

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

MINUTES

**The Watertown Board of Health has scheduled a REMOTE ZOOM meeting on
Wednesday February 17, 2021 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Dr. John Straus, Chairperson and Dr. Barbara Beck, Secretary; Richard Arnold, Board Member.

Staff: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health, Rajit Gupta, Environmental Health Officer, Maureen Foley, Head Clerk

In attendance Sofia Manoogian, Resident, Melissa Manoogian, Resident Heather McManus, BioSafety Committee, Rob Derosier, Triumvirate Environmental

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Straus called the meeting to order 7:06 pm

Minutes

Minutes were approved for January 20, 2021 meeting,

Motions granted (Beck, Straus) 2-0.

All in favor.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Watertown Biosafety Committee (WBSC)

Heather McManus, Chair, WBSC Biosafety Committee, indicated and reviewed the application for registration and recommended registration of Aldatu Biosciences since they are a BSL 1 level and use exempted materials to produce a rapid PCR tests.

Motions granted (Beck, Arnold) 3-0.

All in favor.

RootPath application provided inadequate information in their application packet including failing to submit a completed application. They were contacted and asked to provide additional information. Therefore consideration of their application was tabled until the March meeting of the WBSC.

Biosafety Applications

Rob Derosier, Triumvirate Environmental asked what the lead time is when submitting biosafety permit applications.

A list of 50 plus labs has been compiled and the Health Department will be contacting these organizations for permit compliance by July 1, 2021, and if this was the forum to discuss. Larry Ramdin Director of Public Health indicated, it was not and Mr. Desrosier, said he will reach out to the Health Department.

Request for a Variance from the requirements REGULATION GOVERNING THE KEEPING OF HENS AND HONEY BEES at 127 School Street, Ms. Manoogian

Melissa Manoogian she would like to raise hens in her back yard. The address was inspected by the Health Department and the location does not comply with required setbacks to accommodate a chicken coop. Further is in a corner location that fronts the street on both sides and the regulation does not allow such activity. Ms. Manoogian presented her request for the variance and the Board asked her questions for clarification. The Health Department does not recommend granting of the variance given the inadequacy of the lot to meet the requirements of the regulation and the public health challenges/ nuisances that will arise from same. After discussion and responses from Ms. Manoogian. The Board voted to deny the request for a variance to keep hens at 127 School Street. Motions (Beck, Arnold) 3-0.

All in favor.

COVID 19 Updates

Watertown Health conducted two COVID vaccine clinics (2/5 & 2/6/21). The clinics inoculated 563 Perkin's students, faculty, employees, and healthcare workers. Perkins is a congregate setting and received a dedicated supply of vaccines.

Watertown Health conducted two COVID 75 years and older vaccine clinics (2/10 & 2/17/21). The clinics inoculated 323 of our older population. Health Department provided 2 clinics for the first responders 2nd Moderna vaccine dose on 2/12 & 2/17/21.

Response from Watertown Public Health Director

The Commonwealth informed the local public health departments on February 17th, they would not be receiving any additional vaccines unless they could inoculate 750 doses per day for five days. This is not a possibility for Watertown. The Massachusetts residents must register online and go to the mass vaccine sights set up by the state. Many of these locations are not conducive to vaccinating the venerable, disabled or to those without vehicles. The Council on Aging has been assisting their residents with the online registrations and finding appointments with any of these venues. It has been a challenging endeavor. These populations do not want to travel to these larger, difficult to access venues.

The local public health departments are trained and know their populations to provide a successful vaccination rollout. Watertown Health has proved we can provide safe and successful clinics at very low cost.

These commercial facilities are paid to administer the vaccines and are also reimbursed by insurance companies. The local health departments are not paid to administer but can be reimbursed from insurance companies.

Dry goods for those who are quarantining

MEMA has provided dry goods to residents who are quarantining, and the health department is distributing those boxes.

Staffing and Department Update

We are interviewing next week for the ACO position. There are a couple of qualified candidates. This is a very specific position, and it is an on call 24/7.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for Wednesday March 17, 2021

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health