information on how to make activities easier and safer for them. She stated that they have been doing virtual community engagement meetings during the pandemic and they have had a good mix of people from all ages attend. She stated that they have created a survey to gather information from the public asking what the barriers are for getting outside and being active. She stated that they have been active with the Seniors on the Go project and they have been brainstorming on how they are going to keep people physically active this winter. She stated that she submitted a proposal to the library's Assistant Director to create a lending library for snow shoes. She stated that Gloucester and Manchester seemed interested in the proposal. She stated that this year they were awarded \$340,000 by the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Eating to fund transportation for seniors for five years. She stated that Addison Gilbert and Beverly Hospital also donated \$20,000 to support the program as well. She stated that it has been a challenge during the pandemic but they had their highest number of participants this past summer. She stated that the program is now available to all seniors, not just seniors in housing facilities. She stated that the bus is not able to bring seniors to the senior center but can bring them to get groceries or to physical activities. She stated that they have been working on programs for encouraging people to be physically active at home during the winter. She stated that they had 34 people sign up to get fresh produce this summer which took the place of the Farmer's Market vouchers that they usually give out. She stated that they have partnered with the Public Health Nurse, Kelley Hiland, to work on providing digital devices for seniors. She stated that the Mass in Motion grant will expire in June and they will have to reapply to see if they can get another three years.

The board thanked Ms. Connelly for her presentation and her work on the grant programs.

DISCUSSION: Recent surge in COVID-19 cases and possible response actions -

*Ms. McMahon*, Assistant Emergency Management Director, appeared before the board. She stated that the Health Department did receive some Moderna Covid-19 vaccine this week for the first responders in Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, Manchester, and Ipswich. She stated that some school nurses will also be vaccinated that will be assisting at the clinics. She stated that they did the first round of vaccines today which was about 30 of the clinic vaccinators. She stated that they will do 5 clinics to start and administer 100 vaccines a day. She stated that people have to be observed for about fifteen minutes after they get the vaccine so they cannot do more than 100 a day to allow for social distancing. The clinics are in the Rose Baker Senior Center.

*Ms. Schweitzer* asked how people will be informed when it is their time to be vaccinated. *Ms. Carroll* responded that they will work with the communications office within the Mayor's office, social media, and the State will have messaging as well.

*Ms. Carroll* stated that Covid-19 cases continue to rise in the City. She stated that there are about 115 active cases, 5 in the hospital, and 1 new death in the last few weeks with 31 deaths total. She stated that they are not seeing really sick people like they did in the spring. She stated that the hospital is starting to see more admissions; at 97% capacity in our region. She stated they are watching the hospital capacity very closely. She stated that long-term care facilities are still doing pretty well. She stated there is community transmission and they are seeing it in all environments. She stated that household contact is still the main source of transmission. She stated that they are encouraging businesses to be creative by staggering appointments and workers. She stated that the schools continue to do well, they had 8 cases on Monday between staff and students and none were related to transmission within the school. She stated that the schools also have a rapid test on site to test symptomatic staff and students. She stated that the State average positivity rate is around 8% and Gloucester is around 6%.

*Mr. Cowan* asked what the standard quarantine time is. *Ms. Carroll* responded that if you are determined to be a close contact and have no symptoms and test negative, you can stop quarantining on day 8. If you don't test and/or have symptoms you have to quarantine for 14 days. She stated that if you travel you have to be quarantined for 14 days unless you test negative and if you have a confirmed case of Covid you have to isolate for 10 days from testing positive.

DISCUSSION: (Cont'd From 10-15-20) Whether to extend the eviction moratorium issued by the Mayor and Board of Health on April 10, 2020

*Mr. Schenk* stated that in April of 2020 the Governor's Office put forward a moratorium on evictions but it did not include anyone who was not already in the eviction process. He stated that the Board of Health put forth their own moratorium which has been in place since April 10, 2020 to protect those individuals. He stated that the Governor's order ended October 17, 2020 and the Board of Health extended their moratorium.

*Peggy Hegarty-Steck* of Action, Inc. appeared before the board. She stated that there are a lot of people in need of rental assistance and the eviction moratorium has been really helpful in the City. She stated that they received \$100,000 to assist people with housing during the pandemic and they are down to \$1,000.

*Lori Fonseca*, Housing Attorney for Action, Inc. appeared before the board. She stated that numbers for people in need of rental assistance continue to rise. She urged the board to extend the moratorium.

*Mr. Cowan* stated that this also puts a hardship on the landlords. *Ms. Fonseca* responded that landlords can get mortgage assistance for themselves or rental assistance from the tenant. She

stated that they pay the landlord directly when tenants apply for assistance. *Mr. Cowan* stated that banks should offer assistance to landlords as well.

The board agreed to keep the moratorium in place and revisit the issue in 6 months.

Other department updates -

*Ms. Carroll* stated that the Health Department is focused on Covid-19 related issues.

**CONCERNS OF BOARD MEMBERS**

Volunteers- *Mr. Cowan* stated that he has received many requests from people asking how they can be helpful. *Ms. Carroll* responded that during the first clinics they are using existing staff. She stated that they will be looking for more volunteers for the larger clinics and people can go to the MRC website or MA Responds website, both can be found on the Health Department Facebook page, to volunteer.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting will be February 4, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

**MOTION** by Mr. Cowan to adjourn.  
Seconded by Mr. Rosa **CARRIED.**  
MEETING ADJOURNED – 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_/s/ Bobbi Orlando\_\_\_\_\_

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/ Richard Sagall\_\_\_\_\_

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:

January 7, 2021 Board of Health Agenda  
January 7, 2021 Covid Metrics  
December 10, 2020 Board of Health Minutes  
November 5, 2020 Board of Health Minutes