

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

MINUTES

**The Watertown Board of Health has scheduled a REMOTE ZOOM meeting on
Wednesday August 18, 2021 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Dr. John Straus, Dr. Barbara Beck and Richard Arnold,

Staff: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health, Maureen Foley, Head Clerk, Wil Van Dinter,
Public Health Nurse

In attendance: Lian-Ee Ching, Helen Dempsey, Leanne Hammond, Ning Lee, Mia Lieberman

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

Minutes

Minutes were approved for July 21, 2021 meeting, with adjustment

Motions granted (Beck, Arnold) 3-0.

All in favor.

Roll Call

Public Comment

Larry Ramdin read these comments to the Board of Health:

Yesterday I watched the fire and police department respond to an emergency and was appalled that no one was masked given how contagious the Delta variant is. While surrounding towns are requiring masks inside, as Baker acts usually too little, too late, I wanted to register my concern that the very people who are responsible for vulnerable Watertown residents, are putting them at risk. I encourage you to look at the huge jump in numbers of Covid positive people in the Commonwealth and urge you to follow the lead of neighboring towns. I do not know if this is your decision or up to the town manager but I urge you to protect vulnerable people in Watertown. The time is now, before school starts to try to stop the spread before we join other states and are in crisis mode.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Geller

Good afternoon -

I would like to submit public comments for the Board of Health meeting to occur on August 18, 2021. These comments relate to usage of rodent bait stations in response to resident requests for rodent management. While in my particular case I have observed bait stations on my street (Evans Street) for purposes of a pipe replacement project, I understand that the Board of Health may similarly authorize the use of bait stations for individual residential cases. The purpose of

my comments is to make the BoH members aware of the dangers of rodent bait stations, and to urge alternative rodent control methods such as Integrated Pest Management.

The poison used in the bait stations is the so-called Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticide (SGAR), and it frequently harms animals who are not the intended victims. Non-target species of animal may eat the poison itself, or eat rodents who are poisoned. A wide variety of animals, both wildlife and pets, have been hospitalized and/or died after being exposed to second generation anticoagulants. You may have seen a recent story in the news about the first death of a bald eagle in MA due to ingestion of SGAR (<https://www.mass.gov/news/first-bald-eagle-death-in-massachusetts-from-rodenticides-confirmed>). Newhouse Wildlife Rescue recently posted about a six month old fox being treated for exposure to rat poison (I urge you to read its rescuer's

note: <https://www.facebook.com/NewhouseWildlifeRescue/photos/a.1862173803870811/4172493626172139/>).

MA currently has a bill in the State legislature that seeks to limit the use of SGARs and promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which uses multiple methods to prevent and address rodent problems. One of these strategies is a product called Contrapest, which is fertility control for rodents (the product is approved for use in MA and with the EPA). The Contrapest, coupled with other proven IPM strategies such as effective waste management (sealed trash containers, dumpster enforcement, etc.), can go a long way to reduce rodent populations without resulting to rodenticide use. In fact, Somerville has recently published a report on its successful implementation of IPM (<https://www.somervillema.gov/news/reported-rodent-sightings-down-somerville>).

I would like to understand whether the BoH has considered the IPM as a rodent control measure, and if not, how it can be introduced into the town's strategy as a long-term rodent management solution that is better for public health and the environment and wildlife.

Sincerely,
Tatiana Mandel
Evans St.
Watertown, MA

Leanne Hammonds supported moving forward with masking in public buildings. WFPL has making in place.

Chairman's Comments

Dr. Straus will be retiring from the Board of Health at the end of October to spend more time in Vermont. He thanked his fellow Board members and the Health department especially during the pandemic. Larry Ramdin thanked Dr. Straus for his guidance during his tenure as a Board Member and chairman of the Board.

Watertown Biosafety Committee (WBSC)

Larry Ramdin, WBSC Biosafety Committee (WBSC), indicated that the WBSC reviewed the application for a permit and approval of the application with conditions. WBSC Chair indicated all conditions have been met and recommended approval of **Selecta Biosciences Permit Application**. Ning Lee, gave a short synopsis of Selecta's activities.

Board of Health made a motion to accept the recommendations of Selecta Biosciences Biosafety Permits.

Motions granted (Beck, Arnold) 3-0.

All in favor.

Roll Call

Larry Ramdin introduced Mia Lieberman to the Board of Health as a consultant to the Watertown Biosafety Committee.

Covid Update

Wil Van Dinter, Public Health Nurse stated the COVID cases are rising even with the vaccinated also. The Delta variant is becoming more prevalent. Wil stated there have a total of 1147 cases, 40 fatalities and 45 active cases presently.

May had 29 cases, June had 5 cases, July had 72 cases and August has 58 cases so far. CDC recommends booster shots for the immune compromised population.

Watertown received a limited supply of Covid antigen testing equipment with stipulations: for people with symptoms, not for travel purposes and one per person.

Larry Ramdin recommends face coverings in all public buildings. Larry contacted Town Attorney and Town Council regarding this mandate. The state has left the responsibility up to each city and town. [The board of Health will vote on the mask mandate on Monday, August 23, 2021.](#)

Staffing and Department Update

Carly Foster, ACO is attending ACOAM training and certification from September through October 2021.

Other Business

Wil Van Dinter received first shipment of flu vaccine. Watertown will be receiving some enhanced doses for the older population.

Next Meeting

Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday September 15, 2021

Dr. Straus adjourned the meeting at 8:38 pm