



## **Acton Board of Health**

Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2020

7:30 P.M.

**VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM**

### **Present:**

Virtual Members Present: William McInnis -Chairman, Mark Conoby, Michael Kreuze, Dr. William Taylor and Joanne Bissetta.

Virtual Associate Members Present: Dr. Thomas Jacoby and Rekha Singh

Virtual Staff Present: Sheryl Ball-Health Director and Heather York, Nursing Director

Virtual Present: Diann Oster, Peter Light, Sarah Mallard, Jared Lyle, John Petersen, Peg Mikkola and Timothy Deschamps

### **1. Opening**

Chair - William McInnis opened the meeting at 7:31 P.M. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual during this crisis.

### **2. Regular Business**

#### **Director Operational Updates –**

Ms. Ball updated the Board on the status of the schools septic plan. The Health Division has still not received revisions to the plans and is awaiting those revisions to bring them back for the Aquifer Special Permit.

Ms. Ball stated that the Department of Secondary Education (DESE) announced today that schools are required to report positive cases to them. They will be looking for the following information; student or staff, whether the individuals are in the same classroom or bus (if two or more) or if 3% of the student population tests positive. This information will be a decision factor in deploying mobile testing sites. T

Ms. Ball also stated the State has issued protocols for Local Boards of Health to follow if a business or organization fails to follow COVID-19 guidelines or orders. This enforcement includes an initial verbal warning and progresses to a written warning, fines of up to \$300/violation, cease and desist or a court injunction. Ms. Ball stated that so far our businesses are doing a good job and complaints have died down quite a bit since the beginning.

Ms. Ball announced that Household Hazardous Waste Day will be held on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ball further stated that this date falls on Rosh Hashanah and apologized for booking it



on this day. Ms. Ball stated that there will be an additional day on Thursday October 1, 2020 from 4:30 – 6:30 PM for those that are unable to attend on Saturday.

Ms. Ball stated that Acton still remains as shaded green in the State Metrics with our numbers slightly decreasing from the previous week. Hopefully that trend will continue downward.

#### **Nursing Service Director Updates-**

Ms. York stated that Acton currently has 202 positive cases, 2 in active isolation, 179 recovered and 21 fatalities. Ms. York stated there is no new guidance except for what Ms. Ball mentioned above in regards to the requirement to report positive cases to DESE. Ms. York stated that she is working with the schools and Ms. Ball on school reopening plans and stated that the school has some great resources on their website. The Board asked Ms. York if you can be tested for COVID without a doctor's order. Ms. York stated that a lot of testing facilities require a doctor's order and if residents need one, she can provide them a letter. It was also stated that there are some facilities that don't require that and Marlboro Hospital was mentioned. The Board also asked Ms. York about flu clinics and it was stated that we are awaiting vaccine but once we have them we will schedule drive through clinics since new regulations require the vaccine to be in refrigeration so new locations are being looked at with 30 Sudbury Road being one. The priority will be the senior population and Ms. York mentioned we are talking to the schools about them as well.

#### **Next BOH Meetings**

Ms. Ball stated the next BOH meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23, 2020.

#### **Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project Update**

Timothy Deschamps from the CMMCP was before the Board for an update on mosquitoes in Acton. This update is typically done in the spring but due to COVID-19 the update was delayed. Mr. Deschamps stated that Massachusetts has had some cases of WNV and EEE in other parts of Massachusetts but he does not expect to find this virus this year in Acton. CMMCP traps mosquitoes in 15 different locations in Acton and he noted collections are dropping now due to the colder weather. Mr. Deschamps also mentioned that adult larviciding ended after Labor Day but stated that throughout the summer CMMCP responded to many residents request for spray. Mr. Deschamps stated that if a mosquito in Acton were to test positive for WNV or EEE he would be in contact with the Town. The Board asked about no spray markers and mentioned they haven't seen many on lawns. Mr. Deschamps stated that there is an electronic process to complete paperwork through the Department of Agriculture but there is also a requirement to mark your property and unfortunately some residents only do the paperwork and not the postings. The Board asked about catch basin cleaning and if the mosquitoes can survive over the winter. Mr. Deschamps stated that traps are placed in the catch basin and yes some can survive over the winter. The Board thanked Mr. Deschamps for the update.



## **Biobot Sewage Testing**

The Biobot program has been developed to test the presence of COVID-19 in sewage. Ms. Ball stated that this testing would be helpful but it is very expensive and the Board would need to consider whether or not they recommend and the frequency of testing. In addition, what would the town/school district do with this information if this program were to be implemented. John Petersen has requested that this item be placed on the agenda and has provided the Board with a Powerpoint presentation to help explain the process. Mr. Petersen spoke about the Overview of Wastewater Testing for COVID, Steps in Sampling and Testing, Current events in wastewater testing, how wastewater provides a leading indicator for COVID-19 and the strengths and weaknesses of wastewater testing vs Individual testing, metrics in surveillance, comparison of techniques and the history and results of Biobot. The Board stated that if this testing were to happen we would need data to help identify trends. The Board also spoke about this testing vs testing people for COVID and questioned whether funds should be used for actual testing of people vs wastewater. The Board stated that the data from wastewater testing would be nice to have but it is not a must have as data with this virus changes so quickly. The Board also stated that only 10% of our population is on sewer and wondered if data for only 10% of the town would be conducive. The Board determined that this may be useful but a PCR test for COVID would be more deterministic. The Board also asked Mr. Petersen if this request is representative of the schools or an individual. Mr. Light, Superintendent of Schools stated that there are frustrations over the lack of available COVID testing for the school population and when they looked at the cost it was anticipated to be approximately 8 million dollars to test all students. The State will provide mobile testing only if the school were to have an outbreak. The Board also asked Mr. Light about screening students for COVID in schools. Mr. Light stated that they are following the state guidance that asks the parents to screen their children at home. The Board reviewed and discussed this information and are interested but struggled with how this information would be used to drive the decision. All members stated that they believe this testing may be useful but would recommend that the Board of Selectmen or the School Districts make the decision if they are interested in performing this testing and gathering this data. The Board took no action or recommendation on this matter.

## **Remote Learning Approval:**

Ms. Ball stated that the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have released a model to allow businesses to provide care options for both remote and hybrid learning models during school hours only. This is to help parents navigate the need for assistance and provide a safe learning environment for students while parents are working. The Health Division has received numerous inquiries for businesses that will be applying for the Remote Learning Enrichment Licensure Exemptions but so far two have submitted their plans and I am bringing them before the Board for approval. The process stated in the model requires that organizations first receive approval by the municipal authority and then apply to the EEC for the exemption so that minimum standards for care of our children are being met. I have also included the model for your review. The BOS will be appointing Ms. Ball as the approving authority for the Town as the Health Division has experience in compliance with Recreational Camps for Children and the Remote Learning model



mimics those regulations. These include inspections by various departments, CORI/SORI checks, staff/student ratios and COVID plans and guidelines. We currently have two requests before the Board tonight and the Health Division has reviewed these requests and requests that the Board consider acceptance of the plans so that the Health Division can ensure that all protocols outlined in the model are met prior to submitting to the EEC for approval. The Health Division would also ask that future plans be delegated to the Health Division for approval. The Board discussed this and stated that as long as all COVID safeguards are followed, inspections of establishments followed by a permit from the Health Division and guidelines identified by EEC and DESE the Board agreed to this action. On a motion made by Mr. Conoby, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously moved to delegate approval to the Health Division for all Remote Learning models as outlined by DESE and the EEC with the following conditions:

1. The Health Division shall ensure compliance with all safety protocols.
2. The Health Division must continue to monitor these programs while open.
3. A permit shall be issued by the Health Division for a limited timeframe so if guidelines change or a resurgence of COVID occurs, they can be modified.

The Chair took Roll Call and all were in favor.

#### **Other Update**

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

#### **3. Minutes:**

On a motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Bissetta, the Board voted to accept the minutes dated August 26, 2020. The Chair took roll call the vote and all were in favor.

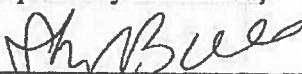
#### **4. Adjournment**

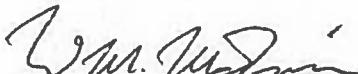
On a motion made by Mr. Kreuze, seconded by Bissetta, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:31 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

#### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting;**

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- Biobot powerpoint presentation and General Biobot information
- Remote Learning Plans from Teamworks and Acton Recreation
- Minutes from August 26, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Sheryl Ball  
Acton Board of Health

  
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William McInnis- Chairman,  
Acton Board of Health