



**CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS**  
Division of Public Health



Michael P. Hirsh, MD, FACS, FAAP  
Medical Director

Derek S. Brindisi  
Director

**SUBJECT:** BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES  
**DATE:** JANUARY 5, 2015  
**START TIME:** 6:35PM  
**LOCATION:** 25 MEADE STREET, ROOM 201  
WORCESTER, MA 01610

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**Present:** David Fort, Joanne Calista, Dr. Jerry Gurwitz, Abigail Averbach, Erin Cathcart, Derek Brindisi, Dr. Michael Hirsh, Seth Peters, Karyn Clark, Sarai Rivera

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- a. Ms. Calista served as Chair for the meeting, as a permant Chair has not been assigned.
- b. A motion was made by Dr. Gurwitz to approve the agenda and the agenda was approved.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

- a. Ms. Averbach suggested amending the December minutes so that Dr. Gurwitz is referred to as "Dr." as opposed to "Mr."
- b. Ms. Averbach made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Fort seconded the motion. Minutes are unanimously approved as amended.

**3. Staffing Announcements**

- a. Derek Brindisi (DB) announced that Kerry Clark, Chief of Environmental Health and Response, has accepted a position as the Director of Emergency Management for the Colleges of Fenway. He will be leaving January 9, 2015. DB stated that the department has a plan in place to ensure coverage until the position is filled. DB also stated that the department is considering requesting organizational changes
- b. Alissa Errede has joined the department as of January 5, 2015 as a Health Preparedness and Surveillance Tech. She has a long background in emergency preparedness and previously worked in Maine.



- c. Kwabena Owusu Ansah "Koby" joined the department as of December 22, 2014 as a Public Health Specialist, working in Environmental Health. He previously worked with the Regional Environmental Council under the Healthy Homes program and has extensive background in public health.
- d. DB also announced to the Board that two staff members, Zach Dyer and Pat Bruchmann, have recently been honored for their work. Mr. Dyer was named as one of Worcester's "15 to watch in 2015" by Pulse Magazine. Ms. Bruchmann has been awarded the Thomas S. Green Award for Public Service by the Worcester Regional Research Bureau.

#### **4. STD Informational Brief**

- a. Seth Peters, Chief of Epidemiology and Health Protection, presented a summary of a report that has been submitted to Worcester City Council regarding Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Birthrates among Youth. See PowerPoint slides.

#### **5. Community Health Informational Brief**

- a. Karyn Clark, Chief of Community Health, discusses the current work of the community health staff including: Mass in Motion (Healthy Eating/Active Living), Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund, Worcester Alliance against Sexual Exploitation, Health Equity and Health Disparities, and the Youth Opportunities Office. See PowerPoint slides.

#### **6. CHIP 2012 and CHA 2015 Informational Brief**

- a. Karyn Clark also presented information on the 2012 CHIP (Community Health Improvement Plan) and upcoming CHA (Community Health Assessment) as Zach Dyer was unavailable. See PowerPoint slides.

#### **7. Public Health and Human Services Committee and Board of Health Collaboration Discussion**

- a. City Councilor Sarai Rivera, who serves as Chair of City Council's Public Health and Human Services Subcommittee, provided an overview of the Subcommittee and its purpose. The Subcommittee reviews reports, orders, etc. that have been assigned by City Council and provides recommendations for further action by the Council. There are 2 other members of the Subcommittee.
- b. Ms. Rivera stated that her goal is to find a balance to working with the Board of Health to advance public health. She also stated that she believes the Council as whole is very supportive of public health and the Board. The Subcommittee is open to ideas for collaborating with the Board.
- c. Ms. Calista asked what the normal process is for the flow of information and ideas to the Subcommittee (i.e.—how are agendas created and topics identified?)
- d. Ms. Rivera stated that the agenda items come from a pending list of items assigned to the Subcommittee by the full City Council. As Chair, she selects items off the list when crafting agendas. She stated that she works with the City administration to ensure that any time sensitive items are taken first. There is a Subcommittee meeting coming up on January 7, 2015 to discuss the proposed tobacco regulations.



- e. Dr. Gurwitz asked about the proposed tobacco regulations, if they would move through City Council and if they could move through the Board of Health.
- f. Karyn Clark stated that traditionally tobacco ordinances have always moved through City Council because of the Board's previous advisory role and because the process has already been initiated in Council, it will continue through. However, the Board of Health could act on other legislation and future revisions to the City's tobacco ordinance. The example of sanitation regulations for hookah bars was provided as a policy item that the Board of Health could examine.
- g. Ms. Averbach asked where the idea to revise the tobacco ordinance originated. Ms. Clark stated that it originated with the Worcester Division of Public Health based on available evidence. A report was first submitted to the City Manager who reviewed it and submitted it to City Council. The Council assigned the Subcommittee to review the proposal, hold a public hearing, and provide recommendations. The item will then go to the City Solicitor to review the information and provide language for the revised ordinance. It will then return to full Council for a vote.
- h. Ms. Averbach stated that historically there hasn't been a role for the Board of Health in the development of policy, other than to provide the Commissioner with advice.
- i. Mr. Fort stated that he is eager for the Board to advance some items but wants to ensure that the Board is working collaboratively with Council.
- j. Ms. Rivera agreed with Mr. Fort and added that there is value in looking to other municipalities with similar models for examples and guidance.
- k. Dr. Gurwitz asked if items always move from the Division of Public Health up to Council or if they ever flow vice-versa? Dr. Hirsh stated that that is the most common situation but there are examples of City Council asking the Division for information.
- l. Ms. Averbach asked if the City Council would ever ask the Board for opinions on items. Ms. Rivera responded that she believes that would be reasonable given the level of expertise on the Board. She also stated that there currently is an item before Council to remove public health items from the purview of the Subcommittee.
- m. DB asked if it would be appropriate for the Board of Health to review reports from the Division of Public Health before they are submitted to Council. He stated that it might make sense to have an extra level of review but has concerns that that practice could slow down the process and because Board of Health meetings are also public, he has some concern about information being released to the public before it is properly vetted and before City Council receives it.
- n. Ms. Calista asked how Council members are assigned to Subcommittees. Ms. Rivera stated that the mayor is responsible for assigning councilors. Each councilor is required to chair one committee and sit on two additional committees. Ms. Rivera also stated that Board of Health members are welcome to attend Subcommittee meetings.

## **8. Organization of the Board (Chair/Co Chair)**

- a. The group discussed assigning permanent positions for Board members. Board members unanimously decided to wait until the final Board member is assigned to consider make decisions on organization and will continue to rotate the Chair position at each meeting.



- b. Ms. Calista asked if there was a volunteer to chair the next meeting. Dr. Gurwitz volunteered and no objections were made.

**9. Next Meeting**

- a. Monday February 2, 2014 6:30pm at 25 Meade Street, Worcester.

**10. Adjourn: 8:33 P.M.**

- a. Ms. Averbach motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fort seconded the motion to adjourn.

