



Emergency Meeting

Joint Meeting Between the Acton Board of Health and the Acton Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 23, 2020

7:00 P.M.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM

Present:

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

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

Virtual BOS Members Present: Jon Benson-Chairman, David Martin, Joan Gardner, Dean Charter and Jim Snyder-Grant.

Virtual Staff Present: John Mangiaratti, Town Manager, Sheryl Ball-Health Director and Heather York, Nursing Director

Virtual Present: Ann Corcoran, Barbara, Elaine, Jaime Heald, Jason Cole, Library, Ag, MD Chautin, Richard Degon, Tack Palmer, Terence Lobo, Kim Kastens, Siddharth Nirudkar, Christine Russell, Vanessa Bergman, Karen Herther, Debbie Murphy, Bev Davis, State Representative Tammi Goveia, Dawn, Nancie Boudreau, Maureen Fletcher, Craig Andrews, Eva Szkaradek, Beth, Alice, Ann Chang, Carie McMenamin, Cathy & Tom Griffin, Ann Kulsick, Carolyn Randolph, Kerry Lewis, Elizabeth Osche, Barry Rosen, Ben Wolfson, Terra Friedrichs, Brenda Linsey, Barbara Morse, Anne Heinlein, Asa Kalvade, Bill Klauer, Catherine Buffy Reichert, Clare Siska, Caroleen Right, Anne Heinlein, Austin Cyganiewicz, Andrea Ristine, Mark Hald, Amy McCready, Alan, Alissa Nicol, Amy Krishnamurthy and numerous telephone call in users for a total of 178 attendees.

1. Opening

Chair – Jon Benson called the BOS meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

Chair - William McInnis stated that this emergency meeting was called to order as there has been a rapid deterioration in infections this past week and the purpose of this meeting is to make any necessary policies/conclusions in order to help keep our residents safe. Mr. McInnis called the BOH meeting to order at 7:33 P.M. Mr. McInnis also introduced the BOH and their backgrounds. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual during this crisis.

2. Regular Business



Director Operational Updates –

Ms. Ball shared that last week 34 new COVID cases were reported, 20 of which were reported over the weekend. Ten of the reported cases were at the Life Care Center on Great Road.

Nursing Director Updates-

Ms. York indicated that Mr. Mangiaratti, Town Manager had a presentation for the Boards with a COVID response update. Mr. Mangiaratti thanked the Board for gathering on such short notice and stated that this meeting was planned but pushed up due to the large COVID cases the Town received this week. He further stated that we have been tracking cases since the pandemic started in March and he is concerned with all the new cases the Town has seen this past week. Mr. Mangiaratti also stated that according to public health data released on Thursday, November 19th Acton is now yellow which indicates that we are at medium risk. These metrics were changed about three weeks ago by the State and Acton was in the green previously. This meeting was also held tonight due to the upcoming holiday season and the need to reach out to residents before Thanksgiving.

Ms. York indicated that since March, Acton has 305 COVID positive cases with 34 in active isolation and the curve is going up. Ms. York stated that there has been quite an increase in cases recently and noted most exposures have been from friends and family member gatherings. Ms. York stated that both the CDC and the MDPH have issued guidance on how to celebrate Thanksgiving safely and encouraged all to read those guidelines but outlined that the holidays should be spent with only those that live with you. Ms. York stated that we should all be mindful during this holiday season in order to do our part to help contain the spread.

Ms. York also mentioned that we have had 33 cases with the school community. Ms. York also mentioned that we meet weekly to discuss current metrics with the school community but also speak with them on a daily basis as well.

Ms. York mentioned that we have 11 new cases at Life care center of Acton plus two staff members at that facility. The current impacted area is located in the long term unit and was an area that was unaffected in the spring. The center has separated the residents into 4 units, active cases, identified direct contacts, recovery and lastly for residents not impacted. Lifecare has shut down for visitors and for new admissions. The staff also is currently utilizing full PPE.

Board members asked what ages were affected in the school cases and Ms. York stated from preschool to High School. There was also significant conversation between the Boards on how the spread is happening. Ms. York stated that the transmission is occurring amongst family gatherings. The Board also asked if there were any residents hospitalized. Ms. York stated not currently that she is aware of but mentioned 2-3 have been in the last month.



Mr. Mangiaratti recommended the following:

- Town wide phone call before Thanksgiving
- Town wide mailing next week
- Operational Changes
- Transition to appointment only for Town Hall window services
- Return to telecommuting for more staff
- Less in-person inspections
- Relocate staff as necessary to provide separation/Cohorts
- New signage at rail trails and rec areas.
- Consider temporarily suspending public access to libraries
- Consider closing skate park if mask compliance continues to be a problem
- Consider further closures of public spaces if mask compliance is a problem

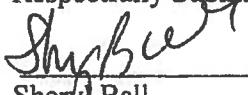
The Boards discussed how the virus is being transmitted in Acton but decided that these actions are necessary to help contain the spread. The Board discussed these recommendations at length and both boards expressed their support for the recommendations above and agreed to suspend in person browsing at both libraries but continue with curbside pickup. It was also stated that Town Hall window service would transition to appointment only and details will be worked out by staff soon.

It was also stated that messaging to our residents is extremely important and the Town will be adding new signage at all town owned trails, parks and recreation areas reminding residents to follow COVID safety guidelines. Mr. Mangiaratti will also be sending out a town-wide phone call to all residents reminding them to follow all guidelines and gather with only those that you live with. A town-wide mailing is also being drafted and will contain useful information for the residents to help keep them safe during the pandemic.

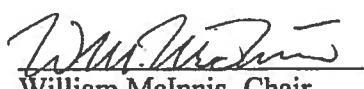
Throughout the meeting residents asked many questions including, potential school closures, residents isolation and loneliness during the pandemic, are we coordinating with other surrounding towns, where we are seeing the exposures and if they are work related what kind of work are they engaged in and what we are seeing for exposures in the school.

Both Boards thanks all for their work on COVID planning, guidelines and implementation.

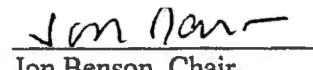
Respectfully Submitted,



Sheryl Ball
Acton Board of Health



William McInnis- Chair,
Board of Health



Jon Benson, Chair,
Board of Selectmen