



Acton Board of Health

Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2020

7:30 P.M.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM

Present:

Virtual Members Present: William McInnis -Chairman, Joanne Bissetta, Mark Conoby, Dr. William Taylor and Michael Kreuze

Virtual Associate Members Present: Dr. Thomas Jacoby and Dr. Rekha Singh

Virtual Staff Present: Sheryl Ball-Health Director, Heather York-Nursing Director, and Eva Szkaradek

Virtual Present: Peg Mikkola, David Martin, Terra Friedrichs, Tack Palmer, Dave Lunger, Elizabeth Kidawski and Corrine Hogseth

a. 1. Opening

Chair - William McInnis opened the meeting at 7:30 P.M. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual during this crisis.

2. Regular Business

Director Update: COVID-19 Updates to Residents -

Ms. Ball updated the Board regarding Health Division activities since the last meeting:

- Governor Baker face covering order - Ms. Ball updated the Board regarding Governor Baker's new order that requires masks or face coverings to be worn in public places where social distancing can't be accomplished and included a copy of the order in the Board's packet. This order applies to all workers and customers of businesses and other organizations that are open to the public and permitted to operate as an essential business.
- Construction Site update – Ms. Ball stated that the Building Commissioner is continuing to check sites for compliance with the Board of Health order and there is not a lot of construction going on in Acton but the ones that are working are in compliance.



- Transfer Station – Ms. Ball indicated that staff is working to place educational signage, restructure parking spaces, double lane entry (to get cars off of Rt2) to ensure social distancing is adhered to at the transfer station.
- Nursing Facilities – Ms. Ball mentioned the Governor's support of additional funding up to 130 million to allow for testing of residents, temporary staffing needs and creation of isolation wings.
- Request by BOS to not restrict Arboretum and Rail Trail Parking – Ms. Ball indicated that the Board of Selectmen has asked that the Board reconsider opening all parking spots at the Arboretum and Rail Trails. Mr. McInnis stated that there is still a stay at home advisory and asked Mr. Martin why the BOS is requesting this. Mr. Martin stated that the BOS believes there is no risk with opening the parking and doesn't feel that the areas are overcrowded and it is not effective to close some parking spots due to the size of the areas. The Board discussed this request and is sympathetic to the users; however, the majority of the Board recommended that the parking restrictions remain in place. Mr. Martin thanked the Board for their consideration.

1. Nursing Service Update – Ms. York stated that the current COVID-19 positive numbers in Acton is 100 and 53 are currently being monitored. Ms. York stated that her staff is currently doing well with contact tracing and stated that she would ask for assistance if/when needed. Ms. York also stated that her staff continually gets calls asking the locations of the positive results and reiterated that this information cannot be shared due to privacy reasons.
2. Nursing Home Updates - Ms. York stated that Life Care Center of Acton tested 121 residents and had 24 positive cases with the majority of positives being asymptomatic. These residents have been isolated within the facility, including those who may have shared a common space with a positive resident. They also are no longer taking referrals for new residents. All staff were tested or showed proof that they had been tested within that week and 11 were positive. Ms. York stated that the director or the center is closely working with Ms. York and the MDPH and currently following guidelines outlined by infectious control and all required guidelines.



Ms. York also stated that Robbins Brook Assisted Living has 4 positive cases of residents and 3 staff.

Ms. York stated that both facilities have an epidemiologist assigned to them which is helpful. Dr. Taylor stated that the Boston globe reported that 60% of COVID-19 related deaths are nursing home residents due to tight living quarters with a high percentage of residents having an underlying disease. The Board also discussed how staff and residents could be asymptomatic and the potential to have to retest residents as was the case at a Nursing Home in Washington State. Ms. York stated that testing will be ongoing, as needed, at these facilities. The Board also asked if staff could stop being shared between facilities to help stop the spread. Ms. York stated that it would be difficult to tell people where they can work, especially since this may be their livelihood but did emphasize that precautions are being taken by following all recommended guidance to keep residents and staff safe.

The Board also asked about contact tracing issues. Ms. York stated they have run into some issues where people are hesitant to divulge information to Nursing so they are directing people to the website and/or asking them to call them back to help alleviate those concerns. The Board also asked about the increase of positives at Life care and Ms. York stated that they are following guidelines, however, these guidelines have changed recently and unfortunately living in close congregate housing increases risk similar to an outbreak of norovirus or the flu. The Epidemiologist that is working with these centers is also working to ensure that they are following the most up to date guidance.

3. Mask Order - Governor Baker has issued a mask order effective May 6 and Mr. Conoby typed up an order for the Board to adopt this evening which mimics the Governor's order, provides clarification and allows our sworn police officers to be appointed agents of the Board of Health to help with enforcement. Ms. Ball stated that the Town has not had time to review this document and requests that the Board hold off on adoption of it until the next meeting. The Board discussed this and decided that the order would eliminate the language in the document that relates to the Police until the Town has ample time to review the document and asked that staff bring this back to a future meeting if that needs to be added back in. On a motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Bissetta the Board unanimously voted to adopt the amended Acton Board of Health Emergency Public Health Order of May 5, 2020. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.



Ms. Bissetta, seconded by Mr. Conoby, the Board unanimously voted to grant a 10 day emergency permit, beginning on May 6, 2020, giving the licensed trapper and its agent the right to use restricted traps and breach the dams or dikes subject to the conditions of the Conservation Commission. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

2. Next Meeting – The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2020 and the meeting originally scheduled for Monday, May 25 has been rescheduled until Wednesday May 27, 2020.

3. Minutes:

On a motion made by Ms. Bissetta, seconded by Mr. Conoby, the Board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of April 27, 2020. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

4. Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Conoby, seconded by Ms. Bissetta, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:23 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting;

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- Acton Board of Health Emergency Public Health Order of May 5, 2020.
- Memo from Health Division – Emergency Beaver Trapping Permit- Bellows Farm
- Governor Baker – Face Coverings order
- Minutes from April 27, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheryl Ball

Sheryl Ball
Acton Board of Health

William McInnis

William McInnis- Chairman,
Acton Board of Health