



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY
Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 05145

Date: May 20, 2022

To: Board of Health

From: Kerry Stockwell, Principal Department Assistant – in person

Re: Board of Health Meeting Minutes – IN PERSON

ATTENDANCE: Stephen Vigeant, Dr. George Abraham, and Jennie Fishman – in person

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA):
Karyn Clark, Director – via phone
Micah Blondeau, Regional Environmental Health Specialist – in person
Dr. Michael Hirsh, Medical Director – via phone

Kristen Las, Assistant Town Manager – in person

Jordan Brusso, occupant of 17 Oakland Avenue, Unit B, Shrewsbury – via phone
Christopher Miller, occupant of 17 Oakland Avenue, Unit B, Shrewsbury – via phone

Noelle Freeman, Director of Nursing – Shrewsbury Public Schools – in person

Tony Bonaventura, resident – 120 Howe Avenue, Shrewsbury – in person

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Julie VanArsdalen, Regional Environmental Health Coordinator (CMRPHA)
Tania Soto-Martinez, owner of 17 Oakland Avenue, Shrewsbury

The next meeting of the Board of Health will be held on **FRIDAY, May 20, 2022 at 8:00 a.m.** in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Richard D. Carney Municipal Building located at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545, at which time and place the Board of Health will consider the following 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 April 15, 2022 Board of Health meeting.**
On a motion made by Dr. George Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. George Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to approve the Minutes from the April 15, 2022 Board of Health meeting. Unanimously approved 3 – 0.
- 3. Review and Discuss 17B Oakland Avenue – Property owner is seeking a six (6) to eight (8) week extension beyond a thirty (30) day Order to Correct letter due to supply chain issues and contractor scheduling. The recommendation is to grant an extension through June 17, 2022.**
Micah Blondeau explained that he conducted a housing inspection as a follow-up to a complaint initiated by the tenant. Windows, a door, and some electrical work were in need of repair. The property owner is requesting an extension beyond the thirty (30) day Order to Correct timeline. He felt that the property owner was making a good faith effort to make the necessary repairs and he supports the request for an extension.

Jordan Brusso, tenant, clarified that the stairs also needed repair.

Micah Blondeau conveyed that a building permit application had been applied for and a building permit was issued. Things are moving forward.

There were not any questions from the Board.

On a motion made by Dr. George Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. George Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to approve the request for an extension and to be valid through June 17, 2022. Unanimously approved 3 – 0.

4. Review and Discuss the Emergency Regulation Requiring Employers to Report Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace in the Town of Shrewsbury.

Stephen Vigeant asked if the recommendation was to continue this Order. Karyn Clark said yes, as it is helpful for us to know if businesses are having positive employees or multiple positive employees. This data is an important tool in providing guidance to the public. As everyone is aware, we are not out of the woods with COVID-19. She asked the Board to consider leaving this Order in place through the summer. The Board can revisit this Order at a future Board of Health meeting.

The Board agreed that under the current circumstances, it is still important to have businesses report positive cases and to leave the Order as is.

5. Review and Discuss Coronavirus / COVID-19 Update.

Karyn Clark addressed the Board and mentioned that Dr. Abraham could speak to this topic as well. The number of positive cases are increasing and we are in a surge. The number of hospitalizations have increased at both St. Vincent's and UMass Hospitals. For the last two (2) years, daily case counts were reported. When the numbers started to recede, the reporting moved to a weekly status. Shrewsbury to include the Alliance communities has a data dashboard in place and is updated and communicated every Friday. The basic trend is that the numbers are high in New England. Worcester County is considered a high transmission county and is in the red category, as well as other communities. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has always made the recommendation for communities in the red status for people to wear masks. Last week, Dr. Michael Hirsh, Medical Director felt strongly about the need to issue a mask advisory, not a mandate, in the City of Worcester. An advisory has been what the Worcester Department of Public Health has been stating all along. We must continue to be vigilant and reminder residents to wear a mask whenever possible. Today, we are looking to the Shrewsbury Board of Health to consider the issuance of a mask advisory. Karyn Clark asked Dr. Abraham if he had any comments about variants or an opinion from an Infectious Disease Dr.'s perspective.

Dr. Abraham thanked her. He is seeing trends from hospital employees and from the community. It is important to underscore that the home testing revealing positive results are not being reported. The actual number of positive cases might be higher. New England is in a surge. Europe is a few weeks ahead of us. In the next several weeks, we should see a decrease. This variant is little more aggressive in onset of symptoms. Current vaccines do not completely block against the disease. Another version of the COVID-19 vaccine is in the works. He agrees with issuing an advisory, not a mandate but is strongly encouraging residents to be mindful that there is more disease than what is being reported. We need to protect ourselves when out and about. With the rapid home testing and the current variant, sometimes it takes two (2) or three (3) days of sequential testing to reflect a positive result. A good public health measure is to wear a mask.

Question: What is relationship between hospitalization and cases?

Answer: Very good question. It is lower. The variant is milder in terms of infection. There is a greater presence of vaccinated folks in the community.

Question: Has there been further research on long-haulers?

Answer: Excellent question. There is no additional information at this time. There was an article published in the New York Times that discussed looking at all areas of the body that have been affected. Eighty-Five (85%) percent have brain involvement (i.e. loss of smell, taste, etc.). This is why we want to avoid disease. What happens in the body is different for everyone and it could have long-term effects such as thrombotic issues like blood clots, repeat infection and cardio issues. Virtually every organ is susceptible. We will understand more as time goes on.

Stephen Vigeant asked Dr. Abraham if he was recommending an advisory. The answer was yes, and to wear a mask whenever possible. There was an example Mask Advisory in the Board packet from the Town of Westborough.

Stephen Vigeant asked the Board if they were interested in adopting the Mask Advisory that the City of Worcester had issued last week. All members were in favor.

Karyn Clark recommends having masks made available at proms and graduations. She has not had an opportunity to

Speak with Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Shrewsbury Public Schools as she was out of the office last week when the Worcester mask advisory was issued.

Kristen Las had alerted Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Shrewsbury Public Schools and Noelle Freeman, Director of Nursing that a Mask Advisory would potentially be issued today.

At this time, a Shrewsbury resident in attendance asked if he could speak. Stephen Vigeant explained that this was a Board of Health meeting and not a public hearing. He explained the difference and suggested the resident email the Board if he wanted to be placed on a future agenda.

On a motion made by Dr. George Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. George Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to issue a Mask Advisory for the Town of Shrewsbury. Unanimously approved 3 – 0.

Stephen Vigeant reiterated that this is not mandatory. It is a recommendation from the Board.

6. Review and Discuss the Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA) Updates.

Micah Blondeau reported that there was not that much out of the ordinary. He is in the process of inspecting and licensing pools and camps. There are seasonal nuisance and housing complaints being reported and he is staying on top of those. Since the March Board of Health meeting, there have been a total of one hundred thirty eight (138) inspections.

There were not any questions from the Board.

7. Review meeting schedule.

The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be held on June 24, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Room at the Richard D. Carney Municipal Building, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

8. Adjourn.

On a motion made by Dr. George Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. George Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 a.m. Unanimously approved 3– 0.

Correspondence:

- Board of Health Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2022
- 17B Oakland Avenue – Order to Correct letter – April 13, 2022
- Emergency Regulation Requiring Employers to Report Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace in the Town of Shrewsbury – October 5, 2021