



Town of Adams • Massachusetts 01220

Board of Health Department

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Approved

Adams Board of Health – Public Meeting Minutes

1st Floor Mahogany Room and Zoom

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

BOH Members Present: Chairman Dr. David Rhoads, Vice-Chair Joyce Brewer, Member Dr. Peter Hoyt

Others Present: Mark Blaisdell-Code Enforcer (virtual & person), Michelle DeRose-BOH Administrative Assistant, Atty Edward St. John- Town Council, Fire Chief John Pansecchi, Howard Rosenberg-Board of Selectman Member (virtual), Jennifer Kimball-Principal Planner Public Health-Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Coalition (virtual), Sarah DeJesus- Berkshire Harm Reduction Practice Manager Berkshire Health Systems(virtual) ,Stephen Murray- EMS/Harm Reduction Consultant (virtual), Syed Bokhari and Kathy Keeser-Mount Royal Inn (virtual), Brian Rhodes-iBerkshires

In person or virtual participation in this meeting is allowed by Ch.20 of the Acts of 2021 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL c.30 §20. The Zoom information is given below. This meeting will be recorded via Zoom; a copy can be provided upon request.

Call to Order: Chairman Rhoads called the meeting to order at 4:00pm

Notices on Recording & Post-Pandemic Waiver to Conduct Public Meeting Virtually (Above)

Note: if you are having trouble joining, please call David B Rhoads, PH.D. BOH Chair, at 781-507-1627.

Direct link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87384795277?pwd=aUd0cjZCcElDS0U3akxOVmxzd01Pd09>

or go to "zoom.us/join" or call 1-929-436-2866 (New York) and enter meeting information

Meeting ID: 873 8479 5277

Passcode: **045379**

New Business:

- **Mount Royal Inn Lodging Permit**

The current status is that the building commissioner, Gerry Garner, needs to finalize the sign off on the Permit Eyes system. The Board of Selectman are meeting later tonight. Dr. Rhoads requested a motion to approve the Lodging permit application for Mount Royal Inn pending the final sign off. Ms. Brewer motioned, Dr. Hoyt seconded. Dr. Hoyt asked why is the Board of Health just approving this one, and not other permit requests. Dr. Rhoads said there had been some issues with this particular permit and wanted to be sure everything has been put in order. Dr. Hoyt asked for future reference, if there is a delay in paperwork, will it be put in the Board of Health's hands to approve? Mr. St. John clarified that it is a two part process. Permit process and the Board of Selectman has the authority to renew it. There was issue about whether all the inspections were in order. Dr. Rhoads is asking if the Board of Health members are satisfied that all is in order. The 2nd part to this is a request for temporary housing which is a separate request than what this motion is for.

Dr. Rhoads said that the Building Commissioner has signed off on all the inspections, but just did not check the boxes in the Permit Eyes system noting the sign off and is just a formality. Dr. Hoyt asked

Mr. Blaisdell to confirm. Mr. Blaisdell said all is in order except the sign off from the Building Inspector. Dr. Hoyt asked if that is because he disapproved or if he just didn't have time to check the box in the Permit Eyes system. Mr. Blaisdell said the last entry from the building inspector was on Dec 3 as disapproved and the certificates of inspection was signed on Dec 6.

Dr. Rhoads had asked if door handles vs. door knobs was the issue for delay. Syed Bokhari said that door handles and a new door has been installed on the south portion of the building for access to the basement. Dr. Rhoads specified that since these are emergency doors, they need to have door handles and not door knobs. The Fire Inspector said all is good on his end. Alarms were not activated, one was damaged and has since been addressed. Code requires that should the alarm go off, that they leave the building and call 911. Do not tamper with the alarms.

Mr. Bokhari said he placed the master key outside in a lock box on both sides of the building should emergency personnel need to gain entry into any room. Chief Pansecchi said he will contact Mr. Bokhari to discuss further the lock box access.

Dr. Hoyt was hesitant to approve without the building inspector sign off. Voted as follows: Dr. Hoyt-abstain. Ms. Brewer-Yes, Dr. Rhoads-Yes. Passes 2 to 0 to 1.

- **Louison House's Request to use Mount Royal Inn as Temporary Housing**

Dr. Rhoads requested a motion to approve the use of Mount Royal Inn as Temporary Housing for the Louison House. Mr. Blaisdell said that the motion is not necessary since it is not a full motel and only certain rooms. It does not fit the criteria for housing as the contract states that hot plates are not allowed. This subject is moot at this point.

Dr. Rhoads proceeded to the agenda item that was to start at 4:20pm of the presentation by Jennifer Kimball on Overdose Addiction Prevention

Presentation (4:20pm) Jennifer Kimball, Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative; Resources

Dr. Rhoads shared that Ms. Kimball is resigning and recently learned that today is her last day. Ms. Kimball is the Principal Planner, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Kimball introduced Steven Murray-Harm Reduction Consultant. He is a former lieutenant of the Northern Berkshire EMS and a current employee of the Boston Medical Center. Sarah DeJesus is the Harm Reduction Practice Manager with Berkshire Health Systems Healthy Steps Program which is also known as the Syringe Access Program or the Supplier of Comprehensive Drug User Health Services Berkshire. Dr. Rhoads introduced Fire Chief John Pansecchi who confirmed that the Fire Dept does not carry Narcan and this presentation will provide him with information of the availability of these services.

Ms. Kimball shared a power point presentation. The BOAPC (Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative) does a lot of work around opioid use disorder as well as other multiple substance use disorder issues and other diseases related to other drug use such as Hepatitis C and HIV.

Ms. Kimball talked about 2 specific grants available.

- **Berkshire Post Overdose Program (B-POP):** The team will reach out to the client post overdose to establish a healthy working relationship. They will encourage this person to care for themselves in a

healthy way. Check to see what needs they may have such as food, housing, health insurance, etc. This is a pilot program starting with the Berkshire EMS and rolling out to the rest of the county.

- Expanding Harm Reduction Services: Connect with the local Boards of Health in Berkshire County. This program will allow EMS to leave a Narcan kit behind at a site following an overdose because often they have discharged or utilized their Narcan and can be at risk of an additional overdose 30-90 minutes after or use right away and may have not had time to refill that Narcan. They also wanted to allow EMS to be able to leave clean supplies on site for those that use drugs.

There are 3 Comprehensive Drug User Services sites in Berkshire County: North Adams, Pittsfield and after the 1st of year, Great Barrington. She explained there are barriers of getting fixed site services such as transportation challenged. Since EMS runs 24/7, this is one of the reasons EMS model was chosen. The goal of the grant is to connect with the remaining 29 local boards of health in Berkshire County as well as Rowe and Monroe in Franklin County, that have not allowed for comprehensive drug user health services to operate within their town, to get them to sign a local control letter so all the supplies can be left behind on site and work with other regional EMS and mobile health systems to get mobile comprehensive drug user health services going throughout the county.

Sarah DeJesus said the main point about their program is about reducing negative consequences related to drug use, be it the person that is using themselves, or friends and families that are connected to that person. Services they provide are:

- New injection supplies to help reduce infectious disease such as Hepatitis C and HIV as well as Narcan distribution to reduce overdose deaths.
- Testing for HIV, Hepatitis C, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chlamydia and treatment for positive results and any basic wound care when needed
- Refer other community support services to the clients such as housing support, insurance help, food resources, transportation to Detox facilities
- Educate the individuals that use their program on the services they are providing to help keep them as safe as possible
- Disposal of used syringes
- Besides the 3 stationary sites in North Adams, Pittsfield and Great Barrington, they now have a Mobile Medical Unit that allows them to reach additional locations resulting in closing the gap of transportation barriers to those that need these services.

Steven Murray shared that he recently retired from EMS/Fire and is also a recovering overdose survivor. He currently works at Boston Medical Center in their Addiction Research Dept working on these types of programs.

Northern Berkshire EMS and Lee Fire/Rescue have started leaving behind these Narcan Leave Behind Kits at scenes of an overdose. The kits include 2 doses of naloxone, a CPR face shield, fentanyl testing strips and information about services available around the area. They are also able to leave clean syringes to help in the reduction of infectious diseases.

They are doing this program with BOAPC and working to expand Narcan access to all first responders in the county. When they started the program, they had 45% of police depts and 55% of fire depts were carrying. Now, they have over 90%. They provide Narcan free of charge to these depts and hoping Adams Fire Dept

will join. Mr. Murray handles all the paperwork and training. This is all covered under a grant so it does not cost the town or taxpayers anything.

Fire Chief Pansecchi asked Mr. Murray to give him a call to discuss further their options for Adams Fire Dept.

Ms. Kimball said the local Board of Health is key as they can implement the needle exchange program under the MGL Chapter 111, Section 215. If the Town is interested, the Board of Health will put Harm Reduction Services/Syringe Services Program on the agenda, bring it to a vote using the exact language as cited in the sample local control letter and make a motion to approve these services in the Town. Send the local control letter with a copy of the certified minutes showing that a vote was taken in support of syringe services program to The Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences. Usually, the DPH acknowledges and approves in less than 90 days.

Dr. Rhoads motioned to add this subject and the letter to the next meeting agenda in January. Mr. Blaisdell asked if there are any resources available for local BOH to have the means for safe confiscation of used syringes such as sharps boxes? Ms. Kimball responded that Sharps containers may be provided by them free of charge and can discuss further on how the Town would like to set up the disposal of them. An option is that the mobile van can pick up when they come through town. Mr. Murray said that other municipalities, such as Pittsfield, said that they contracted with the ambulance service to pick up syringes if they have been found somewhere in the area. People can call the dispatcher to let them know syringes have been found and an ambulance will be dispatched to pick up. Mr. Blaisdell shared that Pittsfield inspectors had sharps containers and discouraged people from bringing the needles to us. Instead, we would pick up. The same for expended kits. He asked if a larger Sharps container be made available to us.

Dr. Rhoads inquired about leaving Narcan kits at a home of a user and would that open the possibility that the user would take more risks by using again knowing the Narcan is available to them. Mr. Murray responded that there is a higher number of overdose situations today than there were 10 years ago. Users are already at a greater risk each time they use. It's similar to having a fire extinguisher in your house, are you less likely to start a grease fire just because you have an extinguisher? This program recognizes that people are going to use drugs and it's their goal to make things safer for these individuals in terms of providing the resources and tools necessary to help them be safe. Ms. Kimball said that reports state that Narcan has not increased drug use. These are tools available and reduce the risk.

Mr. Murray said that Narcan is very painful and throws you in precipitous withdrawal, so users may not be inclined to use more knowing Narcan is available.

Dr. Rhoads closed with congratulating Ms. Kimball in her retirement and wished her luck in her future endeavors.

Covid-19 Report:

Dr. Rhoads shared the latest Covid update that continues to be posted on the website regularly. Dr. Rhoads pointed out that the numbers are high and considered on Extreme Alert. Vaccines are available for all people from 5 years of age and older and boosters are available. Workplace safety standards that were passed at the last meeting. Dr. Rhoads stated that contact tracing doesn't make sense right now because Covid can be contracted anywhere at this point. It is a matter of contact tracing for the person that has contracted it and to know who they have been in contact with afterwards.

The difference between last year and this year is on Dec 7, although the numbers are similar from last year (4778) to this year (4031), the cases have milder symptoms due to vaccinations.

Dr. Rhoads would like to hold a public hearing at our next meeting to hear thoughts on considering an indoor mask mandate to hear positive and negative feedback. Ms. Brewer said it would be interesting to see what the numbers will be after the holidays as it will be 10 days after the Christmas holiday. Mr. Blaisdell said people from other communities travel to Adams and vice versa. There are a lot of Adams businesses that are in favor of indoor masking and have signage in place.

Mr. Blaisdell continued saying that before, the elderly were the ones vulnerable to this virus, now the vulnerable age is the 0-5 years of age especially since there is no vaccine for them yet. Ms. Brewer added that data should be available to show the trends for the next meeting. Dr. Rhoads stated in one of the reports cited is that Covid is now among the 10 leading cause of death in children.

Mr. Blaisdell shared that 1800 free Covid test kits will be delivered to the Council on Aging in the next couple of days. Once on premises and will send notifications to their network and housing authority will take 84 kits to be distributed. We will have them available at Town Hall or walk-ins. There is an Alliance webinar meeting at 9am tomorrow that Mr. Blaisdell plans to attend. It is recommended to only use the testing kit when you believe to have been in contact with someone that has Covid or if you have progressing symptoms especially a fever. Don't waste the testing kit if you just have the sniffles.

Public Comment:

none

Public Hearing:

None

Approval of Minutes: November 17: Dr. Hoyt motioned to approve minutes with edits as discussed. Ms. Brewer seconded; Passed unanimously.

Code Enforcement Officer:

None

Presentation (4:20pm) Jennifer Kimball, Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Coalition; Resources
See Above

Old Business:

- **76B Howland Ave**

Mr. Blaisdell accompanied occupants to housing court. Court ordered landlord to put them in hotel until Dec 22. The court ordered the landlord and owner to abide by the correction orders. A new development is now lack of heat. The court ordered that the heat issue be addressed. Occupants have been temporarily placed in a hotel. A status update will be addressed in court on Dec 22. If landlord/owner not compliant, Mr. Blaisdell will look into receivership of this property.

- **Discover Books – Donation Bin Update**

Dr. Rhoads will negotiate with Tim Cota, Operations Supervisor for the location of this bin to be placed.

- **Cannabis: Web page tab**

No updates at this time. Dr. Rhoads will look into after the holidays.

- **2023 Budget considerations**

Mr. Blaisdell explained that he met with Town Administrator, Jay Green and discussed costs of receiverships. It was pointed out that there were line items in the budget that were not being utilized or realized available. The monies Mr. Blaisdell indicated he expected to spend through the year of \$4000 is divided up amongst some the budget lines. Mr. Blaisdell will try to achieve compliance via conversation and should non-compliance occur, then move forward with written documentation accordingly as to help maintain working within the budget. Dr. Rhoads will request a meeting with Jay Green before the next meeting.

New Business:

- **Upcoming recycling mandates**

Mr. Blaisdell stated that DEP changes are textile and food waste will be mandated. There is composting options. Mr. Blaisdell will send the document of the changes via email to the Board.

- **SAPHE Grant BOH training wish list**

Dr. Rhoads said that Sandra Martin circulated it and found one thing missing that was Cannabis and she added that to the list.

Local & County Updates:

- **11/18: Berkshire Public Health Alliance Governing Board**

Dr. Rhoads attended along with others in person and virtually. They have plenty of money to serve the smaller towns.

- **12/6: Greylock Glen plan approval by ConComm**

Rhoads attended meeting on Dec 6 Conservation Commission Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc (VHB) presented their plans for the outdoor center at the Glen and the Commission approved.

Upcoming Events:

- **11/18: Berkshire Public Health Alliance Governing Board** duplicated from above in error on the agenda. Holidays are coming up

Review Mail:

- **Transfer Station Inspection, etc. (email 11/30; TS Inspections, TS folder; RDP Award of \$4,900, needs town signature; request to list textile recovery box as publicly accessible on DEP website**

Linda Cernik did the coordination of these subjects. We received \$4900 in awards for our recycling efforts. Because it is a mandate for recycling textile or scrap metal, you should not need a permit to enter the transfer station to discard these items. And if we are listed as a recycling transfer station, any county resident can discard these items here.

- **BOAPC Newsletter (email 12/3/21)**

Jennifer Kimball announced her retirement

For the Good of the Order: Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Happy Hanukah

Dr. Rhoads had a conversation with Howard Rosenberg and he is interested in health and wellness programs in promoting proactive wellness. There was a wellness fair some time back and there may be another one in the spring or summer. Dr. Rhoads inquired with the other members if they were interested in being part of the fair in promoting community health and wellness. Mr. Blaisdell said that if the BOH wants to attend an outdoor event, they must have a canopy.

Schedule Next Meetings: January 5, 2022 (Moved back to 1st Wednesday of the month) Mr. Hoyt may need to Zoom in. Dr. Rhoads said we are good to maintain Zoom option till April 1

Adjournment:

Dr. Rhoads asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr Hoyt so moved, Dr. Brewer seconded. Voted Yes unanimously.
Adjourned at 5:59pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle DeRose
Administrative Assistant

2/15/2022

Date