



**TOWN OF SHREWSBURY**  
Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building  
100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545

DATE: February 28, 2020  
TO: Board of Health  
FROM: Kerry Stockwell, Administrative Assistant  
SUBJECT: Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
ATTENDANCE: Stephen Vigeant, Jennie Fishman, and Dr. George Abraham

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Phil Leger and Ivan Kwagala – Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA)  
Maurice DePalo – Board of Selectmen  
Bryan Moss – 16 Ruthen Circle, Shrewsbury  
Naomi Halpern – 131 Stoney Hill Road, Shrewsbury  
Mary Ellen Merendino – 15 Berkshire Road, Shrewsbury  
Kerry Nissen, RN – 108 Harriet Avenue, Shrewsbury

**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by Stephen Vigeant.
- 2. Review and approval of Minutes from the January 24, 2020 Board of Health meeting.** Dr. Abraham made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes from the January 24, 2020 Board of Health meeting. Seconded by Jennie Fishman. Unanimously approved 3-0.
- 3. Review and discuss a request for the Town of Shrewsbury to notify pregnant women about the latest study on fluoride's link to reduced IQ in children – requested by Bryan Moss, 16 Ruthen Circle, Shrewsbury, MA 01545**  
Bryan Moss came before the Board. The Chairman allotted ten (10) minutes to speak.

Mr. Moss had requested that the Shrewsbury Board of Health request the following from the Worcester Department of Public Health: a) ask the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Worcester Medical Director to provide scientific evidence that proves that fluoride is safe for pregnant women and their fetus; b) ask the MDPH and Worcester Medical Director “randomized and placebo-controlled” clinical trials proving that swallowing fluoride is safe for pregnant women and their fetus; c) ask MDPH and the Worcester Medical Director to provide “randomized and placebo-controlled” clinical trials that prove swallowing fluoride is safe for any population. Mr. Moss referred to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website which describes how placebos in clinical trials were used as the standard in science for determining whether or not a treatment was safe and effective

A letter was referenced identifying studies that had an effect on the brain. Some studies found lower IQ scores in children and some studies have shown hyperthyroidism. He filed a Citizens Petition in the past due to the implementation of a new water treatment plant and that was the main reason he wanted to bring this topic forward. He believes that informed consent is fundamental right and an ethical one. By placing fluoride in the water, it bypasses that right. Mr. Moss would like the Board of Health to inform pregnant women of the studies. There are now two (2) United States (U.S.)-funded studies about exposure to fluoride during pregnancy and linking it to a lower IQ. Currently, there is no control over who consumes it and no controlled dosage. A fetus would receive more exposure than anyone.

Mr. Moss would like the Board of Health to show the safety standard proving that fluoride is 100% safe for everyone. There is a lot of good science out there but would like to see it. Through all of his efforts over the last five (5) years with raising his concern, there is zero proof. He feels that the City of Worcester should easily be able to obtain the information and show safety studies. When there is a new drug, you must test it against a placebo. If you don't test, you leave things to chance. He would like to view the safety studies and then he will go away. If it's safe

for a two hundred (200) pound man, he would like to see pregnant people included in that as well.

The Board of Selectmen are completely absolving themselves of this topic and placing it solely onto the Board of Health. If you look at the law, it says that all the Board of Health can do is order fluoride into the water. Fluoride has been in place since 1953. He feels that the Water & Sewer department has a responsibility because they weighed in. they will send a letter say that it's on you 100%. He wants the BOH to reply in some way.

Dr. Abraham clarified that the Canadian study was not 100% funded by the U.S. government. It was one source but not all. He felt that at this time, there is not a scientific body of evidence to prove that fluoride is not safe.

Stephen Vigeant, mentioned that a couple of meetings ago, the Board of Health was not recommending and not moving forward with Mr. Moss's request. The Board of Health relies heavily on individuals that have spent their life in the public health arena and feels they shouldn't have to justify their position. Public Health provides their information based on their expertise and doesn't feel the Board should ask them to prove their case to us.

Jennie Fishman challenged that. She thinks it's fair to ask for that type of evidence because things change all the time.

Dr. Abraham, said that the Medical Commissioner of Public Health was contacted. At this point in time, he is not aware of any evidence to support that there is reduced IQ in children.

Question: Are we saying there isn't a study saying whether it's safe or not?

Answer: It's important to continue to raise the issue but unless there is a specific body of evidence to support this, there is no need to change the current practice.

Question: Are there are two (2) questions (i.e. removing the fluoride out of the water and notifying pregnant women about the concern)?

Answer: Yes.

Questions: Is there a body of evidence to prove that it is safe? Did anyone respond from the City of Worcester's Division of Public Health?

Answer: Stephen Vigeant doesn't feel it's proper to notify anyone without discussing it first. That is the purpose of the meeting.

Question: What is feeling of the Board?

Answer: Dr. Abraham said he can't speak to the ability or capacity of the Public Health Department. It was suggested that Mr. Moss reach out to the MDPH. Jennie Fishman is in favor of asking for the information. Dr. Abraham is opposed. Stephen Vigeant is opposed.

The Board has a difference of opinion. Stephen Vigeant asked if someone could make a motion to ask the City of Worcester's Division of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to provide the scientific studies Mr. Moss is requesting that demonstrate fluoride is safe for everyone to drink. Jennie Fishman made a motion to ask the City of Worcester's Division of Public Health and the MDPH to provide the scientific studies Mr. Moss is requesting that demonstrate fluoride is safe for everyone to drink. Seconded by Stephen Vigeant. All in favor – Jennie Fishman, Yes. All opposed – Stephen Vigeant and Dr. Abraham, No. Not approved 2 - 1.

#### **4. Review and Act on the Report from the CMRHA.**

Phil Leger provided some updates:

*Coronoavirus* – This is a fast-moving topic around the world and is the main focus and priority of the Health Department. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has been encouraging the public to reference their websites and downloadable Fact Sheets. Public Health depends heavily on these entities for information and recommendations. The Alliance towns will be pulled together for a presentation. Sanitizing practices should continue. When a person coughs, it leaves a cloud. A person is more likely to acquire a virus due to close proximity (i.e. highly dense population, closed spaces, and places not properly ventilated. Most of deaths that have occurred were among the elderly and immune-compromised populations. Little to no fatality in children. The virus can live for a time on surfaces. Washing your hands is very important and using alcohol-based wipes is also effective. Stressing that the public reference the CDC's website for any updated travel advisories.

*Quarterly Alliance meeting* – The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2020.

*Local and Regional Public Health Advisory Committee* – Karyn Clark and Phil Leger were appointed by MDPH Commissioner Monica Bharel and will further serve on sub-committees for three (3) and two (2) year terms, respectively. The first meeting took place on January 30, 2020.

*Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)* – The City of Worcester’s Department of Public Health team will be attending a seminar the week of March 2, 2020.

*Community Sanitation* – There will be a seminar that the public health team will be attending in April 2020 focusing on upcoming code changes.

*Semi-public Swimming Pools* - Still waiting for code changes. Kerry Stockwell will be sending out annual renewals the week of March 2, 2020. She has been instrumental in gathering all the pertinent information and scheduling inspections. The Health Department does their best to have all pools open for the Memorial Day holiday.

*Certified Pool Operator (CPO)* – Ivan Kwagala just renewed his CPO certification.

*REHS / Registered Sanitarian (RS)* – Ivan Kwagala recently passed his RS exam. Congratulations!

*Public Health Nursing* – Have been receiving inquiries around the Coronavirus and Influenza (FLU). There is still time to get a flu shot. The recommendation is to cough in your elbow, wash your hands, and sanitize surfaces with wipes containing alcohol. One of the Public Health Nurses has been holding CPR sessions at several of the Council on Aging (COA) in the Alliance towns.

*Emergency Preparedness (EP)* – As with previous years, all communities have been tasked by MDPH to complete a facility set-up drill for their Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS).

*Environmental Health Inspectional Data* – Ivan Kwagala provided the Board with an update of what type and how many inspections have taken place since the last Board of Health meeting that was held on January 24, 2020. A few reinspections were conducted as a follow-up to routine inspections. Working with a few food establishments to educate and gain compliance. Overall, everything is going very well.

*Massachusetts Public Housing Training* – Both Ivan Kwagala and Danielle Edmands, Regional Environmental Health Specialists need to conduct five (5) housing inspections alongside a mentor. They are both getting close to that number. Currently, the Health Agents will prepare report and Phil Leger reviews the content. They will both be up to par within the next couple of months.

Question: Are there discussions taking place about mosquito control?

Answer: Yes. We experienced a mild fall and winter season. According to the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP), all indications point to a regular mosquito season. Informational meetings have taken place across the state identifying areas of concern. A surveillance plan is forthcoming to include templated language to assist municipalities in communicating with their residents. October can be a tricky month with outdoor activities such as fall festivals, Halloween, and evening sports activities. The definition of a hard frost varies greatly depending on location. The Health Department’s role is to educate and inform the public based on hazards / dangers. We know what to expect. Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) tends to follow a three (3) year cycle. Aerial spraying is a last resort as it is very costly and is heavily dependent on weather patterns. While aerial spraying is helpful, it does not eliminate EEE. What you do personally has the most effect. Residents can take precautions (i.e. removing stagnant water, get rid of old tires, use mosquito repellent, wear long sleeves, repair any damaged screens in your home, leave the door shut, etc.

5. **Review meeting schedule.** The next Board of Health meeting will be held on March 27, 2020 at the Shrewsbury Landfill, 620 Hartford Turnpike, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 at 8:00 a.m.
6. **Adjourn.** Dr. Abraham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m. Seconded by Jennie Fishman. Unanimously approved 3-0.

**Referenced Material:**

- BOH Meeting Minutes – dated January 24, 2020
- Email from Bryan Moss, 16 Ruthen Circle, Shrewsbury – dated January 22, 2020
- CMRPHA Updates – February 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry M. Stockwell  
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Health