



## Board of Health Minutes

Date: May 6, 2020

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Attendance:

### 1. Administrative

Date: May 6, 2020

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

In accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20 relating to the COVID-19 emergency, the May 6, 2020 public meeting of the Arlington Board of Health shall be physically closed to the public to avoid group congregation. The meeting shall instead be held virtually using Zoom.

***Public access to this meeting shall be provided in the following manner:***

Attendees can use either phone or computer to attend the meeting. The Board of Health requests that public comment be sent in advance of the meeting by emailing the Board of Health at [boh@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:boh@town.arlington.ma.us) by no later than 5pm on May 5, 2020. Submitted public comment will be read into the record at the appropriate points in the meeting.

***Zoom Login instructions:***

Instructions and the meeting link for this specific meeting can be found on the Board's agenda and minutes page or on the Town's meeting calendar. Attendees must register for this meeting. The meeting link and call-in number will be emailed to all attendees after they register. When attendees enter the meeting, they will be placed into a virtual waiting room. The Board will move attendees from the waiting room to the virtual meeting room.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtduhrzovHd0BYZhlwRH4--rdomW8U2J9>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*Members of the public are strongly encouraged to send written comment regarding any of agenda items by emailing [boh@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:boh@town.arlington.ma.us).*

Administrative: Public Health Director, Natasha Waden provided the following opening statement.

Thank you for joining the meeting today. Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and allowing us to adhere to social distancing requirements during the Covid-19 crisis, this Town of Arlington Board of Health meeting is being held virtually via Zoom for audio and video participation of Board Members and the public.

Guidelines, controls, and procedures for conducting the virtual meeting were provided to ensure that the meeting is safe and effective. Confirmation was made that all members and persons anticipated on the May 6, 2020 agenda were present and had audio and visual capabilities.

Director Waden continued her statements by informing all participants that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town of Arlington has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will have a public comment period at the end of the meeting during which members of the public will be able to provide comments to the Board. If you would like to comment during the public comment period, please use the "Raise Hand" function if on a computer, or "Dial \*9" if on the phone. When your name or phone number is called, and you are unmuted, please state your name and provide your comment. All attendees will be afforded 3 minutes for any comments.

For this meeting, the Board of Health is convening by telephone and computer conference via Zoom as posted on the Town's Website identifying how the public may join.

As the meeting facilitator, Director Waden stated she will be the only participant sharing their screen. Board Members and Department Staff may be participating by video conference. Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

All of the materials for this meeting are available on the Novus Agenda dashboard, and it was recommended that Board Members and the public follow the agenda as posted on Novus unless otherwise noted. Similarly, members of the public are encouraged to provide written public comments, but should understand that not all participants, nor all Board Members, will be able to see any written comments during the course of this meeting.

Director Waden reviewed some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

Marie Walsh Condon, the Board Chair, will introduce each agenda item. After the item is presented, she will go down the list of Board Members, inviting each by name to provide any

comment, questions, or motions. Please hold comments or questions until your name is called and you are unmuted.

For any response, please wait until the Chair yields the floor to you, and state your name before speaking.

Finally, each vote taken during this meeting will be conducted by roll-call vote.

For anyone who speaks during today's meeting: Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes.

## 2. COVID-19 Situational Update

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon welcomed all to the meeting and asked Director Waden to provide a situational update regarding the Town's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Director Waden informed the Board that the Health Department began monitoring in early February the world-wide spread of the Novel Corona Virus. In the early stages the Department monitored and instructed 14-day quarantines for travelers arriving from China and other high risk infection areas. At that time, members of the Department also participated in regularly scheduled conference calls with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health as well as the CDC. Key town officials met the first week in March, a group which is now commonly referred to as the Arlington COVID-19 Leadership Committee. The Health Department received notification of the 1<sup>st</sup> positive COVID-19 case on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> as well as one of the 1<sup>st</sup> suspect positive cases in the state for a Student. The Health Department began working with the Leadership Committee and made the decision to close the school in which the student attended, on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> to sanitize the school as well as to identify all close contacts of the student. All close contacts were identified and placed on a 14-day quarantine period. Later that week a decision was made to close all Arlington schools, and subsequently on 3/15/2020 Governor Baker made the decision to close all Massachusetts schools for 3 weeks, an order which has since been extended through the end of June. The Health Director has been in constant communication with the Board of Health Chair, Dr. Marie Walsh Condon, throughout this period. The Health Department staffed a call center for residents; issued advisories and memos to business regarding details of the Governors Orders, and on Essential/Non Essential Business operations. The town also instituted a curb side only pick-up option for essential businesses, with the exception of Supermarkets and Pharmacies. The Health Department has received 561 calls related to COVID-19 and has issued 4 orders to businesses to cease and desist operations because they were found to be operating against the Governors "Essential/Non Essential Business Order". The Health and Human Services Department consists of the Health Department, Council on Aging, Veterans Services, and Arlington Youth Counseling Center. All Divisions within Health and Human Services Department have been working diligently on providing services and guidance throughout this pandemic. The Department has provided over 1,800 fabric masks to seniors in senior housing buildings and also has organized a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) donation drive which has collected and donated over 15,000 units of PPE to first responders and medical staff. The Health and Human Services Department, in collaboration with the Planning Department, has started the Arlington COVID-19 relief fund which is currently up and running. The Health &

Human Services Department has been working collaboratively with Arlington Eats and the Arlington Schools to coordinate food and meal deliveries for all residents in need. To date, approximately 3,000 meals have been provided. The Arlington Health Department is also the host agency to the Metro East Medical Reserve Corp Unit and has deployed over 100 volunteers to assist in long-term care facilities, hospitals, call centers, and with meal/food deliveries. The Health Department has also worked with all 3 long-term care facilities located in Arlington.

Director Waden yielded the floor to Public Health Nurse Jessica Kerr who provided a health update and reported the town of Arlington currently has 248 positive cases and has traced and quarantined all contacts. She also reported to date there has been 25 deaths related to COVID-19 in Arlington. Nurse Kerr reported the Health Department is also working with all group homes, long-term care facilities, and assisted living facilities, and has worked with these facilities to coordinate testing by the National Guard as needed. Nurse Kerr informed the Board that the role of the Health Department and Public Health Nurse has been to investigate communicable disease, which is something the Department has always done. She stated what is different with the Communicable Disease COVID-19 is the volume is far greater than is typical and the higher numbers can sometimes strain the state data base system (MAVEN) which maintains the data. Nurse Kerr reported she receives regular updates and guidance from the CDC, WHO, and Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Nurse Kerr reviewed the processes with the Board and stated the Health Department receives positive test results from the State data base. Once notified, the Department contacts the resident to make sure they received the results. Staff then reviews with the resident the isolation process, symptoms and when they first began, as well as a review of their employment. The next phase is to determine anyone the resident may have been in close contact with 48 before they first displayed symptoms, as well as since testing positive. All identified close contacts are informed to quarantine for 14 days. Nurse Kerr informed the Board that the State of Massachusetts has also begun a contact tracing collaborative. This program is in the early stages, and it has been determined that the Arlington Health Department can more expeditiously perform Contact Tracing on our own at this time. As numbers increase, the Health Department will plan to bring on more staff for Contact Tracing including the COA Nurse, School Nurses, as well as Volunteers as needed. Nurse Kerr yielded the floor back to Director Waden.

Director Waden provided an update regarding the long-term care facilities in Town. She stated the Arlington Fire Department reached out in early March to make sure each long-term care facility in town had plans in place in case of a COVID-19 cluster. AFD staff then reviewed the plans with the facilities, and made recommendations as appropriate. In early April the Health Department received notification of the 1<sup>st</sup> positive cases at Sunrise Assisted Living. The Health Department and Facility communicated on a daily basis. The Health Department received a list of all residents, symptoms, and had constant conference calls with state agencies, including the Department of Public Health as well as the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to make sure everything that needed to be done, was being done. A list of all staff was also obtained to determine if any were sick and/or symptomatic. Additionally the Health Department was working with the facility to keep track of PPE supplies on site to make sure they have adequate supplies. Patients that had tested positive were moved to an isolated area of the facility and only had dedicated staff tending to/caring for them.

The Health Department also worked with Sunrise Assisted Living and partnered with Fallon Ambulance service to provide testing to 12-15 individuals who were symptomatic and Fallon brought the swabs to the state lab for testing. Weeks later requirements had changed which allowed for the National Guard to provide testing services at Assisted Living Facilities. Later the National Guard did test all individuals and staff at Sunrise Assisted Living and the Health Department continues to be in regular contact with them.

Also in April, Park Ave Nursing and Rehabilitation Center began reporting possible cases. The Health Department, under the direction of Director Waden, followed the same procedures as referenced at Sunrise. Park Ave did have clinical staff on site as well as some testing kits on site. Additional kits from the National Guard were also made available and all residents and employees were tested. As referenced at Sunrise, Park Ave patients that had tested positive were moved to an isolated area of the facility and only had dedicated staff tending to/caring for them to help stop the spread of the virus. Park Ave was able to obtain state testing kits and did not require the National Guard to provide testing.

In mid to late April the Health Department was notified of the first case at Brightview. The same procedures were followed. The National Guard tested all residents and employees at Brightview as well.

The Health Director is in continued communication with all three long-term care facilities on a daily basis.

As we begin to shift gears, the Health Department will continue with Contact Tracing in-house, and will also now expand focus on how to re-open Businesses, Town Departments, and hold other community events as safely as possible. We will rely on Contact Tracers to continue that important work but also will identify what policies will need to come into play for the community to reopen. At this time, it is unknown about the status of public pools, summer camps, etc. but the Director and Staff are continuously monitoring these issues. There will continue to be daily/weekly calls with state officials, the command center, and DPH partners. The Arlington COVID-19 Leadership Committee discusses daily any and all issues related to this pandemic. Director Waden reiterated this virus is new, it's novel, and as the information changes, we will try to keep all informed and adapt as quickly and as best we can. Director Waden yielded the floor to Chair Marie Walsh Condon.

Dr. Walsh Condon thanked Director Waden, the Health Department, and the Health & Human Services Staff for all their hard work. She stated she knows the many long days and nights that have been worked, including working to midnight as well as working all weekend long to address this crisis. She lauded the Health and Human Services Staff for proactive measures including coordinating efforts to provide face masks for seniors who reside at Senior Housing Buildings, and coordinating/partnering with others to provide meals to those with food insecurity. She stated that Director Waden and her staff have done an amazing job in reaching out to the community, and the Board appreciates that hard work. Dr. Walsh Condon yielded the floor to Board Members Kenneth Kohlberg and Kevin Fallon who also thanked the staff and Director Waden in particular for keeping the Board and Community informed and updated, and for all their hard work.

### 3. DISCUSSION:

**ORDER REQUIRING FACE COVERINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES WHERE SOCIAL DISTANCING IS NOT POSSIBLE**

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon informed the Board that last week the Town released a public health advisory asking residents to wear a mask covering at all times when out in public, both while in essential stores and while outside in open spaces like sidewalks, the bike path, and parks. On Friday, May 1st Governor Baker announced a state order regarding face coverings. The Governors' order goes into effect today, May 6th. Dr. Marie Walsh Condon yielded the floor to Director Waden.

Director Waden requested the Governors' order be posted on the screen for all to see and reviewed key points. She stated that Town Counsel has reviewed the order and recommended the Board consider a supplemental order to clarify a couple of matters. The supplemental order might address: giving authority to public health agents under Chapter 111; and rely on local and state police officers for enforcement and issuance of fines/tickets. It may also clearly set the fine structure, which in the Governors Order lists fines up to \$300 per offense. Director Waden stated it would be most appropriate to consider a supplemental order at next weeks' meeting scheduled for May 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. Director Waden yielded the floor to Dr. Marie Walsh Condon.

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon stated that wearing face coverings is very important and is one way to help stop the spread of the virus, with the goal of getting us to the downslope and not just the plateau. She further referenced the importance of social distancing, as well as hand washing as all good measures to help stop the spread. Dr. Walsh Condon stated she would be in favor of clarifying the matters referenced above and working on the appropriate amount for fines. Director Waden stated her staff will reach out to other communities and provide guidance at the next meeting on how best to adjust the ticketing/fine structure and information will be presented back to the Board.

#### 4. DISCUSSION:

##### COVID-19

##### Testing

Health Director Waden informed the Board that currently Arlington does not have a designated testing site for COVID-19. There is great interest within our community to be able to refer residents for testing. The Health Department is looking at the feasibility to partner with other businesses/organizations to provide testing. Other options could be to partner with neighboring communities. Discussions at this time would cover COVID-19 testing only and not Antibody testing. The Department is in the beginning stages of planning, and will report back to the Board as appropriate. Director Waden yielded the floor to Chair Marie Walsh Condon.

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon stated that Antibody Testing is in the very early stages of development. She stated there are many things to consider which include: false positive results, false negative results, and that having the presence of antibodies may not mean you are immune to COVID-19. There is still a lot to learn regarding this new novel virus. Dr. Walsh Condon also stated that in some cases the test might be given prematurely, which could provide a negative result, even though you might have been infected with the virus. She

stated that currently there is no cut and dry test available, but more will come in the future regarding Antibody testing.

5. DISCUSSION:

Board of Health Meeting Schedule

Director Waden proposed the following “draft meeting schedule” for the Board’s review: May 13, 2020; May 27, 2020; June 10, 2020; June 24, 2020 (2:00 pm was recommended time). Director Waden stated she would recommend the Board meet every 2 weeks, especially during the reopening phase of COVID-19, whereas there may be the need for orders to be issued by the Board. All meetings will be held remotely (via Zoom) at this time. All Board Members agreed to this revised meeting schedule and the Health Department Staff will send confirmation of revised dates and time. Director Waden yielded the floor to Chair Marie Walsh Condon.

Dr. Walsh Condon wanted to take a moment and announce that today is “National Nurses Day” and stated that the Town is very lucky to have Jessica Kerr as our Public Health Nurse. On behalf of the Board and Community she wishes to thank Jessica for all her hard work and would like to wish Jessica a Happy Nurses Day.

6. DISCUSSION:

Public

Comment

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon invited attendees to provide public comment. She provided all with the process and procedures for sharing public comment. She stated all attendees will be afforded 3 minutes for any comments.

No Public Comment made.

7. DISCUSSION:

Adjourn

Dr. Marie Walsh Condon stated this concludes the agenda for today’s meeting of the Board of Health, and thanked all for participating in today's meeting.

Vote via Roll Call: Unanimous (3-0) in favor of the motion.

Adjourn