



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

A meeting of the Board of the Boston Public Health Commission (“Commission”) was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 in the Hayes Conference Room, 2nd floor, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

Board Members Present

Manny Lopes, Chair, Philomin Laptiste, Jennifer Childs-Roshak, Rebecca Gutman

Also Present

Shannon O’Malley, Leon Bethune, Maya Sanders, Chief James Hooley, Debra Paul, Durrell Harris, Kadian Edobor, Marino Souza, Dayina Noel, Sahar Lawrence, PJ McCann, Susan Belvis, Rochelee Cruz, Puneet Sharma, Tierney Flaherty, Thomas Lane, Jen Lo, Steve Simmons, Mervin Adams, Joyce Clark, Anne McHugh, Janet Sanchez, Taylor Jolly, Grace Connolly, Sheila Lee, Triniese Polk, Gerry James, Margaret Reid, Gerry Thomas, Jen Tracy, Derrick Young, Trayce B. Booth

Proceedings

Chairperson’s Comments

At approximately 4:07 p.m., Chairperson Lopes welcomed Board members, staff, and members of the public and gave an overview of the agenda. Chair Lopes acknowledged and thanked Rita Nieves and Gerry Thomas for stepping in to serve in the Interim Executive Director and Interim Deputy Director roles, respectively, and noted that the Board looks forward to supporting the work of the Commission and great team that we have here.

Acceptance and Approval of the November 2019 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and taken unanimously to approve the minutes for the November 2019 Board meeting.

Signatory Authority Vote

Chairperson Lopes recognized Deputy General Counsel PJ McCann. Mr. McCann asked the Board for a vote to update the signatory authority for General Counsel Tim Harrington. He noted that signatory authority has been delegated to Mr. Harrington since his appointment in 2014, and

this vote is a clerical update to reflect his job title as General Counsel. A motion was made by Dr. Childs-Roshak, seconded and unanimously approved.

Executive Office Report: Rita Nieves, Interim Executive Director

Ms. Nieves delivered the following remarks:

Hello everyone, it's great to be here representing BPHC on the Board as Interim Executive Director. I only have five minutes on the agenda, so I'll be brief.

Along with Mayor Walsh and Chief Hooley we celebrated the graduation of 24 Emergency Medical Technician recruits during a ceremony at Faneuil Hall on January 14th. The ceremony in front of family, friends and colleagues formally acknowledged 24 recruits' successful completion of a rigorous post-hire training program for EMTs at Boston EMS. During the ceremony, Mayor Walsh also honored EMS Superintendent-in-Chief Kevin Shea. Superintendent-in-Chief Shea retired after a remarkable 43 years of service.

Chair Lopes asked about the makeup of the class. Ms. Nieves noted that the class was half females, and it was the first time we graduated a person of Somali descent. Chief Hooley noted that the class included individuals from the City Academy program who benefitted from recruitment and the program's offerings.

Ms. Nieves announced the appointment of Margaret Reid as Interim Chief of Staff and Triniese Polk as the Interim Director of Health Equity.

Dr. Lo gave an infectious disease outbreak. We have been in touch with MDPH and CDC about how we will prepare and coordinate in the event of cases. Currently five airports have been identified as screening airports, not including Boston at this time. At this time, we are communicating that the risk remains relatively low. Flu remains much more likely. At this time, recommendations are focused around those that have traveled to Wuhan in the last 14 days. \

We also have been handling a Measles case at a local university. BPHC staff have actively tracked over 100 potential contacts and notified about risks and verified immunity status. I want to also recognize MDPH for their efforts.

We are also tracking an uptick in HIV cases, currently involving 12 since October. We are making sure that potential contacts are receiving referrals to appropriate care.

Tierney Flaherty, Director of Intergovernmental Relations gave an update. The new City Councilors have been sworn in. We have recently offered testimony on bills related to Fetal and Infant Mortality Reviews, and *An act to prevent gun violence*. At this point in the session we are working with partners to move some of our priority bills forward.

FY 2021 Budget Development Update:
Grace Connolly, Director of Administration and Finance

Ms. Connolly delivered the posted presentation. She noted that we are working on closing books a half-year basis for the first time. For the budget schedule, we have submitted a maintenance budget and budget proposals for FY21. External funds budget is due to the city in two weeks. She noted that Boston's credit rating continues to enable us to dedicate funding directly to programming. Additionally, the City is expected to cover its pension liability within five years, which is well ahead of many other jurisdictions.

Chairman Lopes asked about the reduction in the Administration line. Ms. Connolly noted that this was due to a restructuring in the way that fringe rates are calculated.

Chairman Lopes noted that the budget process becomes clearer and clearer every year, and thanked Ms. Connolly and her team for their work.

Executive Director Search Process:
Members of the Board

Chairperson Lopes gave an update on the Executive Director Search process:

As many of you know, under our Enabling Act, the Board of Health is tasked with appointing the Health Commission's Executive Director. In light of the importance of this duty, and the need to conduct some of this work outside of regular Board of Health meetings, I am recommending the appointment of an Executive Director Search Committee.

Because of the fact that conducting search business in open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants, I am recommending that meetings for preliminary screening of applicants be conducted in executive session of the Search Committee. I am pleased to share that Philly Laptiste has agreed to chair this Search Committee. Thank you, Philly.

I welcome any discussion or questions from members of the Board. Hearing none, now I will accept a motion to appoint a search committee to be chaired by Phillomin Laptiste with additional members as may be selected by Ms. Laptiste. A motion to create a search committee chaired by Ms. Laptiste was moved and seconded and adopted unanimously.

A motion for the preliminary screening meetings to be conducted in executive session was made, seconded, and adopted unanimously.

Melnea Cass/Mass Ave 2.0 Strategic Plan
Jennifer Tracey, Director, Mayor's Office of Recovery Services
Gerry Thomas, Interim Deputy Director

Ms. Tracey delivered the posted presentation, and noted that while she is presenting, the plan represents the work of a number of partners here at the Commission and across City government, including key members of our team, Chief Hooley and Gerry Thomas, and Leon Bethune from our Community Initiatives Bureau.

Chairperson Lopes asked if there was an opportunity to collect money from more recent lawsuits, including the Sackler litigation. Ms. Tracy noted that we do not yet know how the funds from Attorney General's lawsuit will be disbursed but we will be following it closely.

She noted that while this plan and data collection and reporting is focused on the immediate Mass/Cass area, much of the coordination related to the response informs the response to these issues across the city.

Ms. Thomas spoke about the racial justice aspects of substance use disorder response and treatment. Highlighted ongoing issues with limited access to treatment, healthcare bias, and the media portrayal of the drug crisis. She noted that we have partnered with MDPH on a report demonstrating access issues for Black and Latinx populations, and we will be working through the RIZE grant to support studies to better understand why these issues persist. The federal Office of Minority health will fund additional work in this area in Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan. Ms. Thomas then posed discussion questions for the Board, including questions and concerns from staff and community.

Ms. Laptiste noted that it sounds like more dedicated resources have gone into this issue since it was raised with the Board previously. She noted that ongoing concerns are related to inequities and calling them out and appreciated the effort to do just that.

Dr. Childs-Roshak raised the issue of the intersection between the drug crisis and sexual and reproductive health. The attention to gender-specific programming, particularly for women with a higher risk of becoming pregnant, STIs risk, trauma, abuse, sex trafficking, is something we're concerned about and appreciate that you are focusing on it, even as we focus on the immediate work of keeping people alive.

Ms. Gutman noted that she hears about healthcare workers who become hurt on the job and develop substance use disorders that way, and also protecting workers on the job.

Chair Lopes mentioned the importance of making sure these issues are reflected in the communications plan. It's important to emphasize that we are in this together, and to demystify the disease for members of the public and partners.

Ms. Tracey noted that a communication campaign for a more general audience will require input. In the nearer term, we will be introducing a youth prevention campaign soon. Mr. Lopes offered assistance to spread information.

Dr. Childs-Roshak noted that storytelling is important for advocacy and communications, especially in health issues that involve stigma.

Chairperson Lopes thanked the presenters and noted that the Board looks forward to updates in the future.

Health Equity Advisory Committee Introduction and Office of Health Equity Initiatives
Triniese Polk, Interim Director, Office of Health Equity

Triniese Polk delivered the posted presentation giving an update of Priority Area 1 from the Strategic Plan, including updates on the Community Engagement Plan, Community Engagement Toolkit, and Community Engagement Policy. She noted that we have developed a partner database and feedback mechanism. She introduced the Health Equity Advisory Committee (HEAC), now in its second cohort.

Dr. Childs-Roshak asked what the top priorities for the HEAC will be. A HEAC member noted that we would like to focus on the different types of disparities among the different neighborhoods, and what are the common links.

Chairperson Lopes asked what inspired members to become involved. A HEAC member noted, as a board member of a local community development organization, she felt it was important to understand more about what the local health department and partners were doing.

Ms. Tracey asked if there was a role for the HEAC with other Commission programs. Ms. Polk noted that the HEAC meets regularly, and the goal is to have them advise all of our work. Programs can reach out to my office to work on getting on the agenda and setting up a process for involvement in decision-making.

Chairperson Lopes thanked the members for their commitment to service and addressing inequities.

Hearing no further items, the Board adjourned at 5:08pm.

Attest:

/S/ Susan Belvis
Board Secretary