

Advisory Council on Public Health | Meeting Minutes

Location: Public Hearing | [Link to recording](#)

Date: January 6, 2022

Time: 5:30 – 6:30 PM

Attendees: Pat Maher, APRN, MA MS, Chair
David Hemenway, PhD
Natalia Linos, MSc, ScD
Peter Moyer, MD, MPH, Affiliate Member
Rosemarie Roque Gordon, MD

Absent: Anthony Schlaff, MD, MPH

A monthly meeting of the Advisory Council of Public Health (ACPH) was held via Zoom on January 6, 2022. It began at 5:34 pm and was presided over by Pat Maher, Chair of the ACPH. This meeting has been convened to discuss the implementation of the policy put forth by Mayor Wu in Boston to require proof of vaccine in certain indoor spaces in Brookline.

Ms. Maher opens the meeting by introducing a guest panelist. Dr. Harold Cox joins the meeting to provide an update on his work as a consultant for the town. He has been engaged by the Select Board and Mel Kleckner to (1) look at issues around Human Services and how effectively they are running in Brookline or if there are different ways to restructure, and (2) different ways to support the Police as they address these issues.

Council members in attendance introduce themselves (see above).

Public Health staff attending the meeting: Darlene Johnson (Administrative Coordinator), Dr. Lesley Archabal (Community Health Specialist), Dr. John Kleschinsky (Public Health Policy Analyst), EJ Bennett (Public Health Nurse), and Pat Maloney (Acting Public Health Commissioner).

Agenda Items

Announcements

Dr. Cox provides an update on the hiring process for a new Public Health Commissioner.

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for December 9, 2021 is made by Dr. Moyer. The motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting on December 9, 2021 is approved.

A motion to approve the minutes for December 22, 2021 is made by Dr. Linos. The motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting on December 22, 2021 is approved.

Director's Report

Two new case investigator/epidemiologists have been hired to assist with contact tracing. One has already started and is training on the statewide infectious disease surveillance system, MAVEN.

Licensing and permitting obligations are complete. Some long time establishments have closed during the pandemic, but new operations are also opening in town. Public Health has been working with our licensing board, the Select Board, and other partnering departments to approve status and address any complaint driven issues.

COVID-19 Update

Brookline Department of Public Health has released the number of cases in town which have tripled in the last several weeks with the spread of Omicron. Mr. Maloney wants to make sure people remain vigilant and continue to follow public health mitigation practices including wearing a mask, getting vaccinated and boosted.

EJ Bennett has been working with third party vendors to schedule COVID-19 clinics for vaccinations. Two clinics are specifically for Brookline Housing Authority residents (by appointment or walk-in). There will also be two clinics for the general population in partnership with PSB at school locations. The Fenway will reopen as a mass vaccination site soon also. The department is also working to provide COVID-19 testing (drive up and walk-in).

The Select Board will meet to discuss ways to assist Public Health with funding to provide more resources to residents. The call center has also been reactivated to assist with the high call volume to Brookline DPH. Daycare centers have been calling to receive more guidance as CDC guidance has recently changed. Nurse Bennett and Dr. Kleschinsky have put together interim guidance for them.

Almost all of the 18,000 test kits have been distributed to residents at or below the federal poverty level (as directed by the state). Due to an increase in cases in Town Hall, Human Resources have borrowed test kits until others arrive (approx. 15 cases on order, arrival based on availability). Brookline DPH is trying to order more test kits to make available to all residents. Small businesses have asked for test kits to assist with safe operation of their establishments.

Dr. Kleschinsky shares case and vaccination rate data which he will post weekly COVID-19 update slide deck to the Public Health website (www.brooklinema.gov/health).

Dr. Linos asks about the possibility of remote work for town employees who can do their jobs remotely while cases continue to uptick. Ann Braga, Director of Human Resources, provides an update on work from home for eligible employees and other steps her department is taking to assist employees with the uptick in cases.

Roland Lankah, Director of Environmental Health, joins the meeting and shares that they have sent our reminders to retailers and food establishments on COVID-19 safety protocols.

ARPA Proposal

Dr. Archabal provides a quick update on the Public Health ARPA proposal submitted. Brookline DPH application was submitted on December 3, 2021 and it is on Level 4 in the proposal process. The proposal asks for funding to address short-term impact, but also the long term impacts of COVID-19 on the department. The initial request totals \$4 million for four years. Some of these funds would support social service resources and personnel. Additional requests include funds for rapid antigen test kits and PCR testing for residents which will be addressed by the Select Board on Tuesday.

Deliberation and vote of a temporary public health order in Brookline for vaccination requirements for certain indoor settings.

The policy will be adopted under the authority of the Board of Health (the Public Health Commissioner in Brookline). It must be posted in the media and by Town Clerk for 24 hours before going into effect as law. The policy will be amended to fit the needs of the Brookline community. Mr. Maloney in collaboration with Economic Development met with the business community to gather information and feedback. The Select Board and ACPH have also held meetings to discuss the possibility of this policy. He has also reviewed other town's adaptations of the policy.

The policy in Brookline will focus on commercial businesses. There are some exceptions for quick visits or take-out orders. Establishments can accept CDC vaccine cards, images of CDC cards and other digital vaccine records as proof of vaccination. The policy will be phased in as outlined in the original policy from Boston. The plan is to educate before enforcement. However, there is the ability to enforce with a \$300 fee assessed to business for non-compliance. Public Safety will assist businesses with removing non-compliant individuals if necessary.

Public Health has asked for ARPA funds to assist businesses with vaccination and testing for their staff. In partnership with Economic Development, Public Health will provide signage to establishments. The rollout will be consistent with Boston unless there is a need to adjust the timeline in Brookline.

Mr. Maloney allows ACPH members to ask questions of him. Discussion includes use of false documentation and staff/employee vaccination requirements.

A motion to vote to endorse Interim Commissioner Pat Maloney and the Brookline Department of Public Health’s proposal for a temporary vaccine requirement in certain indoor spaces including restaurants and bars, indoor fitness facilities, and entertainment venues with the recommendations of Town Counsel is made by Pat Maher. The endorsement passes unanimously with a 4 – 0 vote (Maher, Hemenway, Linos, and Roque Gordon in favor).

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Pat Maher. Meeting is adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
COVID-19 Booster Clinic Dates	EJ Bennett	January 2022	Completed
Rat Task Force update on steps being taken to reduce rodent activity	Dr. Roland Lankah	January 2022	Pending
WA-9 Study Committee Timeline	ACPH & BDPH	January 2022	Pending
Vote on policy mandating proof of vaccination for certain indoor spaces	ACPH	January 6, 2022	Completed