

BOARD OF HEALTH VIRTUAL MEETING

Tuesday May 5, 2020 – 5:00 PM – via Zoom

PRESENT: Peter Cohen, Chair; Fred Schubert; Louise Maron; Andy Fisher; Emilie Jarrett, RN, Community Health Assn.; John Olander, Agent for the BOH; Tony Segal; Danielle Fillio, Richmond Town Administrator; Phyllis LeBeau, Recording Secretary

Peter Cohen opened the meeting at 5:00 PM with a reading of the Governor's Directive concerning the changes in the Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

OLD BUSINESS:

Signage for Beach and Playground Closings: It was reported that the signs at the beach had been torn down and the gate broken open. Peter Beckwith, Richmond's Highway Superintendent, has restored both the gate and the sign.

Meals Available at Richmond Consolidated School: The free meal pick-up program at the school is continuing.

Short-Term Rentals: A letter, detailing the restrictions to short-term rental businesses was sent out on Board of Health letterhead.

NEW BUSINESS:

Library Opening: Peter was advised that the Mass. Board of Libraries is considering opening branches. Peter noted that he has provided masks and gloves and disinfectant cleaning materials for the use of the people who work there when they touch anything coming into the library from the outside. He advised that the Westchester Brewery is making and selling hand-sanitizer.

School Opening: Emily addressed the issue of the possibility of a congratulatory exercise for the 8th graders graduating this year. Danielle noted that It is a complex undertaking that will require careful planning. She will reach out to Emilie if any such plans develop. In the meantime, there is the greater and more complex issue of the reopening of school in the Fall. No plans can be made until the Town has some clear guidance from the State. On that same subject, it was noted that the State has sent down no directives concerning the opening of summer camps. Danielle will look for information from various sources, including from Laura Kittridge of the Health Alliance.

Emilie provided some update on the status of COVID-19 cases: according to the Department of Public Health weekly notification, Richmond has had 5 cases. Nursing homes have experienced large numbers of cases and the State is in the process of testing employees and residents of nursing homes and other congregate living situations. As of May 5th, Berkshire County overall

has experienced 457 cases resulting in 36 deaths. The good news is that the hospitalization rates are declining. There was a discussion of contact tracing being done by the State (CTC) which has run into some technical issues. Emilie explained that if there is an increase in the number of cases being reported by MAVEN in Richmond, the CTC will take the lead in following those cases if she is too busy to follow all of them. She noted that they are predicting a second wave of cases. In the event of special or sensitive circumstances, for example, a cluster or a positive health-care worker, those will be followed by local nurses.

Heirloom Fire Take-Out: Heirloom fire has approached the Board of Health with a request for guidelines to open a take-out business in their location. All food will be packaged and go out raw. Every effort will be made to assure that each different food meets its appropriate temperature. The members of the Board agreed that there appeared to be no reasonable objection to allowing Heirloom Fire to proceed.

Beach Re-Opening: Richmond will not officially reopen the beach until a directive from the Governor grants permission. There was a discussion of whether the Town should provide for lifeguards, which would require a salary line item in the budget. The consensus was that further discussion should await word from the Governor.

Wearing of Face Masks: Emilie noted that the wearing of face masks is mandatory and the Board of Health, in cooperation with local law-enforcement should be dealing with the issue. Peter noted that there are only a very few places in Richmond that would come under that directive: Balderdash, Hilltop Orchards, and Bartlett's, which he knows are requiring face mask wearing. He will contact those businesses and ask them to be sure that their employees are in compliance and that they post signs in the store asking customers to wear face masks. He noted that the Post Office is already doing that.

The Town Caucus: Danielle was asked to explain how the Town will hold its caucus under the COVID-19 restrictions. She said it will be held at the school's parking lot using public address equipment and distancing. Fred asked where he could find a copy of the list of people to be voted on at that Caucus. Danielle said it will be posted on the website.

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.