

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

MINUTES

**The Watertown Board of Health has scheduled a REMOTE ZOOM meeting on
Wednesday May 19, 2021 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Dr. John Straus, Chairperson and Dr. Barbara Beck, Secretary

Staff: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health, Maureen Foley, Head Clerk, Stephanie Venizelos, Wellness Director

In attendance Heather McManus, BioSafety Committee, Jim O'Connell, Rachel Stilling, Caroline Evarts, Lillian Baptista, Maureen Caligiuri, Susan Flint, Colleen Mahoney, Patrick George, Dan Levine, Rachel Danford, Naomi Anderson, Micha Josephy, Deanna Finn, James Douberly, Sheila Krishnan, Peter Centola, Leanne Hammond

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Straus called the meeting to order 7:04 pm

Minutes

Minutes were approved for April 21, 2021 meeting,
Motions granted (Beck, Strauss) 2-0.
All in favor.

Public Comment

Mr. Josephy is a parent of a child too young to be vaccinated at present. He commented that the states mask guidance is confusing for children participating in sports on outdoor fields. Children of all ages are not required to wear face coverings.

Mr. Ramdin replied the state has not been forthcoming regarding this issue. Town of Watertown is following the states regulations.

The vaccination rate is increasing and all COVID requirements are going to be removed on May 29th.

Ms. Danford stated she is a parent of an unvaccinated child, she agrees with MEFA with regards to under 12 yrs of age population.

Dr. Straus states the community should support private businesses that want to maintain masking.

Community Wellness Update

Ms. Venizelos gave an update of LIVE WELL, WATERTOWN CARES NETWORK and WATERTOWN FARMERS' MARKET. She introduced the new Farmers' Market coordinator, Lillian Baptista. Even though the state is opening up, the Farmers' Market will keep some safety measures in place.

Stephanie stated Watertown Cares is a substance use disorder network held a virtual event in late 2020 and had 50 participants. Dr. Beck requested the number of participants in these programs. Stephanie reported the Live Well programs bring 10-30 per event.

Mr. Ramdin added with the Farmers' Market that SNAP program offer \$40 to \$80 of free produce. This is an underutilized program. We are using social media to advertise free produce for those families.

Stephanie received two grants, Marshall Home Fund and Mt. Auburn Hospital to finance the SNAP match program. A SNAP recipient can receive a match on their SNAP card to spend at the farmers' market.

Watertown Biosafety Committee (WBSC)

Heather McManus, Chair, WBSC Biosafety Committee, indicated and reviewed the application for registration and recommended registration of **Forma Therapeutics**. Maureen Caligiuri gave a short synopsis of Forma's activities.

All the recommendations have been met.

Motions granted (Beck, Strauss) 2-0.

All in favor.

Heather McManus, Chair, WBSC Biosafety Committee, indicated and reviewed the application for registration and recommended registration of **SQZ Biotechnologies**. Dr. McManus stated SQZ provided a thorough application with many details related to security to the building, lab space and materials. She also stated the BSC minutes were thoughtful and detailed. Rachel Stilling gave a short synopsis of SQZ Biotechnologies' activities.

All the recommendations have been met.

Motions granted (Beck, Strauss) 2-0.

All in favor.

COVID 19 Updates

Covid regulations are going away on May 29th. Children can play sports without masks as of now even without vaccinations. Parents within 6 ft must wear masks and the officials on the field must wear masks. While on public transportation, taxis, ride shares and hospitals, masks must be worn. Health will vaccinate any resident with the excess Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Colleen Mahoney, a resident asked what are the definitive mask guidelines. She also inquired about masking with unvaccinated children in school. Mr. Ramdin stated the Watertown School Superintendent will make those discussions with 5 weeks left of the school year.

Staffing and Department Update

We have not received any applicants for Chief Environmental Health Officer. The position is posted in several online platforms.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for Wednesday June 9, 2021 remotely

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health