



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

MARCH 12, 2009

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH
Hortensia Amaro, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Celia Wcislo, Jack Cradock,
Harold Cox

Board Members Absent:

Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD
Elaine Ullian

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH
John Townsend, Maia BrodyField,
Mark Campbell, Maurice Myrie, Tim
Harrington, Roger Swartz, Elizabeth
Barry, Gerry Thomas, Leon Bethune,
Gerry Byrne, David Pia, Rich Serino,
Anne McHugh, Dan Dooley, Dr. Snehal
Shah, Daisy DeLaRosa, Erin Christiansen,
Bernard Killarney, Fred Bruk, Phil Balbon,
Lourdes Orbinola, Samatha Panati, Pam
Jones, David Susich, Julia Gunn, Sara
Helely, William Kibaja, Michelle Urbano,
Peter Holtgrave, Thomas Plant, Mary Ellen
Yankosky, Margaret Reid, Phyllis Sims,
Denise Dodds, Julie Webster, Chuck Gagnon

Guests:

Scott Mason

Dr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM on Thursday, March 12, 2009.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair invited a motion to accept the February minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, began by giving the Board an update regarding the Health of Boston report. Dr. Ferrer stated that the report is beautiful and the entire research department under the direction of Dr. Snehal Shah has been great. Dr. Ferrer gave a huge thanks to the research department and said that it took the department's labor of love and endless hours of hard work to put together the report.

Dr. Ferrer spoke regarding the union agreements in terms of layoffs and said she is enormously pleased with the agreements. Dr. Ferrer reported that the unions understand the terms of the wage freeze and stated that, unlike the City of Boston, the Boston Public Health Commission is not able to identify layoffs at this time. The Commission is working on restructuring as we face the difficult times ahead.

Dr. Ferrer gave an update regarding the tobacco regulation blunt wrap lawsuit. Dr. Ferrer said that the Commission was sued by the blunt wrap manufacturers and that there is not a date set as of yet for the case. Trial is scheduled for late March or early April. Dr. Ferrer stated that Nakisha Skinner, General Counsel, is confident that the Commission has a strong case. The tobacco control department's staff is hard at work doing routine inspections. Dr. Ferrer said that 188 inspections have been conducted in terms of the blunt wrap ban and there have been no violations. The Commission has purchased media time for the smoking cessation program.

Dr. Ferrer next introduced Mr. Gerard Byrnes who is the new Comptroller for the Commission and said Mr. Byrnes will handle all of the Commission's audit obligations. Dr. Ferrer said that she is pleased to get someone with Mr. Byrnes experience.

Dr. Ferrer announced that Dr. Peter Moyer, Medical Director of Boston EMS is retiring and his retirement party is scheduled to take place on March 12, 2009. Dr. Ferrer said that Dr. Moyer will be sorely missed. Dr. Ferrer then announced Ms. Sophia Dyer as the new Medical Director of Boston EMS.

Board member Amaro inquired as to the second phase of the Trans fat ban and asked did the next phase begin. Dr. Ferrer answered, yes, the Commission is working with bakers to give support for them to come into compliance. Education workshops were held earlier in the week but an extension would be helpful.

Board Vote Regarding the Signatory Authority for Gerard Byrnes

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote regarding the signatory authority for Gerard Byrnes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 5 Nay's 0 Absent 2

FY 10 Budget – John M. Townsend

John M. Townsend, Director of Administration and Finance gave an update regarding the proposed FY10 budget. Mr. Townsend stated that at today's meeting the Board would be voting to submit the FY10 budget to the Mayor. The vote for acceptance of the final budget will take place in April with the city's changes and in May the budget will be presented to the City Council. Mr. Townsend said that 45% of the Commission's budget comes from the City of Boston and that the City has asked the Commission to cut the FY10 budget by 7%.

Mr. Townsend then gave a breakdown on the projected FY10 sources of funding in terms of grants, third party billing and other revenue. Mr. Townsend said the total requested City of Boston appropriation for the Commission is \$70,500,158.98.

Mr. Townsend spoke regarding the proposed budget reduction initiatives for FY10 which are as follows:

- An 7% reduction in the amount of health center contracts;
- Increase in commercial and residential rents;
- Continuation of current restrictions on non-essential purchases;
- Reduction of positions; and,
- Delay 2.5% salary increase for all non-union and union positions.

Mr. Townsend also reported on the Commission's proposed wage freeze and stated that agreements and tentative agreements are in place with all unions. Unions have agreed to delay the effective date of the negotiated FY10 wage increases for one year and the agreements apply to all union and non-union employees.

Board member Cradock asked for clarification on the wage increase delay. Mr. Townsend replied that wage increases would be frozen for one year. Mr. Townsend stated that deferred wages will be applied to preserving positions covered by the bargaining units.

Vote to Approve the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget for Submission to the Mayor

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote to approve the fiscal year 2010 budget for submission to the Mayor. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 5 Nay's 0 Absent 2

Environmental Justice: Safe Shops Update – Leon Bethune

Leon Bethune, Director of Environmental Health, gave an update regarding Massachusetts' environmental justice in terms of safe shops. Mr. Bethune said that Massachusetts defines environmental justice populations by identifying all census 2000 block groups that meet any of the following criteria:

- Income: average household income 65% or less of the statewide median household income;
- Minority population: 25% or more of the residents are foreign born;
- English proficiency: 25% or more of the residents lack English language proficiency.

Board member Cox asked Mr. Bethune to define environmental justice. Mr. Bethune gave the definition of environmental justice as the follows:

- Historic contamination (lead paint on old housing, contaminated soil from past industry);
- Current noxious industries (solid waste recycling facilities, junkyards, auto-body repair shops, and nail salons);
- Illegal dumping, and,
- Limited access to resources and infrastructure.

Mr. Bethune stated that neighborhoods of North Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park are adversely impacted by environmental justice.

Mr. Bethune said that the Commission's Environmental Health Office has several programs that systematically work to address environmental justice issues by improving the environment and preventing health hazards. Three of the most prominent is to reduce lead poisoning, regulate the solid waste industry, and promote pollution prevention. Mr. Bethune stated that in 2000 the City had 80 solid waste sites but there has been a decrease from 80 sites to 12 sites.

Dr. Amaro asked where the sites have been relocated to. Mr. Bethune replied, Chelsea.

Mr. Bethune spoke regarding lead and reported that screening rates are high but lead is still a problem in Boston's environmental justice communities.

Dr. Johnson inquired as to the cost of deleading and asked can property owners delead legally. Mr. Bethune replied that deleading can cost anywhere between \$8000 and \$10,000. Deleading requires a painting contract and it is the painter's responsibility to clean-up. Clean-up costs can run between \$500 and \$1,000.

Mr. Bethune lastly stated that the Environmental Health department works with and regulates auto shops, nail salons and tanning facilities. Mr. Bethune announced a new initiative opportunity, the dry cleaning industry. (Perchloroethylene is most common dry cleaning agent. It is a toxic carcinogenic chemical that can contaminate soil, surface water and groundwater).

In conclusion Mr. Bethune stated that geographical information systems (GIS) is a significant tool for identifying and tracking emerging environmental health issues and new initiatives that impact Boston's environmental justice communities.

Integrated Pest Management – Margaret Reid

Margaret Reid, Director, Healthy Homes & Community Support Division, gave a presentation on Healthy Pest Free Housing Initiative. Ms. Reid introduced Ms. Melissa Fiffer an employee of HUD Healthy Homes. Ms. Fiffer will be working with the Commission for 2 months regarding the Pest Free Housing Initiative.

Ms. Reid said that the Healthy Pest Free Housing Initiative was developed to address broad public health issues including asthma, pest control and pesticide use. The healthy public housing initiative will document the extent of pest infestation and pesticide use. Ms. Reid stated that the health focus initiative will be on asthma.

Ms. Reid reported that 10% of Boston residents are housed through Boston Housing Authority and that they are the largest apartment owners in the City of Boston with aging properties and pest infestation. Integrated Pest Management's goal is to make the environment less hospitable to pests by the following:

- Eliminating sources of food and water;
- Sealing cracks and holes;
- Reducing harborage (clutter);
- Monitoring infestations and locate traps in high activity areas;
- Targeting use of pesticides.

Ms. Reid stated that focus groups were conducted in English, Spanish and Chinese. Residents expressed concern around the hazards of pesticides and concern about children and asthma. Ms. Reid spoke regarding the public awareness campaign and informed the Board that resident community health advocates will be conducting in-home and community-based outreach, education and advocacy.

Healthy Homes will conduct three (3) home visits a year and pest control contractors will be contracted to come in and work with families.

Board member Cox asked if there is a decrease in the rat infestation. Ms. Reid replied, yes.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

