

Advisory Council on Public Health | Meeting Minutes

Location:	Zoom Meeting Link to recording
	ACPH – May 10 Meeting Related Files
Date:	Wednesday, May 10, 2023
Time:	5:30 – 7:00 PM
Attendees:	Natalia Linos, MSc, ScD, Chair Charles Homer, MD, Vice Chair Andy Epstein, RN, MPH Leonard Jokubaitis, MD, MPH Peter Moyer, MD, MPH, Affiliate Member Rosemarie Roque Gordon, MD, MPH James Perrin, MD
Absent:	
Attending staff:	Sigalle Reiss, MPH, RS/REHS, Director of Public Health & Human Services John Kleschinsky, DrPH, Assistant Director, Programming & Policy Roland Lankah, PhD, MPH, Assistant Director, Chief Sanitarian 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 hybrid meeting of the Advisory Council of Public Health (ACPH) was held on May 10, 2023. It began at 5:35 pm and was presided over by Dr. Natalia Linos, Chair of the ACPH.

Agenda Items

Announcements

During the recent elections, Dr. Linos won a seat on the School Committee and will be stepping down as the Chair of ACPH. She will continue to serve as a member on the Council. A discussion about the chair will take place later in the meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for April 12, 2023 with a revision to Dr. Linos' attendance status 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.

Friends of Brookline Public Health (FBPH)

Pat Maher, Trustee and Steering Committee Member of Friends of Brookline Public Health, presents history of the organization and their recent activities with Advisory Council members.

In 1997, the Friends began under the leadership of Dr. Alan Balsam. He wanted to create an organization that would give him access to a community of public health professionals to consult with and provide more understanding of public health to the community.

When the Friends was started, it was a 403(c) and there were 150 members and 5 corporate members. The group hosted two annual events - the policy forum with former governor, Michael Dukakis, a ceremony for community awards to recognize local public health professionals with national recognition and small grants to non-profit organizations.

During the pandemic, the group went inactive. Over the past year and a half, a dedicated group of volunteers have been working to get things back on track. This steering committee has transferred donations held by the Town to Brookline Community Foundation (BCF) to create a tax-deductible, donor-funded account, created a website, revised the bylaws, and reconvened trustees, and co-sponsored 3 public health education events. The Friends raised nearly \$7,000 for Brookline Thrives and awarded Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) a \$500 grant to fund their community day. Volunteers from the Friends also assisted the Department with the food coupon registration.

Some of the goals this year include prioritizing and rebuilding the membership base, developing educational programs, donating small grants, and focusing on broad public health issues.

Dr. Roque Gordon and Dr. Moyer are trustees of the Friends.

Dr. Perrin asks about the informational sessions the group hosted. They hosted a program on winter preparation for respiratory illnesses (flu, COVID-19, and RSV) and PFAS during National Public Health Week.

Dr. Homer asks about the differences and similarities in goals of the Friends and ACPH and how they can support each other. Ms. Epstein states that the Friends operate outside of the government which allows them more leeway to push progressive issues. Ms. Maher adds that she sees it as a way toward community building, recognizing people in the community, and getting younger people involved. She would like ACPH to

provide emerging public health issues to Friends for educational programs and work on bigger initiatives to draw in members.

Dr. Linos shares discussion the group had about the role of ACPH, possibly advising Commissioner Reiss on day-to-day issues and advising the Town on issues outside the purview of the Department. She discusses ways that ACPH and Friends can partner in overlapping priorities in public health, with the Council working on policy and the Friends providing informational programs on these topics.

Dr. Jokubaitis suggests having a non-voting member, someone serving as a representative from the Friends who joins ACPH meetings. Dr. Roque Gordon is willing to be a conduit for the time being, sharing information between groups, while they work on formalizing this possible role.

Chair Transition

Dr. Linos is stepping down as the chair of ACPH. She nominates Dr. Homer, the current vice-chair to assume the role. All members are in favor of Dr. Homer becoming the new chair of ACPH.

Dr. Linos also nominates Dr. Roque Gordon to become the next vice-chair. There is consensus among the members. Dr. Perrin moves to appoint Dr. Roque Gordon to vice chair, Dr. Jokubaitis seconds. The vote passes unanimously.

Town Meeting Warrant Article Memos

The final versions of the warrant article memos will be sent to ACPH members tomorrow. Dr. Linos asks Dr. Homer to speak as chair of the ACPH on the council's support for WA-13, -18, and -20.

Director's Report

The mapping study on Human Services is pushed out to July while the department works with procurement on an RFP.

Dr. Homer asks about the scope of services: What is the role of the Town? What are the needs of the community? Will there be recommendations for the Town and a budget attached? He would like the study to include concrete recommendations for Health and Human Services and efficiencies for other services in the town.

The Community Health Assessment – Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP) kickoff is on Monday, May 15th. Commissioner Reiss will share slides with the Council.

The override passed. The override benefits Brookline Department of Public Health (BDPH) by:

- Providing 1 new inspectional staff member for Environmental Health
- Continuing pest control contracts, supplying Contrapest
- Sustaining ARPA-funded food coupon program within the budget

- Developing and implementing the community champions program

Division Reports

Community Health

After more than 20 years, Lynne Karsten is retiring.

Earlier this month, the Friends participated in the Walk for Hunger. The program was a success, raising more than \$5,000 in donations.

The Food Coupon Program is underway for the season. Staff and volunteers are registering residents at several BHA sites throughout the month.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Sara Schaffer, and MRC volunteers were on site for the Marathon. Environmental staff also attended to conduct food inspections.

Nursing and Epidemiology

Nurse Bennett mentions an uptick in appointments at the pediatric clinic recently and expects that there will be more in late summer heading into the new school year.

The Department is approved to receive naloxone and ordering supplies for Stop the Bleed training.

The State of Emergency is lifting tomorrow, May 11th. Nurse Bennett discusses developing a policy to respond to an uptick in respiratory illnesses. The Department has test kits on hand and will distribute 8 – 10 boxes to the schools. Test kits expire in September.

The CDC suggests a second bivalent booster for people who are 65+. Seventeen residents were vaccinated at the COVID-19 clinic last night. There will be another clinic at the Senior Center on June 5th and another in the weeks following.

The monovalent booster is no longer approved. Children who are 6+ years should receive the bivalent booster to remain current with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Naloxone will be distributed to residents. They will receive a brief training with the public health nurse at the time of distribution. The dose expires after 18 months.

Environmental Health

Commissioner Reiss thanks Dr. Lankah for organizing de-escalation training with the Police Department. The training promotes public safety and the safety of staff, especially those working in the field. Staff were learning how to de-escalate and manage personal emotions in challenging situations.

The division will add a new sanitarian to their staff (as a result of the override).

There has been a delay in promulgation of the updated sanitary code, but the division will review all reports to reflect the changes as it becomes effective.

Dr. Lankah attended a small business development meeting to connect with the business community to discuss environmental health initiatives. The division is working on a long-term project to make all applications available online, streamlining the process.

Environmental staff attended Massachusetts Environmental Health Association's (MEHA) training. Some of the topics covered included environmental justice and food safety. This training is essential for keeping staff up to date on field practices.

The division is working towards adopting the FDA retail standards. Grant funding is available. An inspector and intern are working on the process over the summer, which is in the initial stage. The first phase requires conducting a self-assessment. This will help streamline food enforcement.

The division is adopting the new housing code. Some of the changes in the new code include:

- Added and strengthened pest control
- Flexibility on heating and cooling season requirements
- Owner liable temporary housing costs due to condemnation
- Added language to increase accessibility

June meeting dinner: June 21

The group discusses having an end of the year dinner before or following the next ACPH meeting. They discuss bring food on-site to the meeting. Plans will be finalized before the next meeting with the chair and vice-chair.

Other business

Adjournment

The meeting adjourns at 7:02 pm.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
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