

CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
May 6, 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: Assistant Health Director: Max Schenk. Absent: Health Director: Karin Carroll.

Also present Chip Payson, General Counsel for the City of Gloucester.

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 Ms. Schweitzer that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of April 1, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Harris. **CARRIED.**

MOTION by Mr. Cowan that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of April 8, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Ms. Schweitzer. **CARRIED.**

MOTION by Mr. Rosa that the Gloucester Board of Health approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of April 22, 2021 as written. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.** Mr. Harris **abstained.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no "Committee Reports".

NEW BUSINESS

There was no “New Business”.

Chairperson Sagall stated that they did not give proper notification to enter into the executive session.

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer that the Gloucester Board of Health cancel the “Executive Session” scheduled for May 6, 2021. **Seconded** by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**

Chip Payson, General Counsel for the City of Gloucester appeared before the board. He stated that the parties involved with the legal issue are trying to come to a resolution. He stated that since the parties are trying to come to a resolution he does not know why the board would want to intervene. He stated that there are ongoing negotiations and discussions and cautioned the board to consider letting those play out before they take any action.

Chairperson Sagall stated that he suggested an executive session to keep the board informed.

Ms. Schweitzer stated that if they do have an executive session, she would like Karin Carroll to be able to attend.

The board discussed whether they would like to reschedule the executive session and agreed to wait to schedule an executive session.

The board expressed their support for the Health Department. *Ms. Schweitzer* asked if the Board of Health could do anything to show their support. *Mr. Schenk* responded that the staff of the Health Department know that the Board of Health is there as a resource and as a body that they can voice their concerns to.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion: COVID-19 Response Updates - *Mr. Schenk* stated that there will be a demobilization of the taskforce and response teams which include weekly calls with all agencies. He stated that the Vaccine team will remain active for the time being and after June 30, any tracing will revert to the Health Department/Public Health Nurse.

Mr. Schenk stated that in Massachusetts there were 718 new COVID-19 cases yesterday, 5 new confirmed deaths; State 1.60 %, positivity rate slightly down. He stated that it is anticipated that Pfizer will be open for ages 12+ next week. He stated that the State is closing many mass vax sites and pushing mobile and walk in clinics.

Mr. Schenk stated that Gloucester has 11 active cases in the city, no one hospitalized, 1 new death for a total of 45 deceased; 2.01% positivity rate. He stated that as of last Friday, 60% of

Gloucester has had at least one dose of the vaccine, 85% of that number are people ages 65-74 and 88% are 75+. He stated that daily numbers are decreasing.

Mr. Schenk stated that they are working with the Gloucester Community Health Center to do outreach and education and they continue to partner with us to locally distribute Moderna vaccine. Our Vaccine team will continue to work to address the 3 C's of vaccine hesitancy, Complacency, Confidence and Convenience. The vaccine team will be reaching out to businesses and residents and we ask you all to become "vaccine ambassadors" to help us get to herd immunity.

Mr. Schenk stated that the Health Department has recently received several grants to help combat vaccine hesitancy and inequality as well as mental health support and youth prevention work.

Mr. Schenk stated that effective April 30, 2021 face coverings will be relaxed for some outdoor settings. He stated that if you are able to maintain a six foot distance from others around you when outside, you do not need to wear a mask but not if you are having an event. He stated that if you are at an outdoor event you still need to wear a mask. He stated that face coverings are still required at all times at indoor public spaces except for when eating or drinking. He stated that face coverings are suggested but not required at gatherings in private homes.

Mr. Schenk stated that effective May 10th, large stadiums can increase their capacity from 12% to 25%. He stated that road races and other athletic events will be permitted with staggered starts and plans submitted to the Health Department. He stated that the City has concerns with using public properties for athletic events until August 1, 2021. He stated that sport tournaments will be allowed. He stated that singing will be allowed but the singer has to be 10 feet from other people performing and has to be 25 feet from the audience.

Mr. Schenk stated that effective May 29th, gathering limits will increase to 200 people indoors and 250 people outdoors, which includes both private and public settings. He stated that a plan needs to be submitted to the Health Department in order to hold a gathering of that size. He stated that street festivals, parades, and cultural festivals will be allowed at 50% of their previous capacity. He stated that since they have no way to enforce 50% capacity of the previous capacity, the City has serious concerns about allowing these types of events. He stated that bars, beer gardens, and distilleries will be able to open with restaurant rules with seated service only. He stated that restaurant table size will be increased from 6 people to 10, and the same 90 minute maximum time will apply and you cannot stand to order a drink.

Mr. Schenk stated that effective August 1st, all remaining industries will be able to open including dance clubs, night clubs, saunas, steam rooms, health clubs, water parks, and other facilities. He stated that all industries will be able to operate at 100% but businesses will still be encouraged to follow best practices. He stated that all gathering limitations will be rescinded.

Mr. Cowan asked on behalf of the Council of Aging if they could have permission to restore congregate meals at the Senior Center. *Mr. Schenk* responded that they could open but would have to follow restaurant regulations. He stated that he will work with *Mr. Cowan* on the issue.

Mr. Schenk stated that all timelines set forth by the State are subject to change pending active COVID-19 cases and vaccine efforts.

OTHER DEPARTMENT UPDATES

There was no “New Business”.

OTHER CONCERNS OF THE BOARD

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next Board of Health monthly meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

MOTION by *Mr. Cowan* to adjourn.
Seconded by *Ms. Schweitzer*. **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____/S/ Bobbi Orlando_____

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

_ /S/ Richard Sagall_____

Richard Sagall, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:

May 6, 2021 Board of Health Agenda
Minutes of the April 1, 2021 BOH Meeting
Minutes of the April 8, 2021 BOH Meeting
Minutes of the April 22, 2021 BOH Meeting
Health Department May Monthly Report