

City of Westfield, Massachusetts

Health Department

Board of Health Meeting Via Zoom video conference March 10, 2021 6:00 PM

Present: Juanita Carnes, Chair Stanley Strzempko, M.D. Margaret Doody

Ms. Carnes opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. There was no one present wishing to speak during public participation. Minutes from the February 10, 2021 meeting were reviewed and accepted as printed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes.

The vote was as follows:

Carnes	–	Yes
Strzempko	–	Not present at the time of the vote
Doody	–	Yes

All in favor, the Motion was declared passed.

PUBLIC HEALTH:

COVID-19 Update and Discussion: Ms. Carnes will continue to work with Peter Currier at the Westfield News in writing a column pertaining to the status of Covid. This past week there were 67 new confirmed cases; last week the numbers were in the 40's. There were also 2 Covid-related deaths. No clusters or outbreaks were reported. The increase can most likely be attributed to traveling and lack of obeying regulations. March and April are critical times in upholding safety regulations, wearing masks, etc.; and, until most individuals are vaccinated, residents need to be cautious especially as Phase 4 begins to open things up. Travel restrictions changed on Monday. There will be no restriction upon return to the state if one is fully vaccinated and there has been two-weeks from the last dose or not more than 90 days from recovering from the virus. Individuals will need to show paperwork as proof of vaccination. Mr. Rouse does not believe Massachusetts will rid mask mandate any time soon. The department's website will be revised tomorrow with updated information, numbers, etc. City officials are working to re-open City Hall although Mr. Rouse feels that residents have been well served online.

A recent meeting was held with Senator Velis, Representative Pease, the Mayor, Joseph Rouse and Nurse Debra Mulvenna to discuss why Westfield does not have a location to administer vaccines. This has become a political issue as vaccines have been distributed to cities and towns surrounding Westfield. There is a large void around Westfield with no site nearby. The Big E site is crumbling because it appeared to Boston politicians that it is too closely located to the Eastfield Mall site, not realizing that Hilltown residents need to travel from 30-40 minutes to get there. Westfield State University would be a better location but no vaccines are available. It was suggested that vaccines be provided to pharmacies; and both Senator Velis and Representative Pease are reaching out to local pharmacies to determine if they are capable of holding clinics and storing vaccine. CVS on East Main St. and both Walgreens locations are willing and able. Stop and Shop has not yet been

approached. Ms. Carnes indicated that she recently spoke to a pharmacist and was told that pharmacist staffing is a problem with them. Only a pharmacist can draw the vaccines. There are many "shooters" but only a pharmacist can draw.

Scheduling appointments has been difficult. The amount of appointments available has increased from 750 to 1,000 per day. The Senior Center has a plan in place should vaccine be made available to them. The Veterans Administration would also like to obtain some and hold a clinic at the Senior Center. They may be able to obtain a federal supply because they can limit their vaccines to veterans only; whereas, the state supply must be used for specific groups, i.e. age, etc. All veterans, not just from Westfield, would be eligible to attend this clinic.

The City has increased the amount of contract tracing it has been conducting as the state only contacts 70% of individuals; the City reaches 100%. Dr. Strzempko stated that the population of individuals who have tested positive appear to get less sick than those prior. The UK variant is now more prevalent and highly contagious. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have not been tested against this variant; Johnson & Johnson has been. If an individual does contract this variant and becomes ill after being vaccinated, they will be less sick.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES:

Proposal to Place a Moratorium on New Tobacco Licenses: Mr. Rouse and Health Inspector Thomas Hibert recently met with representatives from the State Tobacco Control and their attorney to discuss possible revisions to Westfield's current tobacco regulations. The City would eventually like to place a cap on the number of tobacco establishments from the current 55 to 45, and also cap the number of adult-only establishments. As a result of Covid, several tobacco stores have permanently closed, with only 45 remaining. A motion was made and seconded to place a moratorium on the issuance of new tobacco establishment licenses until further notice.

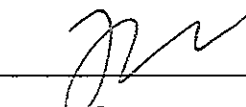
The vote was as follows:

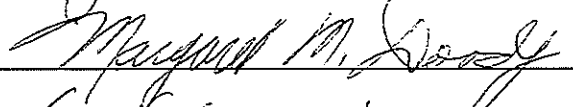
Carnes	-	Yes
Strzempko	-	Yes
Doody	-	Yes

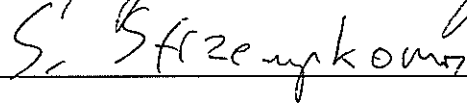
All in favor, the Motion was declared passed.

With no further items on the agenda to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Minutes approved by:







/cam