



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

Date: July 29, 2022

To: Board of Health

From: Kerry Stockwell, Principal Department Assistant – in person

Re: Board of Health Meeting Minutes

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA):
Karyn Clark, Director – via phone
Micah Blondeau, Regional Environmental Health Specialist – in person
Nice Guy – 5122 Avalon Way, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA):
Julie VanArsdalen, Regional Environmental Health Coordinator

The next meeting of the Board of Health will be held on **FRIDAY, July 29, 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 8:02 a.m. by Stephen Vigeant.
- 2. Review and approval of Minutes from the June 24, 2022 Board of Health meeting.**
On a motion made by Dr. Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to approve the Minutes from the June 24, 2022 Board of Health meeting. Unanimously approved 3 – 0.
- 3. 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 there was still an interest in keeping this order going.

Karyn Clark made the recommendation to rescind the order. The MA Department of Public Health (MDPH) has asked Local Boards of Health (LBOH) to prioritize contact tracing with high-risk individuals. The City of Worcester also had this order in place but was rescinded at their Board of Health meeting on Monday, July 25, 2022.

Question: Have there been any conversations about underreporting and potential risk of undercounting prevalence in the community?

Answer: The positivity rate is higher than what we are able to report weekly. The data for Shrewsbury is also on the City of Worcester's website. Test kits are widely available now and those results not being reported to public health. Right now, the focus is on contact tracing for high risk individuals. We do not think it is appropriate at this point to require businesses to report on positive cases.

Stephen Vigeant was fine with the recommendation. Dr. Abraham was not a complete fan but if that is the recommendation, he is all right with it. Jennie Fishman feels it would be hard to lose this valuable tool and would like some level of reporting.

Karyn Clark provided additional details. The cases that employers are reporting are from testing they are offering their employees. The information is getting to us through MAVEN, which is a statewide surveillance system. In most cases, we are capturing these folks. Many businesses are not reporting for a variety of reasons. The problem she is concerned about are the ones people taking at home and not having those results. We have some metrics. Not totally accurate. The priority is based upon what MDPH wants us to do but it is up to the Board of Health.

Question: Is there any downside?

Answer: It is a capacity issue. There are two (2) out of four (4) nursing positions filled. Currently, we are interviewing for those. Amelia Houghton, Public Health Nurse is running point. This would be less of a load on her to a degree. The decision that came from MDPH is to prioritize the high-risk group versus everyone. The capacity recommendation or addressing a capacity issue is from the state.

Question: Would rescinding the order assist the WDPH?

Answer: The hope is when a third nurses position is filled; it will help lighten the load. MDPH was trying to assisting LBOH's with prioritizing and capacity. If the Board would like to look a little longer at this order, that is completely fine.

Dr. Abraham recommended discontinuing the reporting due to capacity issues and would be in support of suspending the order temporarily. Jennie Fishman agreed with that.

Stephen Vigeant asked if there was a motion to rescind the order due to capacity issues and not due to the reduction of the pandemic.

On a motion made by Dr. Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to rescind Emergency Regulation Requiring Employers to Report Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace in the Town of Shrewsbury due to capacity issues and not due to the reduction of the pandemic effective today, July 29, 2022. Unanimously approved 3 – 0.

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

Karyn Clark did not have the data for Shrewsbury yet for today. The positivity rate is around eight (8%) percent. We know it is higher than that because people do not report on their results when using the home test kits. There are new variants. Still recommending individuals to get their second booster shot or to be vaccinated if they have not already. Not sure what the fall will look like. Influenza is still around and as Dr. Hirsh, Medical Director for the City of Worcester says, it could be a Twindemic in that timeframe. COVID-19 is still around and there are many breakthrough cases. The recommendation is for people to be vaccinated.

Dr. Abraham concurred. People have taken a pause in being vaccinated. There will be a new vaccine available in the September timeframe. Hoping that a single dose will target BA.4 and BA.5 variants with this vaccine. The reformulated vaccine will be necessary for everyone. As long as there is disease, there will be new variants. Monkeypox cases are growing by the day, which is a challenge. There are also Marburg (Ebola-like) viruses with small outbreaks in Ghana (West Africa). There is a population of people traveling in and out of the country with the potential of bringing these viruses back with them. There are a number of viral outbreaks around the world that need to be monitored and it will continue to stress public health resources.

There were no further questions.

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

Micah Blondeau provided the Board with an update. We have moved into the event season with outdoor food vendors. Trying to wrangle everyone in with their paperwork and/or applicable fees. Luckily, we have a good number of mobile food trucks that have already been inspected and permitted with Shrewsbury through the end of the year. There has been an uptick in housing complaints. Other than that, we are moving along.

Question: Are the food complaints related to foodborne illness?

Answer: No. Typically, the food complaints are regarding sanitation or along those lines.

Stephen Vigeant wanted to acknowledge that today was Karyn Clark's last day of being Director of Public Health for the City of Worcester's Division of Public Health (WDPH). He congratulated her on becoming the new Assistant Town Manager for the Town of Millbury. He thanked her for all the support, guidance, professionalism, and sense of

humor.

Karyn Clark said that it has been a pleasure to work with the Shrewsbury Board of Health and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were a lot of hours put in, confusion, synthesizing of information, and enforcement. The Board of Health's support, expertise, and passion for public health was instrumental in supporting these efforts every step of the way. It is bittersweet and she has been with the City of Worcester for twenty-two (22) years. Taking the new role in the Town of Millbury is a great opportunity to grow professionally and personally. She is sure that she will be working in some capacity with Shrewsbury as Millbury is part of the CMRPHA. She is very grateful for all the kindness, support, and humor.

Jennie Fishman wished her all the best in this new venture.

Dr. Abraham echoed the same sentiments and gratitude for she has done.

6. Review meeting schedule.

The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be held on August 26, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Richard D. Carney Municipal Building, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

At this time, Stephen Vigeant formerly acknowledged the correspondence previously received by George W. Woodruff, III of 5122 Avalon Way, Shrewsbury – dated June 22, 2022

7. Adjourn.

On a motion made by Dr. Abraham and seconded by Jennie Fishman and on a roll call vote; Dr. Abraham, aye; Jennie Fishman, aye; and Stephen Vigeant, aye, the Board of Health voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Unanimously approved 3–0.

Correspondence:

- Board of Health Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2022
- Email from George W. Woodruff, III of 5122 Avalon Way, Shrewsbury – June 22, 2022
- Emergency Regulation Requiring Employers to Report Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace in the Town of Shrewsbury – October 5, 2021