

Westhampton Board of Health Meeting December 17, 2020

Attending: Board - Robby Armenti (RA), David Blakesley (DA), Tom Martin (TM) Chair. Guests - Paul Kennedy (PK), Margaret Larsen (ML), Wally Marek (WM), John Plourd (JP), Cheryl Provost (CP), Kristen Smidy (KS)

Call to order - 1:02 PM

1. DB moved to approve Minutes of December 10th. TM seconded motion. Approved unanimously.
2. KS, HRHS Principal, introduces the Winter Hampshire Regional School modifications document for Basketball.
 - JP notes that the School Committee has postponed the vote to approve or disapprove basketball as a winter competitive sport. They may decide to just hold practices. Athletics is waiting for the Board of Health to weigh in.
 - TM notes that participating schools must be in "yellow" or below designations to participate in basketball.
 - TM likes that parents and students must sign a waiver (see document) to participate and that this includes both practices and competitions.
 - TM notes with appreciation that although five or six schools may be involved in competitions, only one school per week will compete at a time.
 - TM likes the fact that there would be no spectators.
 - TM notes that other good things are: rosters of all participants for contact tracing; practice pods; jump ball taken out of the game; masks worn at all times - to, from and during the games and practices. He wonders if a tie-on mask can be worn over a "regular" mask to keep it in place and/or if masks can be replaced when wet.
 - TM wants the experience of a "COVID Coach" - someone who would be independent of either team and would be there to make sure that public health rules were being followed correctly. He went over the Pillars of Public Health.
 - JP described both games and practices; the length of times of each and the differences of each. He noted that officials come from outside the schools and that they are assigned to the schools. There are about ten in all and they do not know who they will be beforehand.
 - DB asks if the game will be the same with all the modifications?
 - JP answers that they don't know, that it depends on expectations.
 - DB asks if the students will be satisfied.
 - JP answers that they will still get complaints, but something will be better than nothing and the students will do whatever they can to do something.
 - TM asks JP to describe schedule.
 - JP says that at this point there is no concrete schedule due to fluctuations in School Committee voting and who will be playing in the area.
 - TM to KS - Do you have nursing staff input?

- KS says that it is still in process. One thing is clear, that if a student tests positive, that student's season is over.
 - KS thinks that there could be funds to hire an independent COVID monitor (coach) to only monitor players' safety. Will look into that.
 - RA speaks to the fairness of having basketball and not drama or the musical. TM rephrased (thank you, Tom!) Can we have basketball AND have drama and a musical?
 - KS says that HRHS is looking into this for later in the Spring, outside or online.
 - DB asks about exemptions for players not wearing masks.
 - KS responds that there are, as yet, no students asking for exemptions.
 - DB says he has no real objection, although it is a high risk sport.
 - ML says she is torn. After the changes to the list, something might work, practices may be doable. Could competitions not happen or could we decide about competitions later?
 - JP answers that it is possible, but irresponsible, because it might put other schools in a bad situation.
 - ML responds that if other schools went "red," wouldn't they be out anyway?
 - JP answers that that would be just the start of a conversation, not an automatic "out."
 - ML and JP - discussion of basketball as a Fall 2 sport.
 - ML - discussion of drama and Musical and ways to make those happen in the Spring.
 - PK - discussion of HVAC. They are bringing in a lot of fresh air now, monitoring the heat.
 - PK likes the idea of a waiver/affidavit of players/families being accountable of following rules outside of the schools. He also feels the input of the nursing staff is critical to the success of this program.
 - TM is very impressed with the Principal and the Athletics Staff and the seriousness with which it takes its students and staff. He is hesitant, because of mixing with other towns and overwhelming the nursing staff. However, he is inclined to vote favorably.
 - RA also expresses hesitancy for the above reasons and also because of the outside referees, but notes that the school has worked hard to keep compliance and will "nip things in the bud" if problems occur.
 - The Board votes unanimously in favor of the modifications with the addition of COVID monitor.
 - JP would like help with the definition of "close contact" on the team.
 - TM says that it is a fluid situation which is covered by the public nurse, the nursing staff and the COVID staff.
3. At the time, there are no COVID cases in Westhampton.
 4. 5 Blueberry Hill - new address.
 - The well has been permitted; owner has been chastised for drilling w/o permit.

- Bldg. permit is still a work in progress
5. 69 Northwest Road - TM will follow up with Mark.
 6. Town Hall Regulations Document
 - Motion to accept by RA, seconded by DB, passed unanimously.
 - TM will send to Cheryl for Selectboard.
 7. MVP
 - RA asks about ground contamination at 0 Main Rd.
 - Discussion about how junked cars are in the process of being removed.
 - We don't know how much, if any, contamination there is.
 8. New Business
 - CP asks if storm windows can be installed in the Town Hall; she is concerned about the pipes freezing in the very cold weather, especially if meetings will be happening and doors will be opened.
 - DB feels that windows should go in.
 - TM agrees and DB will let Bill Jablonski know to get that done.
 - Discussion about ZBA and other large meetings.
 - TM wonders if ZBA can Zoom large meetings and task another person on the board to let people "in" as the meeting is being run.
 - Public Safety Committee mtg. in Jan. - Could the meeting either be held at the Highway Dept. or could people vote by Zoom?
 - CP says the problem could be solved by holding several small informational meetings and then a voting meeting.
 - DB asks when the vote is.
 - CP - not before Feb. or March.
 - TM will update PSC.

Meeting adjourned at 3:03