

Worcester Board of Health Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held at 25 Meade St. Room 109
Monday, October 21, 2024
6:30 pm
Minutes Prepared by Brenda Wright

Welcome and Introductions

Board Members Present: Chair Frances Anthes, Gary Rosen, Leopoldo Negrón Cruz, and Michael Perotto.

Staff Present: Dr. Michael Hirsh Medical Director of Public Health; Ian Wong Deputy Director of the Division of Public Health; Alissa Errede Chief of Emergency Preparedness for the Division of Public Health.

Guests: Stephen S. Rolle, P.E. Director of Transportation and Mobility.

Review and Approve September 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Michael Perotto made a motion to approve the amended minutes from September 9, 2024. Gary Rosen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the amended minutes.

Communicable Disease Update

Dr. Hirsh provided an update on Communicable diseases in Worcester and Worcester County. Dr. Hirsh provided an update on COVID-19 and other local communicable diseases. Regarding COVID he said that there was a significant surge over the summer which equaled fall of 2023, and at this time it is unclear of the impact it will have on this year's winter. While the summer's impact has decreased, he said there are still sporadic reports of outbreaks. The question was asked if there was a recommended brand of vaccine, but Dr Hirsch said that whatever was available could be administered. He also reminded us that boosters designed for the Omicron variant are available. Additionally, a tri-variant flu shot is available and both vaccines can be administered at the same time.

With regards for other communicable diseases:

Mosquito Borne Diseases

Dr Hirsh reported that because of cooler temperatures, mosquito transmission was reduced, but a mild winter and the La Nina effect could lead to a wider population of mosquitos in general.

There were no reports of mosquito-borne viruses/diseases except for one person with Triple E who was already susceptible, having contracted the disease some ten years ago.

Shingles

Concerns were raised about possible report of persons in their 40s getting shingles. Dr Hirsh said he had no reports of that; but the shingles vaccine could now be administered to persons as low as 60 years.

Vision Zero Presentation

The Chair Frances Anthes introduced the Commissioner of Transportation and Mobility Stephen S. Rolle and thanked him for coming. Mr. Rolle began by explaining what Vision Zero is. Vision Zero is an international street safety movement dedicated to eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. Vision Zero is adapted by the Department of Transportation & Mobility and its goal is to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injury crashes on Worcester roadways.

Some approaches that are being used are,

- **The Safe System Approach**, a new system used by the USDOT to achieve safer streets. It has five (5) objectives
 - *Safer People*
 - *Safer Vehicles*
 - *Safer Speed*
 - *Safer Roads*
 - *Post-crash Care*
- **The Data Driven Approach**, which focuses on *Worcester's Priority Network*. The Priority Network is based on an analysis approach that includes crash data, contextual roadway, land use characteristics, and community input.

All these variables together serve to narrow down all roads in Worcester to a manageable list of priority locations, where the city can invest to make the most progress toward improving safety and reducing crashes. This is informed through,

- *Data collection*

- *Comprehensive analysis*
- *Community input, among others.*

Priority Network: Top Priorities

A vast majority of crashes occur on a small subset of Worcester's street network, and Top Priorities represent the locations most in need of safety investment. These represent:

- **56%** of Worcester's severe and fatal crashes (282 of 506 crashes)
- **7%** of Worcester streets (43 of 605 miles)

73% of the Top Priority mileage is in federal zones that have been historically overburdened and under resourced. Already, projects are underway, improvements have been implemented and public audits have been conducted.

He spoke about the development of the Priority Network which combined *trend-based Network*, *Risk-based Network* and *Community-based Network*, that serves to narrow down all roads in Worcester to a manageable list of priority locations, this helps the city to invest, to make the most progress toward improving safety and reducing crashes.

There are also plans in place for the next rounds of 'priorities' which the city will focus on in future years.

An in-depth look at the Vision Zero project can be found on our website at [Vision Zero | City of Worcester, MA](#). At the end, Commissioner Rolle was commended for an excellent, timely and very informative presentation.

Overview of the Office of Health and Medical Preparedness

The presentation was done by Alissa Errede, Chief, Office of Health and Medical Preparedness.

The following was highlighted.

What the office does

Massachusetts DPH has separated the state into six (6) regions and formed Health and Medical Coordinating Coalitions (HMCC). Worcester is the Sponsoring Organization for the Region 2 HMCC grant, and works with all stakeholders including hospital, long-term care facilities, local public health departments, health centers among others, on regionalized multi-disciplinary, planning for and responding to emergencies. As the Sponsoring Organization, the Office of Health and Medical Preparedness serves as the regional ESF-8. In an emergency that exceeds a

stakeholder's capacity, the regional ESF- serves as a liaison between that entity and other state and regional partners.

The office works primarily behind the scenes and is instrumental in

- Plan development
- Relationship building (local, regional, state and federal)
- Expenditures & equipment procurement
- Training and Exercises

Publicly they participate in emergency dispensing sites, large scale events such as the Boston Marathon, shelters and tabling events. Some Key Outcomes FY 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) include,

Mitigation (purchasing of supplies for hospital evacuation)

Preparedness (development of a regional Response plan)

Recovery (COVID-19 After Action Report)

Response (major flooding, hospital surge, mass casualty incidents)

Initiatives FY 25 will address Resources, Plans and Response. At the end of the presentation, the chair thanked Alissa for a good report.

Open Floor

Ian L. Wong, Deputy Director of the Division of Public Health opened the discussion of two outstanding issues,

1. Racial Equity training for the BOH. The chair's response was that the training was still pending because of staff issues and would be determined in the coming months, and
2. One or more youth member(s) to serve as an unofficial student representative to the Board of Health. The chair said that the Law Department reminded the BOH that there are ordinances that govern the election of board members, and such would have to meet the guidelines of those ordinances.

Next Meeting Dates and Topics

November 18, 2024, at 6:30pm



Future Topics

Community Health Link Update

Adjournment

Gary Rosen moved to adjourn the meeting. Leopold Cruz seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.



Office of Health and Medical Preparedness

Region 2 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition

Region 2

Seventy-four cities and towns in Central MA

MDPH has created six regions throughout the state

HMCC

WDPH is the Sponsoring Org. for the Region 2 HMCC

Consists of all health and medical entities within Region 2, including nine acute care hospitals

ESF-8

WDPH is the Regional Emergency Support Function- 8 (ESF-8), which oversees Public Health and Medical Emergency Response

WDPH's role includes coordination of resources and liaising between locals and the state

Preparedness/Response

BEHIND THE SCENES

Plan Development

Relationship Building (Local, Regional, State, Federal)

Expenditures and Equipment

Trainings and Exercises

PUBLIC VIEW

Emergency Dispensing Site/Vaccine Clinics

Large-scale events (Boston Marathon)

Shelters

Tabling events



- Purchasing of Supplies for Hospital Evacuations
- Active Shooter Training for Local Public Health



- Response Plan
- Continuity of Operations Plan
- Resource Coordination Annex

- COVID-19 After Action Report and Improvement Plan
- Regional Hazard Vulnerability Analysis

- Major Flooding
- Hospital Surge
- Mass Casualty Incidents

FY 24 Key Outcomes

FY 25 Initiatives

Resources

- Supply Chain Issues
- Inventory

Plans

- Reviewed Annually

Response

- Training