

## BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

**Tuesday February 4, 2020 – 5:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall, 1529 State Road**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Peter Cohen, Chair; Mr. Fred Schubert; Ms. Louise Maron; Mr. Anthony Segal; Mr. Andrew Fisher; Mr. John Olander, Agent; Ms. Phyllis LeBeau, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT:**

**GUEST:** Ms. Claudia Ryan; Ms. Emilie Jarrett, RN, Comm. Health Assn.; Ms. Laura Kittross, Berkshire Alliance;

Mr. Cohen opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes of the January 13, 2020 meeting:** There being no discussion, Mr. Fred Schubert moved that the minutes be accepted as read. Mr. Peter Cohen seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous vote.

**UNANTICIPATED ISSUE:**

**Term of Chair of the Board of Health – Discussion:** Mr. Fisher noted that the argument to have a one-year term was for the sake of continuity. He felt that, given that there are five voting members and the record of the minutes to refer to, the issue of continuity isn't that crucial. He suggested that, instead of a full year term for the Chair, it be reduced to six months. Six months will provide sufficient continuity without overburdening anyone for a full year.

There being no objection or need for discussion, Mr. Fisher moved that the term of the Chair of the Board of Health be six months. Mr. Fred Schubert seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous consent. Mr. Segal will take over as Chair in July. The rotation will then continue with Mr. Fisher, then Mr. Schubert, Ms. Maron and back to Mr. Cohen.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Ms. Laura Kittross – Berkshire Alliance:** Ms. Kittross reported that the Alliance still has not heard from the gentleman who was to have taken over Jayne Smith's position as Agent for the Richmond Board of Health. She said that by tomorrow she should be able to announce the replacement for that position and that he/she will be able to begin work within the month.

Ms. Kittross noted that Ms. Sandra Martin is working on Camp Russell, requesting that the required paperwork be completed and submitted before the opening of Camp in the summer. Mr. Cohen requested that Ms. Martin be in touch with Ms. Emilie Jarrett about all the medical records from the Camp.

Mr. Cohen then revisited the issue of the wading pond that has a water spray faucet in the middle of the pool. Last year, in the face of the State's designation of that faucet as a hazard,

the BOH provided a waiver to the Camp to avoid their having to undertake an extensive and expensive renovation of the pool at short notice. Mr. Cohen expressed his concern over the potential harm to a child and his reluctance to issue another waiver this year. Ms. Kittross will look at the situation and ask Ms. Martin to evaluate the risk and advise the BOH what action they should take.

Discussion of Fees: The various permits the Camp is required to obtain from the Town were discussed, as well as the fee structure, which for Richmond tends to be low although the amount of work for the Town is considerable. That raises the question as to whether the Alliance plans to increase their fee to the Town, which Ms. Kittross assured them was not the case. The question before the Board is whether it wishes to raise the fee structure for the Camps or wait until next year to reassess. It was decided not to raise the fees.

There was a discussion of when a permit should be issued. It was decided that permits should not be issued until after the camp passes inspection. Ms. Kittross brought up the issue of online permitting. Mr. Cohen reported that Mr. Mark Malloy will join this meeting next month to explain the system. The Board is in general agreement with the principle but would like to know how it works.

**HMCC Newsletter – January 2020:** They are the regional entity in the four counties of Western Massachusetts that coordinate the Emergency Preparedness System for Boards of Health, etc. Mr. Cohen noted that the BOH has no part in Emergency Preparedness. Our Fire Chief, Mr. Steve Traver, is the Emergency Manager for the Town and he needs to be given the phone number of the Berkshire Planning Commission. In the case of major emergencies, Pittsfield and the State Police will manage the response effort. The only responsibility the BOH has is to register and keep track of the people who come to the shelter.

Mr. Cohen will ask Ms. Fillio, the Town Administrator, to direct Chief Traver to attend one of the Board of Health meetings in the near future.

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Invoice:** Ms. Kittross said that quotes for next year will be going out soon and she does not anticipate that the Fee for Richmond will increase. Mr. Schubert will draft a budget for the Board of Health for 2021. Mr. Cohen noted that the Board should be sure that enough monies are budgeted so that the Board can do everything it needs to do.

**Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)** Ms. Jarrett suggested to Ms. Kittross that the *Berkshire Eagle* run articles advising the public how to keep safe from the virus and how to identify the symptoms. Ms. Jarrett also suggested to Laura that the article can stress the fact that the flu is a bigger risk right now and people should take preventative measures.

The Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health (MDPH) and The Berkshire County Board of Health have just issued corona virus updated statements and have made available printable fact sheets

for the public. Ms. Jarrett advised the Board that there was a call on Monday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, for all local boards of health with MDPH about the virus in Massachusetts. All practicing clinicians, hospitals, clinics in the state of MA have also been given guidance from MDPH.

In order to create a perspective on this situation, Ms. Jarrett provided the data on some of the worst virus outbreaks in the recent past: Ebola Virus – 40% fatality rate; SARS Epidemic in 2002 – 9.6% fatality rate; MERS Virus – 34.9% fatality rate; Bird Flu of 2013 – 39% fatality rate; as compared to the 2019 Corona Virus, which is currently at 2% and is expected to fall. The fatality rate is falling as the virus is being recognized in people earlier and treatment is begun promptly. There is a very different anticipated outcome for people catching this disease depending on their age and whether adequate medical care is available in their area.

The risk to residents of Massachusetts remains low. The number of cases in the U.S. is low, it is not spreading and there is no current recommendation to cancel group activities in Mass. Of the 11 cases in the U.S., two in Illinois were spouses who got sick from close contact and six were in California.

Mr. Cohen asked how anyone would know if there was someone in Town from China with the virus. Ms. Jarrett advised that travelers from China will, first of all, be arriving at one of the CDC specified airports where there will be enhanced screening. They will identify a person under investigation (PUI). PUI criteria is subject to change and the current definition is as follows: 1. Recent travel from Hubei Province, has fever, lower respiratory symptoms. 2. Has had close contact with a known infected person 3. Has traveled in China and has fever, respiratory symptoms. If they are permitted to continue on, they will be given information about the corona virus symptoms and to seek medical care immediately if any symptoms arise. At this point there has been no official coordination between the current Administration and State Board of Health in regard to following those who are symptom free. If the Board should receive any calls about the corona virus infection, they can forward it to Ms. Jarrett who has instructions about following such people.

If Richmond gets a case, MDPH will take the lead and will instruct Ms. Jarrett in regard to surveillance, investigation, and treatment. If a person is being told to isolate and quarantine at home for 14 days, LBOH (Emilie Jarrett RN) will evaluate and educate the person by phone. MDPH is not requiring home visits. She will also follow close contacts if necessary.

There have been no cases of influenza in Richmond so far this season. Mr. Cohen asked if Ms. Jarrett has seen any information about a concern of illnesses in long-term care facilities. Ms. Kittross noted that she has seen an uptick in G.I. illnesses in long-term care and in the community in general. The numbers are not hugely concerning, but it is worth noting and the Alliance is watching.

**Summer 2020 Local Health Internship Program:** Ms. Kittross said that the interns never want to come out to Berkshire County, so the Alliance has stopped applying.

On the subject of vaping, Ms. Kittross suggested that the Board could ask Ms. Joyce Brewer from Berkshire AHEC to talk on the subject. Since Richmond is not selling vaping products, there was no incentive to be educated about the ban. There was a discussion of the increase of vaping among young people.

**Water Testing Protocols:** The algorithm that was prepared by Mr. Schubert was distributed. Mr. Schubert said he believes he has revised the algorithm along the lines of the comments he received. He plans to readdress his concern that the Highway Department crew have backed off from the closing and opening of the gate to the beach. A discussion ensued that went over the process for opening and closing the gate when the water tests too high for e-coli in two consecutive tests. Mr. Schubert wanted a definite commitment from the proper person that he/she will take on that responsibility. It was decided that Mr. Cohen will talk to Ms. Fillio about charging Mr. Polardy with the process to automatically post the warning sign and close the gate.

Mr. Cohen displayed the two different signs that will be purchased for the beach and, after some minor changes to the wording, with the Board's unanimous approval, will advise Mr. Beckwith to go ahead and order the signs.

**Unanticipated Issues:** Mr. Cohen asked if anyone is interested in attending some of the events offered in an calendar sent from the Berkshire County Board of Health that he shared with the group.

Recycling. Mr. Cohen updated the information that the Board had on the subject. He spoke to the company that collects the trash in Richmond and determined that they bring it to a transfer point in Canaan, NY. He went to the Transfer Station to ask where it goes from there and was advised that it is sent to a recycling plant. The question at the last meeting was whether the Town wants to pay to have the trash brought to a recycling plant in Springfield. It would cost more to do that than what the Town could ever recoup. Since the trash is going to a recycling plant now, there is no real reason to send it to Springfield.

There was a discussion about the possibility of having the Town consider changing the van owned by the Council on Aging to all-electric. The consensus was that this is probably not the right time to introduce a new expense for consideration by the Town.

**Agents Report:** The report distributed was from an earlier year. Mr. Olander will provide the correct version and it will be addressed at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 – 5:00 PM

There being no further business before the Board Mr. Segal moved that the meeting be adjourned. He was seconded by Mr. Fisher and the motion was carried by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM