



MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOSTON BOARD OF HEALTH

A meeting of the Boston Board of Health (Board) was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 by remote participation pursuant to Governor Charles D. Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, s. 20.

Board Members Present

Manny Lopes, Chair, Rebecca Gutman, Phillomin Laptiste, Kate Walsh, Gualde Valdez, Dr. Jennifer Childs-Roshak, John Fernandez

Also Present

PJ McCann, Taylor Jolly, Sheila Lee, Rita Nieves, Abeer Khatana, Caitlin McLaughlin, Dan Dooley, Debra Paul, Gabriel Lopes, Gerry Thomas, Grace Connolly, Dr. Jennifer Lo, Jennifer Tracey, John Steis, Johnna Murphy, Leon Bethune, Margaret Reid, Mariana Sarango, Chief Marty Martinez, Mary Bovenzi, Michaela Jones, Dr. Sarimer Sanchez, Helen Ayanian, Stacey Kokaram, Steve Simmons, Tim Harrington, Yeojin Jung, Anne McHugh, Devin Larkin, Johnna Murphy, Amelia Thyen

Proceedings

Chairperson's Comments

Chairperson Lopes: Hello and welcome, everyone, to the March Board of Health Meeting. Thank you everyone for joining, especially our Board members.

This meeting is being conducted by remote participation as authorized by the Governor's Emergency Order. In keeping with our usual practice, members of the public and BPHC staff will be allowed to observe the proceedings and we will use the moderating features on the Zoom application to keep all on mute other than Board members and BPHC presenters and others as needed.

Since we are deliberating remotely, any votes will be taken by a roll call of the members.

Acceptance and Approval of January 20, 2021 Minutes

The first order of business for the Board will be the accepting and approval of the meeting minutes from January 20th. A motion was made by Ms. Walsh and seconded by Childs-Roshak and approved unanimously by roll call to approve the January 20, 2021 meeting minutes.

Executive Office Report

Rita Nieves, Interim Executive Director

Ms. Nieves: Thank you, Manny. I have some brief updates and then I'll turn it over to my colleagues for the communications and intergovernmental relations updates.

First, BPHC has contracted with Flowetik to create a public activation COVID-19 campaign designed to inform and encourage all neighborhoods in Boston and specifically Black, Latinx and immigrant residents to get vaccinated via clinics/vaccine sites available in their communities. This will include engaging marketing and communications campaign that is locally focused as well as an organizing and digital community mobilization effort to engage with community organizations and leaders.

We are extremely excited about this partnership and look forward to ensuring that communications and education around the COVID-19 vaccine is culturally and linguistically accessible to all Bostonians.

Our own communications team has been working diligently to build vaccine confidence by highlighting members of our staff who have chosen to receive the vaccine and share why. These are some examples of our multilingual COVID-19 vaccine post cards that we'll be distributing in the community. We have post cards in 6 different languages so far including Chinese, Cape Verdean Kriolu, English, Haitian Creole and Spanish.

We'll keep you updated on our communications campaign as more Boston residents become eligible to receive the vaccine.

I want to also thank all of our staff and the many volunteers who made the Reggie Lewis vaccination site possible. I was pleased to be able to volunteer myself on a Saturday and was also happy to have Board member Dr. Childs-Roshak on hand as a volunteer in this important effort to ensure equitable access.

Last week I had the privilege of participating in a virtual federal lobby day with support from our Intergovernmental Relations team. We met with representatives from Rep. Pressley, Rep. Lynch, Sen. Warren, and Sen Markey's offices, focusing on funding for local public health, workforce support, and equitable vaccine distribution. I'll turn it over to Abeer Khatana, our IGR Policy and Strategy Specialist for a more detailed update.

Ms. Khatana provided an update from the IGR office.

Thank you Abeer, that's all for the Executive Office Update, I'll turn it back over to you Manny.

**FY22 Budget Presentation and Vote to Submit to Mayor
Grace Connolly, Director of Administration and Finance**

Ms. Connolly thanked the Administration and Finance team and delivered the posted presentation. She noted that BPHC closed the first two quarters for the first time.

Ms. Walsh asked about additional expenses related to vaccination, is it a different source of funds.

Ms. Connolly said that it is largely FEMA and CARES act reimbursements. Ryan White got about 1m, and have spent 30m on COVID, and it is largely reimbursed through the federal government. The expenses are on our books and we bill FEMA ourselves. We have an MOA with the City where we get a portion of the money they received from the federal treasury.

Mr. Lopes asked for a summary of the Bureau acronyms.

Ms. Connolly shared:

ORS/BRS – Office of Recovery Services and Bureau of Recovery Services, Jen Tracey and Devin Larkin

CAFH – Child, Adolescent, and Family Health, Anne McHugh

CIB: Community Initiatives Bureau, Leon Bethune

EMS: Emergency Medical Services, Chief Hooley

HSB: Homeless Services Bureau, Interim Stephanie Acker

IDB: Infectious Disease Bureau, Dr. Sarimer Sanchez

PHSC: These are the offices that provide support functions across the agency, such as Research and Evaluation, Communications, General Counsel.

ADMIN: Executive Office and related functions.

PROPERTY: Property Management

OPEB: Other Post-Employment Benefits.

EMS Revenue: Money that we are getting from third party payers, largest of which is Medicaid.

Mr. Valdez asked for additional detail in EMS revenue change.

Ms. Connolly said that was a combination of fewer trips and unbillable trips, both of which are related to COVID. There may be additional funding in the stimulus under discussion at the federal level.

Hearing no further discussion, I would entertain a vote to submit the budget to the Mayor's Office in accordance with the Commission's enabling legislation.

A motion was made by Ms. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Laptiste and unanimously approved to submit the FY2022 budget to the Mayor's Office.

The Chair then introduced Ms. Kokaram for a COVID-19 update.

COVID 19 Metrics Update

Stacey Kokaram, Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness

Ms. Kokaram presented the posted presentation.

Chair Lopes asked for questions and hearing none introduced Dr. Lo to present.

COVID-19 Vaccination Update and Data

Dr. Jennifer Lo, Medical Director

Dan Dooley, Director of Research and Evaluation

Dr. Lo, and Mr. Dooley presented the posted presentation.

Chair Lopes asked about access to vaccine and supply.

Dr. Lo said all of these strategies are contingent on supply. All institutions involved are dependent on what supply comes through from the federal and state levels of government. Our goal is to build capacity so that we are ready for additional supply as it comes.

Chair Lopes asked whether the Reggie Lewis site under its new operator, will it be our supply?

Dr. Lo answered that it will be a separate supply.

Ms. Walsh asked about the school teacher requirements and BPHC role.

Dr. Lo said that we have been working with BPS and other school partners to make sure that all those working in schools will be able to be vaccinated. We have been doing work to find out who is interested in getting vaccinated, providing information to staff populations, and we are planning to set up a priority clinic for teachers as well as other workers as soon as the supply is available.

Ms. Gutman asked about ambassadors, and community health workers and leaders in communities to be there at vaccine sites to make sure folks are welcomed and receiving culturally competent care.

Dr. Lo said that we will have ambassadors, it is a goal of putting these clinics in the community that those sites will have those capacities built in. We understand that there is more work to be done across partners to address barriers.

Mr. Valdez asked how the plans are being adjusted to account for the Johnson and Johnson vaccine coming on line.

Dr. Lo said that we will be having a forum with providers to identify globally what the city is going to do. This will take into account all vaccines. The goal is to plan across vaccines and have the ability to scale.

Chair Lopes asked about vaccines directly to CHCs from federal government.

Dr. Lo said that CHCs have played a critical role. Looking at the vaccine map shows how deeply involved the CHCs are. We are working with CHCs to ensure that we can support them, including in offering community clinics open beyond their patient population.

Chair Lopes asked about the eligibility dates. Dr. Lo said that 75+ was February 1st and 65+ and additional comorbidities were added on February 11th.

Ms. Laptiste asked about targeted outreach for the homeless population, especially with the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

Gerry Thomas said that we are working with Healthcare for the Homeless. We have a robust vaccination plan.

They are offering vaccine at about 20 sites and launched an effort to reach those that are unsheltered, for example at the comfort station, Engagement Center, and Common. There are 2,900 that have been given to the staff and shelter guests. Over 1,500 homeless individuals have received at least the first dose. We think the Johnson and Johnson vaccine will help, and we have hired navigators to help with peer-to-peer outreach.

Chair Lopes said thank you for this great work. We know this is early but it is great to see this data.

Chair Lopes said we have been having interviews with Executive Director. We have a number of candidates and will accept advice from counsel. Thank you to Philly for your time on this as chair of the search committee.

At approximately 5:30, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn by roll call, moved by Mr. Fernandez seconded by Ms. Gutman and approved unanimously.

/s/PJ McCann
Deputy General Counsel