

# Advisory Council on Public Health | Meeting Minutes

**Location:** Emergency Zoom Meeting | [Link to recording](#)

**Date:** September 23, 2021

**Time:** 5:00 – 6:30 PM

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

## Agenda Items

### Welcome & Introductions

Pat Maher, Council Chair initiates introductions. Present ACPH members introduce themselves (members in attendance listed above) and Brookline Department of Public Health (BDPH) staff: Lesley Archabal, Community Health Specialist; EJ Bennett, Public Health Nurse; Lynne Karsten, Director of Community Health; Dr. John Kleschinsky, Public Health Policy Analyst; Dai Nguyen, Public Health Sanitarian; Dr. Roland Lankah, Assistant Director; and Mel Kleckner, Town Administrator.

### Transition at Health Department/Search for new Commissioner (Mel Kleckner)

Mel Kleckner shares that he has met with the staff of the Health Department. He continues by sharing his gratitude for Dr. Swannie Jett's service to the Town of Brookline and the country through his military service. He also reads a letter from Dr. Jett thanking the Town for the opportunity to serve as their Commissioner, especially during the pandemic. He goes on to thank Health Department staff, Town Administration, and the ACPH for their work. Dr. Jett ends his letter by mentioning the changes that will be coming to BDPH.

Patrick Maloney, former Assistant Director, will serve as Interim Commissioner of Public Health. He is familiar with the town and credible, has continued to work for the town as a consultant. Mr. Kleckner expresses his appreciation for Mr. Maloney's willingness to step into the role.

He speaks about the process for hiring a new Public Health Commissioner. He will have a screening panel that can provide him feedback; however, Mr. Kleckner makes the final decision. He takes this process very seriously. The Town has hired a consultant to assist with the hiring process, especially with the amount of time they have to seek a replacement. The consultant will engage with ACPH members and staff to learn more about qualities they expect in the next leader.

Mr. Kleckner shares that he will conclude his tenure in September 2022. He has discussed some of his long and short term goals with Mr. Maloney and staff. These goals include:

- **To provide stability and leadership presence**
- **To develop and mentor staff**
- **To engage the Advisory Council for Public Health more**
- **To take advantage of funding opportunities that American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) provide and other funding sources**

ACPH members were offered a moment to ask questions to Mr. Kleckner. Dr. Schlaff stresses the importance of the nursing in public health. Dr. Linos asks if the department could be opened in the future for community conversations around public health related issues. Pat Maher mentions the ARPA proposal includes ways to use the public health building for those types of meetings.

## **COVID-19 Update**

EJ Bennett provides an update that the COVID-19 cases are trending upwards in the last few weeks:

**Total cases:** 2,740 confirmed, 280 probable cases

**Past week:** 61 new cases in the last week, 2 deaths (fully vaccinated individuals)

Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC) resources have been reduced over the summer and BPHD was taking all of the contact tracing cases. They have started to take cases again until November or December when they will begin to disband. The Health Department is getting a team of Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers together for contact tracing once the CTC is no longer available.

Over the summer, BDPH vaccinated 50 homebound residents with Moderna. Currently, BDPH has ~200 doses of Moderna (two different lots) set to expire soon. FDA has approved Pfizer COVID-19 boosters for people 65+ years and high-risk patients. We do

not have Pfizer vaccine, but have ability to store the vaccine (ultra-cold freezer). Moderna has not been approved for booster. Ms. Bennett is attempting to transfer unused vaccine to other locations. If she cannot transfer the vaccine, she plans to host weekly clinics from the Health Department to people needing a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

The flu clinic is planned for Sunday, October 24, 2021. Dr. Jett proposed one clinic initially, but BDPH is prepared to have a second clinic scheduled on Sunday, November 14, 2021. The clinic will be held at the Brookline High School Gym from 9 am – 3 pm, staffed with MRC volunteers. Ms. Bennett has 20 doses of high dose (for 65+) and these will be administered to elderly homebound. There are 440 privately purchased doses and 440 of state provided doses, 90 flu mist doses. The clinic is open to adults and children. People can schedule appointments online and by phone. Senior Center is contracting with Walgreens for a senior flu clinic this year.

The pediatric clinic reopened in August and 22 vaccines have been administered since then.

## **Public Health Announcements**

*Report by Lynne Karsten:* Kresge Foundation granted BDPH \$43,000. Of the funds granted, \$30,000 will go towards food coupons for low-income families to spend at the Brookline Farmers' Market. Individuals or families of two received \$40 and families of 3+ receive \$80 in coupons. Vendors collect coupons, return them to BDPH, and are paid. The program has been very successful. People are gracious and have sent emails sharing positive feedback. Lynne gives a shout out and thanks to her committee: Pat Maher, Darlene Johnson, Kitty Kaufman, and Wendy Machmuller.

### **Program data:**

- 265 total residents registered
- 194 coupon books to households of 1 – 2 people
- 142 coupon books to households of 3 or more

## **ARPA Proposal for Public Health (Lesley Archabal & John Kleschinsky)**

Brookline has received half of the \$32 million dollars and there is an additional amount coming to the county. Dr. Lesley Archabal with assistance of Dr. John Kleschinsky has drafted a proposal for BDPH. The proposal initially began with the immediate need of BDPH to receive assistance with contact tracing. The funds are open to town departments and local businesses and organizations.

BPDH is taking the following approach to request these funds:

- **Initial proposal:** Increase organizational capacity to respond to immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic: increasing staff and infrastructure
- **Subsequent proposals:** Programmatic aspects to meet objectives and goals, continue current programs and increase programs offered to the community

ACPH provides feedback on the ARPA proposal:

*Dr. Schlaff mentions the importance of collecting data, hiring an epidemiologist. The current epidemiologist position is HCA funded, but has been challenging to fill. He also suggests thinking about what lasts longer, including technology infrastructure.*

*Pat Maher compares the staff size of BDPH to Newton and Cambridge. She compliments the staff for the great work they provided throughout the pandemic despite being understaffed.*

*Dr. Linos supports the need for additional staff in BDPH and building the infrastructure.*

*Dr. Roque Gordon mentions the proposal goals for building partnerships and endorses the initial proposal.*

Additional feedback from BDPH staff:

*Dr. Kleshchinsky proposes transitioning the positions from ARPA funds over to the town budget gradually, working with Town Administration and Town Meeting.*

*Dr. Lankah adds the benefit of having a grant department looking for additional funds to sustain positions and programs.*

Dr. Archabal mentions that many of our departments are run by one person, some working part-time. She requests ACPH's support for this proposal in the community, speaking out to support the need for public health.

**Dr. Schlaff moves to support and urge full support of the proposal, Pat Maher seconds, and all members in favor.**

### **Recognition and Appreciation of Dr. Jett**

ACPH Members and staff, Pat Maher, Lynne Karsten, Dai Nguyen, Dr. Tony Schlaff, Dr.

Peter Moyer offer thanks to Dr. Jett for his service to the Town of Brookline and wish him well in his future endeavors.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Time constraints prevent approval of minutes and it is postponed to the next meeting.

### **Adjournment**

### **Action Items**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status</b>
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