



City of Westfield, Massachusetts
Health Department

RECEIVED

Board of Health Special Meeting
Room 201
February 11, 2026

MAR 13 2026

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

Present: Stanley Strzempko, M.D., Chair, Carrie Hildreth-Fiordalice, Nitin Bhatnagar, M.D.

Staff: Debra Mulvenna, Health Director
Crystal Dugay, Assistant Health Director
Hunter Pelkey, Substance Use Outreach Coordinator
Cheryl McMordie, Secretary

CHAIRPERSON TO CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Chair Strzempko opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Minutes from the January 21, 2026, meeting were reviewed and accepted. A motion was made by Dr. Bhatnagar and seconded to approve the January 21, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted.

The vote was as follows:

Strzempko	–	Yes
Hildreth-Fiordalice	–	Yes
Bhatnagar	–	Yes

All in favor, the motion was declared passed.

Monthly bills for the Transfer Station were reviewed and signed.

Ms. Mulvenna provided the Board with a copy of a letter she received from the Audit Dept. regarding a recently enacted policy. Board chairs are no longer required to sign off on accounts payable invoices unless they choose to do so. Only department heads will need to sign. It was agreed that, should there be an invoice which the Board needs to be made aware of, it will be brought to their attention at a subsequent meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

TRANSFER STATION:

Public Hearing on Increasing Transfer Station Regulations and Pay-As-You-Throw Program: Chair Strzempko opened the public hearing. There was no one present at the hearing. Dr. Strzempko moved to close the public hearing.

Discussion and Vote on Transfer Station Regulations and Pay-As-You-Throw Program: Ms. Mulvenna stated that the Law Department's recommendations have been incorporated into the regulations.

A discussion ensued regarding the Transfer Station overflow bags. The Board had previously reviewed the proposed regulations and information regarding the Pay-As-You-Throw Overflow program. A motion was made by Dr. Bhatnagar and seconded to adopt the Transfer Station Regulations and Pay-As-You-Throw Overflow Program.

The vote was as follows:

Strzempko	-	Yes
Hildreth-Fiordalice	-	Yes
Bhatnagar	-	Yes

All in favor, the motion was declared passed.

SUBSTANCE USE OUTREACH COORDINATOR:

Kratom Discussion: Outreach Coordinator Hunter Pelkey presented the Board with a fact sheet on kratom and 7OH. He provided the history of kratom and its evolution from being used for centuries as a stimulant and depressant; subsequently used as a harm reduction tool to ween people off opioids; to the production of synthetic kratom products which interact with the brain's opioid receptors creating effects similar to morphine.

Currently, there are no requirements for labeling, packaging or age restrictions in Massachusetts. Several countries as well as several states in the United States have banned these products. An additional 20 states have age-restriction regulations, however, Massachusetts is not one of them. The Massachusetts House and Senate are pushing to either label this as a controlled substance or ban it completely. To Mr. Pelkey's knowledge, no establishment in Westfield is currently selling kratom. Some local communities are working to ban this. It was noted that pure kratom has been used for harm reduction, but synthetic-derived kratom poses a risk. A discussion ensued among the Board members regarding the possible ban of kratom. If Westfield were to ban its sale, a public hearing would need to be held. Regulations will also need to be drafted and sent to the city's law department for review. It was suggested that Delta8, a synthetic cannabinoid, also be added to the banned substance listing.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

Youth Support Discussion: Dr. Bhatnagar thanked Ms. Hildreth-Fiordalice for the prior information provided to the board regarding addiction issues at the high school and would like to expand on the data received. He advised that he had spoken to Dr. Chang Weijen, prior Chief of Adolescent Medicine at Baystate Medical Center; Dr. Robert Peskin, head of Pediatric Associates of Hampden County; and Dr. Adam Chamberlain, an addiction medicine specialist at Baystate Health. All were willing to become involved in this initiative. An associate of Dr. Chamberlain, Yunika DePalma, is also excited to join the team. Because Dr. Peskin has ties with Boston Children's Hospital, he has access to additional resources. Dr. Bhatnagar stated that he would like to get everyone together to brainstorm, clarify the situation and discuss objectives on how to combat the issues.

Discussions developed as to how to best provide professional help to these children. It was agreed that parental involvement was crucial. Ms. Hildreth-Fiordalice stated that this would be best handled by the schools. She advised that she and Mr. Pelkey were meeting with a group of professionals tomorrow to address these issues. She stated that the Board of Health is a regulatory board and cannot offer direct services, however, can use its knowledge to address gaps and find resources to pass on.

Mr. Pelkey has received five Naloxone boxes, one of which he displayed to the board. They should be installed sometime in April. He will be speaking with the Mayor about preparing a press release when they are installed.

Director's Update Re: Board of Health Trainings, Budget: Ms. Mulvenna stated that she had sent information to the Board members regarding standardized trainings available through the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) which are helpful but not mandatory. She stated that she will send the Board a PowerPoint provided by MMA. Additional city trainings were also discussed.

Proposed fiscal year 2027 Health Dept. and Transfer Station budget spreadsheets were distributed to the Board for their review.

Discussion and Vote – Shared Services Municipal Statement of Commitment: The Mayor has signed this letter of intent. The group will be known as Common Ground Health Collaborative, and will consist of East Longmeadow (host), Agawam, West Springfield and Westfield. Ms. Mulvenna stated that Westfield can withdraw from this collaborative at any time. A discussion was held and it was noted that this is an open collaborative so resources can be combined, which will be beneficial. A motion was made by Dr. Bhatnagar and seconded to approve the Shared Services Municipal Statement of Commitment.

The vote was as follows:

Strzempko	-	Yes
Hildreth-Fiordalice	-	Yes
Bhatnagar	-	Yes

All in favor, the motion was declared passed.

Dr. Strzempko signed the Shared Services Municipal Statement of Commitment.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Dr. Bhatnagar and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

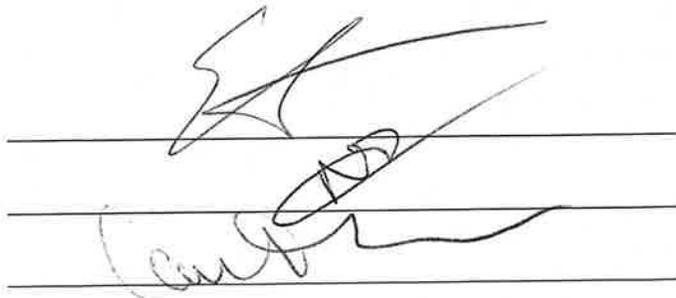
The vote was as follows:

Strzempko	-	Yes
Hildreth-Fiordalice	-	Yes
Bhatnagar	-	Yes

All in favor, the Motion was declared passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Minutes approved by:

The image shows three horizontal lines representing a signature line. The top line has a large, stylized signature. The middle line has a signature that appears to be 'C. Bhatnagar'. The bottom line is mostly blank with some faint scribbles.

/cam

Next meeting date: March 11, 2026