

Advisory Council on Public Health | Meeting Minutes

Location:	Zoom Meeting Link to recording ACPH – April 12 Meeting Related Files
Date:	Wednesday, April 12, 2023
Time:	5:30 – 7:00 PM
Attendees:	Natalia Linos, MSc, ScD, Chair Charles Homer, MD, Vice Chair Leonard Jokubaitis, MD, MPH Peter Moyer, MD, MPH, Affiliate Member Rosemarie Roque Gordon, MD, MPH James Perrin, MD
Absent:	Andy Epstein, RN, MPH
Attending staff:	Sigalle Reiss, MPH, RS/REHS, Director of Public Health & Human Services John Kleschinsky, DrPH, Assistant Director, Programming & Policy Elizabeth Bennett, MSN, RN, CARN, Public Health Nurse Darlene Johnson, MS, Administrative Coordinator

The mission of the Advisory Council on Public Health (ACPH) is to preserve, protect & promote the physical, mental, and environmental health of the Brookline Community. We collaborate with partners to reduce health inequities and respond to emerging public health challenges.

A meeting of the Advisory Council of Public Health (ACPH) was held via zoom on April 12, 2023. It began at 5:34 pm and was presided over by Dr. Charles Homer, Vice Chair of the ACPH.

Agenda Items

Announcements

No announcements.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of minutes

Dr. Homer requests striking a statement made about work he and Dr. Perrin are doing with the schools from the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes for February 15, 2023 with this correction is made by Dr. Perrin, seconded by Dr. Jokubaitis. The motion

to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting passes with 3 in favor and 1 abstention.

A motion to approve the minutes for March 22, 2023 is made by Dr. Perrin, seconded by Dr. Jokubaitis. The motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting passes unanimously, with all members in favor.

May meeting date

Commissioner Reiss asks members if they are willing to move the May meeting date from the 17th to the 10th. All members agree to move the meeting date up a week.

Review of Warrant Article Memos

Article 13: Office of Housing Stability

Dr. Kleschinsky shares the way he has structured the memos - giving a brief introduction to the topic, the connection to public health, ACPH's discussion, petitioners' discussion, the committee vote, and a conclusion. He provides a brief overview of the memo drafted for WA-13. In this memo, he focuses on the resounding connections to the social determinants of health, housing hearth, and the benefits of an Office of Housing. It also includes ACPH and the Department's perspectives on the issue and some of the public comment.

Commissioner Reiss stresses that she would like to review these documents to make sure that the committee provides input and everything is captured correctly.

Dr. Homer suggests changing the format, moving the vote to the end of the document to follow the format of other town government memos.

Dr. Perrin asks Commissioner Reiss about the desire to have a human services mapping assessment. Commissioner Reiss states that she has been talking with The Brookline Center for Community Mental Health and Brookline Community Foundation (BCF) to create a scope of services and they are close to a final draft. The goal is to have an encompassing mapping and assessment of existing available resources, determine possible collaborations and roles, concluding with recommendations for how the town should handle human services. Housing is one of the many things that will be examined.

Dr. Homer summarizes that ACPH are happy with the flexibility that this resolution provides. They firmly support what the resolution tries to accomplish and pleased that it does not dictate the precise manner that it needs to take place. He suggests adding the Commissioner's desire to conduct the mapping and assessment into this part of the narrative. Dr. Jokubaitis asks if they should also include the community health assessment to further refine the needs and demands to address housing insecurity. Both Dr. Homer and Commissioner Reiss agree with Dr. Jokubaitis.

Dr. Homer states that in the future the Council does not have to vote up and down, but can provide recommendations with their approvals, substitute motions. It is something

the Council could consider in the next round of warrant articles, giving more flexibility in how they consider them.

b. Article 18: Refuse Fines

On Monday night, Commissioners Reiss and Gallentine (Department of Public Works) attended the Capital Subcommittee of the Advisory Council to discuss this warrant article. The committee had several questions about the policies, regulations, and bylaws that would be affected by the changes in fines. The Commissioners will write an informative memo to the subcommittee to help them understand the interchange of which regulations connect to these fines. Commissioner Reiss prefers to keep it separate from this because it explains operations and department regulations, the food code, and the bylaw that allows using those fines. Commissioner Gallentine will also add more about how they work with residents since the warrant article proposes changes for single- and multi-family homes.

During review of the ACPH memo, Dr. Perrin and Dr. Jokubaitis raise questions about comments on repeat violations. It was determined that the word “totter” refers to a refuse container. Dr. Perrin also has questions about what a violation is and the continuation of a violation, and how they’re dealt with on a day-to-day basis. Commissioner Reiss answers that some of the language in the bylaw is under review by Town Counsel and could be revised because it contradicts some of the language added by petitioners.

Dr. Perrin asks if there is a typical period by which a violator must resolve a violation. Commissioner Reiss says that Public Health uses fines less often than DPW, as past data shows. The Department’s ultimate goal is compliance and with food establishments in particular, the permit can be used as leverage to motivate them to work towards compliance. This regulatory relationship is different than dealing with a resident. Both departments have similar mindsets that you start with education and awareness, using all of the tools you have to motivate them towards compliance. Fines is just one tool and not usually the first used to address a violation.

Dr. Homer states that as a town meeting member he would want all of this information, as well as the memo from the Commissioners of Public Health and DPW, and Town Counsel’s explanation in front of him before voting on this warrant article. He asks if some reference to Town Counsel’s memo can be added to this memo before the final document is presented. Commissioner Reiss says she will follow up with Town Counsel to find out if they can provide an answer before then. Dr. Roque Gordon adds a grammatic correction.

This memo will be left in draft form until the chair and vice-chair meet with Commissioner Reiss after hearing from Town Counsel.

c. Article 20: New By-law on Reproductive & Gender Health and Equity

Dr. Kleschinky prefaces the conversation by stating that this memo was written before any of the more recent court decisions came down and that it can be added. The memo captures broader legal decisions and challenges facing reproductive access.

Dr. Perrin was not present for part of the hearing discussion and it was unclear to him in the minutes if there is anything actionable in this warrant article. Dr. Homer provides details about the warrant article prohibiting any staff person from impeding access to abortion services. Commissioner Reiss adds an example shared by the petitioner of a constable not being allowed to serve a legal action against abortion. Dr. Perrin suggests adding more detail about what the warrant article does in the memo.

Dr. Jokubaitis adds that the dates on the memos should be postdated for after this meeting.

Director's Report

Commissioner Reiss thanks everyone on the Council who made it to the Public Health Open House. There were over 100 people in attendance and staff collected 80 passport cards (some families submitted one) for the raffle drawing and the ice cream truck was a big draw. A staff debrief following the event revealed some of the challenges, but also reflected on the successes and gained insight that will help make future open houses even better. Nurse Bennett adds that 40 people signed up for the Stop the Bleed and Naloxone trainings. She also adds that it was nice to have positive outreach with the community.

The Friends of Brookline Public Health (FBPH) are working to rebuild their structure, developing new by-laws and reengaging members. They co-sponsored last night's PFAS event and are donating money to Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) for a community event. They are also hosting a Walk for Hunger Team and the proceeds will go to Brookline Food Pantry. Dr. Homer, Dr. Linos, and Commissioner Reiss discussed scheduling a joint meeting with the Friends to discuss some of the similarities and differences between the groups. He adds that this will help them understand different roles and responsibilities, clarifying what the groups can work on jointly. ACPH is an appointed governing body and FBPH are a voluntary association. Dr. Roque Gordon shares that she has recently become involved as a member. Commissioner Reiss will reach out to discuss a joint meeting with the Friends Steering Committee in May or June.

On another note, related to housing, Dr. Homer shares that the Greater Boston Interfaith organization will be hosting a significant rally at United Parish Church in support of our housing authority. The rally is in favor of seeking to increase the State's allocation of funding in support of the operating budget for public housing in the state. Local tenants will share more about housing conditions and Michael Alpern, Director of BHA, will be in attendance. The event starts at 6 pm. They worked with a Globe reporter and have an article in state house news today.

Commissioner Reiss is working on getting an RFP for a consultant to provide the mapping assessment. This contract will be grant funded. The state has granted an additional year of COVID tracing money and expanded the scope to support local public health operations.

In a rodent response update, the food sanitation consultants began inspections in March and they are moving into hotspots in April and May. They are working to gather baseline data using a system that tracks every question they ask and provides a percent compliance rate. Commissioner Reiss is working with the regional epidemiologist to decide the best way to display data, in addition to the Modern Pest Control maps data on the department website. She would like to start sharing the food consultant's data, but right now it is baseline. Once they start to revisit facilities, she wants to start showing trend data. The Department has created door hangers to provide awareness and education to the community. A smaller group of the Rodent Task Force met to learn more about Contrband, a rodent contraceptive.

Environmental and Emergency Preparedness staff will be attending the Marathon providing inspectional services for food and large event support.

Full reports are available in the [meeting folder](#).

Division Reports

Nursing and Epidemiology

Nurse Bennett provides a brief summary of happenings in her division. The pediatric clinic activity has slowed down and will probably pick up around late summer and fall, August and September. There is an uptick in foodborne illnesses, most relating to travel. Test kit distribution continues with the libraries. Supplies are low, but she will receive 10,000 more kits from NACCHO. The State is reviewing the application for Naloxone distribution and she should hear back in 3 – 4 weeks. She will be coordinating Naloxone training dates with Sara Schaffer in Emergency Preparedness upon approval of the application.

Nurse Bennett is also working with the regional epidemiologist, Deidra Clermont, on a program to provide home visits to new babies and their caregivers, similar to Gloucester. It is a one-time public health nurse home visit to provide support and resources. They are in the initial stages and open to suggestions.

Dr. Homer states that there is an enormous amount of literature available on home visits and it is worth looking into to help determine what they are trying to accomplish and develop program structure. Nurse Bennett added that she and Ms. Clermont are working on assessing the needs for a program like this in Brookline. In Gloucester, they offer services, including weighing infants and vaccines for parents.

Dr. Perrin mentions a program developed by Ken Dodge of Duke University called Family Connects that might provide some helpful studies. He will do some research to share with Nurse Bennett. Dr. Roque Gordon adds that having a baby is an event that can

make people more open to receiving help. She feels there is value in offering support and resources in home to help stabilize the family and that you have more insight into their real life that you do not necessarily get during an office visit.

Dr. Jokubaitis talks about early intervention for potential postpartum depression and developing an urgent referral pathway for people potentially at risk. Dr. Roque Gordon shares some mental health resources that could be shared as referrals and agrees that even in a community with relatively high income like Brookline that there is still a need for mental health services. Nurse Bennett has received calls from residents seeking various social services in the past few months. Commissioner Reiss adds the need to determine those referral resources available in the community.

Environmental Health

Commissioner Reiss provides a brief summary of the division's activities. In the next month, staff will attend de-escalation training. It is particularly important for inspectional staff who work in the field, going into people's homes and businesses, and have to sometimes share difficult news. It is also challenging for front office staff who interface with the public and sometimes have challenging interactions. She also shares more information about first amendment audits. People go into public buildings with their camera phones on, taping public employees, trying to escalate situations, getting employees to call the police, leading employees to tell them they have to leave a public space. This is a violation of their first amendment and they post it onto social media. This training will help staff respond in these types of situations. Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) has more information available.

Full reports available in the [meeting folder](#).

Public Health Policy (verbal report provided by Dr. Kleschinsky)

Dr. Kleschinsky provides a brief update on policy work he is engaging in on three town committees:

The Moderator's Committee on Artificial Turf, which Dr. Moyer is a member and Dr. Kleschinsky an ad hoc, is close to a final draft of their interim report. They are waiting to hear when a public hearing is going to be held. It has not been announced. Dr. Moyer adds that they have had 13 meetings and have not come to a consensus.

The Moderator's Committee on Marijuana Policy met last week and he provided an overview of a parent's survey on substance use that BDPH is working to develop. They are scheduled to meet again on April 18th.

The final is the Moderator's Committee on PFAS, chaired by Alisa Jonas, has been very productive in recent weeks. There are five members and they have been meeting consistently over winter and spring.

They have been meeting with some department heads. They recently spoke to the Fire Chief about PFAS light foams that were being used by the Fire Department, but they

have since purchased a PFAS free alternative. They have not disposed of the old foam and it is very difficult to do. Dr. Moyer brings up the fire equipment.

The committee also met with Purchasing to find out what the town is doing to reduce PFAS. The department is buying cleaning supplies with the green seal, PFAS free.

The School Department's Food Services are also using products that are PFAS free. They do not use any non-stick products or coated wrapping.

Other business

The Council also discusses attending the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) when ACPH member, Andy Epstein, will be honored. The group decided that some members will share the table with department staff. They will also contribute a portion of the cost to purchase an ad from the Council to congratulate Andy.

Adjournment

Dr. Perrin motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Jokubaitis. The meeting adjourns at 6:39 pm.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
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