

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 in-person only

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

BOH Members Present: Chairman Dr. David Rhoads, Member Dr. Amy Oberlin, Member Jessica Wilson

Others Present: Michelle DeRose-Administrative Assistant, Howard Rosenberg-Board of Selectman Member, Gerry Garner-Building Commissioner, Jay Green-Town Administrator (partial)

Call to Order: Chairman Rhoads called the meeting to order at 4:01pm and read the notice on the recording of the meeting. *This meeting will be recorded via recording device; a copy can be provided upon request.*

Dr. Rhoads welcomed Dr. Amy Oberlin and Jess Wilson to the Board. He introduced Mr. Rosenberg as the liaison between the Board of Health and the Board of Selectman. He also mentioned that Jay Green, Town Administrator, will be stopping by briefly to say hello. Dr. Rhoads expressed his gratitude that the 2 new members stepped up and joined the Board, otherwise, he would not be able to meet with just one board member. He said that for the first 6 months or 6 meetings, the new members will be introduced to various aspects of what the Board of Health is involved with.

Dr. Oberlin shared what brought her to the Board. Upon moving here from Chicago 6 months ago, she wanted to become more active in the community. She has been interested in public health issues and being a part of the Board will help engage her in the community. She and her husband work from home and she shared that she does research for law firms.

Ms. Wilson has been in the community for 8 years. She expressed that becoming a member of the Board of Health is a great way to serve the community. She was born and raised in North Adams and moved to Colorado for about 16 years and returned to the area. She has a massage studio in town. The pandemic gave her more of a desire to engage and understand the positives and negatives of public health.

Covid-19 Report: Current report (#24), other Covid-19 news

Dr. Rhoads shared the latest Covid update that continues to be posted on the website regularly. Cases are on the rise with about 25 per week. Vaccinations are maintaining at 72% and 40% at 1st booster and would like to see those numbers higher. The number of deaths per cases are lower than they were last year. Death rate may be lower due to better treatments available now. Adams has had over 1600 cases which includes some people have caught Covid twice. In last Thursday's report, Berkshire County had the highest incident report in the State. Everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted to help not get seriously ill.

Public Comment: Comments on Covid-19 responses:

Ms. Wilson stated since there is a very low vaccination rate with 5-11 age group. What is the Town offering to know where can we get our children vaccinated? Dr. Rhoads said that there is a vaccination center in Pittsfield. Berkshire Health Systems offers weekly vaccinations for children in Pittsfield. Ms. Wilson said that getting appointments is a difficult process. Could we host something in Adams? Dr. Rhoads said that we did have a vaccination clinic at the Susan B Anthony festival last summer which we had 7 vaccinations out of all the people that were at that festival. Dr.

Rhoads will explore any options available and this can be shared with the school systems who can also provide the information to the parents as to where they can get their children vaccinated.

Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that we can make announcements at the upcoming free movies held at the Visitors Center this summer to get their children vaccinated as well as themselves. Ms. Wilson said that easy access and parking would help encourage those to get vaccinated.

Dr. Oberlin asked about the testing centers that have recently been shut down in the area. Dr. Rhoads mentioned that the tests are available at no charge through your pharmacy. He also said that the antigen test is better while you have symptoms. The PCR test tends to show remnants of the virus for some time after. The positivity rate shown in the Covid report may not include home testing results.

Jay Green, the Town Administrator, stopped in to welcome the new members. Dr. Rhoads summarized that he would like to spend the first 6 months having presentations by Public Health aspects, Water Dept, County Agency resources, etc. Dr. Rhoads has been in this role for 5 years and is still learning even with his scientific background. Mr. Green suggested that he and Gerry Garner can meet with the new members individually to orient them with the processes of code enforcement and what their role is. Dr. Rhoads asked if it would be beneficial to dedicate a meeting to provide an orientation. Mr. Green said that you could. Dr. Rhoads said that over the next couple of months, we can see how they feel about everything and if they want to set up a meeting, they can. Mr. Green asked Dr. Rhoads to provide the new members with the County Health Organization training packet which he found quite helpful and there is in-person training that is available in August. Dr. Rhoads will provide them with the training material of what he has available. It is noted that MGL 111 and 117 focuses on statutes for local boards of health.

Mr. Rosenberg welcomed new members. He raised a statistic from New York that 90% of the people that had serious hospitalizations from Covid had pre-existing conditions that compromised their immune systems. He requested that in each meeting, that perhaps there can be a Pro-active wellness initiative. He suggested to not just send the message to get vaccinated, but to promote overall good health and to deal with any other health conditions you may have. When you are healthier, you will have a stronger immune system to overcome illness when the next pandemic hits.

Dr. Rhoads said that the Public Health Alliance can provide other programs related in wellness programs.

Ms. Wilson inquired how the Board communicates to the public the importance of increasing their health? Dr. Rhoads said that before Covid, there were functions where he would speak out. Ms. Wilson asked if we are engaged in social media options. Perhaps short videos, verbiage on overall good health, where they can go to be active in their wellness. People just may not know where to access this information.

Dr. Oberlin suggested a Newsletters to every mailbox in our Town as social media may not be popular with many folks in town. Mr. Rosenberg said for the biggest bang for your buck, social media would be best. The Town Clerk, Haley Meczywor, would be the contact to inquire with social media options. Council on Aging has a Newsletter and Deb Dunlap, Town Administration office, provides the Wellness initiative information.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that this doesn't have to be solved today and too make it an agenda item at a meeting to discuss further. There are several town resources for wellness opportunities and it is important to raise awareness of the importance of overall good health.

Public Comment: Comments on other issues:

None

Public Hearing:

None

Approval of Minutes: April 27, 2022

Dr. Rhoads has no changes and requested a motion to approve minutes. Dr. Oberlin motioned, Ms. Wilson seconded. Dr. Rhoads voted Yes, the others abstained as they did not attend the previous meeting. (1 Yes, 2 abstain)

Code Enforcement Officer:

- **Status** none at this time

Old Business:

- **Sunglasses for Kids (plus educational materials from DPH)** . Dr. Rhoads shared his story on what started Sunglasses for Kids. He would take walks at the Glen and noticed parents wearing sunglasses and the kids were not, so the idea came that we would distribute the sunglasses at events providing exposure to the public about the Board of Health and its initiative. There are promotional items you can order from the Massachusetts Clearing House. He asked the members to check it out and see if there is anything they'd like to have ordered and to let him know. These items will be at the informational table for the Board of Health at events.

New Business:

- **Overview of the Adams Board of Health (scope, resources, responsibilities, etc.)**
Dr. Rhoads explained to the new members that the Town Clerk has resources available for their review such as Open Meeting Law and Ethics trainings. We can meet but cannot deliberate, make decisions without being in an open meeting however, we can agree to bring something up in a meeting.

Dr. Rhoads will provide the new members with the power point orientation. Dr. Rhoads referred to the Info Packet for the May 11, 2022 BOH meeting that was shared with the board members. It contained several websites for public health training materials and information. He encouraged the new members to review the resources.

- The Foundations of Public Health website provides a variety trainings that can be done at their own pace. There are online trainings that are free and he encouraged the members to review the links and information.
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance
- Berkshire Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaborative. This was grant funded by the DPH. Adams just initiated a needle exchange program recently.
- Public Health Calendar
- County Health Rankings
- Transfer Station Recycling Dividend Program. More information will follow regarding the revised waste ban starting in November.
- Sanitary Survey

Ms. Wilson inquired about the recycling. Dr. Rhoads said that the grants come from the Dept of Environmental Protection. You earn points for holding these recycling events. Ms. Wilson asked if there is a [local] business that would take recycling material and use it to make something else such as making a park bench out of bottle caps? Dr. Rhoads said that the Old Stone Mill Center may do that. He suggested to set up a time to speak with them about it. There are also bins around town for books and textiles. Examples of use of recycled materials are: books can be recycled for insulation, textiles can be used for paper. He said more information may come when Linda Cernick when she joins the meeting regarding this subject.

Ms. Wilson feels that those that don't follow the rules, will end up dumping on the side of the road so there is a concern on how this will roll out to the community. Dr. Rhoads said that there are events that the Town hosts such as the Household hazardous Material Collection that was in April where we collected from 91

households. The Town website has a lot of information regarding events that happen throughout the year specifically under "Transfer Station".

Local & County Updates:

none

Upcoming Events:

- **BCBOHA Spring Dinner – June 15.** Dr. Rhoads said they had had 2 dinners a year, then Covid came. The bylaw states they must meet at least once for elections so they did meet last year. The Board members are invited to this dinner and the cost is \$40 per person. He was not sure how they will be billed for it, whether paid for and reimbursed or invoiced. There will be conversations related to emergency responses for future emergencies. When Covid first hit, the closest vaccination center was in Springfield. Upon collaboration, local clinics were set up to serve Berkshire County area.

Review Mail:

- **Public Health Nursing report** Dr. Rhoads will include this in next meeting

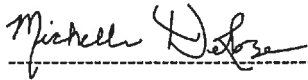
For the Good of the Order

Schedule Next Meetings: June 8 , 2022

Adjournment:

Dr. Rhoads asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Oberlin so moved, Ms. Wilson seconded. Voted Yes unanimously. Adjourned at 5:25pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle DeRose
Administrative Assistant

6/9/2022

Date