

BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

The Watertown BioSafety Committee has scheduled a REMOTE ZOOM meeting on Thursday February 3, 2022 at 7:00 pm

PRESENT: Heather McManus, Chair, Bradford M. Parsons Committee Member, Dr, Deborah McEwan, Deanna Mazina, Chief Health Officer, Maureen Foley, Staff

Consultant: Mia Tova Lieberman
In attendance Rae Moore

CALL TO ORDER: Heather McManus called the meeting to order 7:02 pm

Minutes

Minutes approvals for January 6, 2021
(McEwan, Parsons)
Roll Call

Public Comment

No Public Comment

New Business: Discussion of the WBSC's work so far, and recommendations moving forward.

The committee discussed the draft of a presentation (proposed at the 1/6/21 WBSC meeting) to be presented to the Board of Health and City Council. (Attach File: WBSC_Summary_Draft_PowerPoint.pdf).

WBSC wants to indicate the number of companies permitted and registered throughout the period. Some City Council members have informally requested the committee make a presentation at a council meeting and/or Council Subcommittee meeting. WBSC wants to identify the gaps in lab activities that fall outside of the WBSC purview. Dr. Lieberman wants to identify the chemical concerns. Mr. Parsons stated 500 grams of cyanide is not regulated by any entity and other toxins used in research that do not fall under Flammable Storage Permits. There are chemical hazards that may not currently be reported to the Fire or the Health Dept under an existing City permitting structure. Buildings with multi tenants using class 1 chemical lab should require an inventory. Those particulars do not fall under the responsibilities of the WBSC.

Dr. McManus stated the WBSC has information and perspective she would like to see conveyed to the City Council and the Planning Department.

Mr. Parsons stated the WBSC should determine the qualifications for inspections. Dr. McManus stated inspections, fines and violations are Health Department responsibilities. WBSC can conduct site visits to inform labs of procedures and policies.

Dr. McEwan is concerned about the potential for a new agent to be developed out of a university that has not previously been regulated.

Dr. McManus raised the need for another Chair election. She has been Chair for a year and would like others to have a chance to Chair. It was suggested that the WBSC should set an election policy/procedure. There was discussion about the frequency of rotation of the WBSC Chairperson. It was noted that the 5th member of WBSC does not attend meetings or participate in application review. To elect a new chairperson all members should be present.

The WBSC discussed whether permitting BSL 3 level labs in the City is practical due to lack of capacity. Prohibition of BSL3 labs would require amending the regulations.

WBSC would like to know how the Fire Department plays into the application process going forward.

Adjourn:

8:27 PM

Respectfully submitted: Larry Ramdin, Director of Public Health