

Westhampton Board of Health

Minutes to Meeting of

October 29th, 2020

Present: David Blakesley (DB), Tom Martin (TM), Mark Bushee (MB), Kristen Smitty, Principle HRHS, (KS), Amy Scully, Guidance Dept HRHS, (AS), Margaret Larson, School Committee HRHS, (ML), Paul Kennedy, School Committee HRHS (PK). Present remotely (Zoom): Robby Armenti (RA), Dale Kasal (DK), Molly Butler (MB), Shirl Morgan (SM).

Meeting to order at 1:02 and adjourned at 2:57 pm.

- 1) DB moves to approve minutes of Oct 22nd, 2020 as revised with TM seconding. RA notes a minor change to be made and the motion passes unanimously. RA to make changes and Board to sign when next all present physically.
- 2) KS given floor to go over plans for Quarter 2 (Q2) at HRHS with document to review and questions moving forward. KS notes Covid protocol changes to return to school after illness. KS notes progress with Bus company and efforts to get seating charts for contact tracing purposes (generally the company has resisted these efforts). KS notes buses are more compliant with getting fresh air into the buses and facial covering on the vehicles is very good. KS notes a Q2 start date of Dec 2nd based on work to HVAC system scheduled to be completed (noting this as well could change with evolving conditions). HVAC system upgrades discussed at length. PK has been working closely with JAMROC on this issue and notes that his understanding/expectation is that the entire building will be fitted with MERV 13 filters and be able to handle a turnover rate of air within classroom and office spaces of 2 per hour with a 20% fresh air each turnover. DB notes that this is the baseline expectation of the BOH moving forward. KS notes that by her understanding that it is possible to increase the fresh air to 50% with each turnover under specific heating conditions (done through central computer). Increasing fresh air throughout the building is discussed including opening windows and doors. KS requests that once upgrades are made to HVAC that doors to building could be closed as per DESE guidelines and by State police request. Board indicates that this would be possible. KS doors would still be propped open for entry and dismissal times to reduce touch surface contacts. KS notes that Q2 will be a full hybrid model of learning where all classes will be divided into two groups and have in person learning two days per week in the morning only. Remote learning will have all day Wed and each afternoon. About 300 students will be expected 4 days per week. Formalizing smaller organic developed "social/transportation" pods are agreed to be a worthy goal. Could these pods be identified and had on record to facilitate contact tracing? TM and MB stress that contact tracing need be firmed up as practice test of the process have revealed problems. TM notes that keeping the schools open in the event of positive case arising depends heavily on this process happening smoothly and quickly. What defines a close contact is emphasized so that everyone is clear on its meaning. TM desires that this definition/guideline be communicated and instilled in staff and students to get them thinking about personal and professional behaviors around Covid. ML with questions about Metrics surrounding school closings due to Covid, MB explains what defines a cluster and the assumptions around *transmission* within the school itself as opposed to *appearing* within the school building itself from the community at large. Extracurricular activities are discussed and expectations surrounding them. Eating in the school

building is discussed at length with KS noting that it is difficult for staff to eat outside within their allotted break time (25minutes) although they are doing. Currently only a few students are eating at school (Goshen students without internet access). Bag lunches only moving forward. Teachers eating in classrooms and teaching remotely from classrooms without masks on is discussed. KS requests that Board update its recommendations for the school for Q2 and the Board supports that request and will provide.

- 3) Board receives complaints from SM and DK, who both attended the event) about Covid safety protocols not practiced at the Fireworks display conducted by the Willard Family on the evening of October 24th. Event was over the 100-participant threshold, participants did not stay in their cars to view the fireworks, did not wear mask or social distance. The event was described more as a rally that fireworks display, and observers were appalled by the public behavior of some. RA urges the Board to write a letter to Selectboard describing the event and underlining the expectations of the Board surrounding public gathering moving forward in hopes that it can be forwarded to other town officials, especially the local police, who some feel should have been on hand to deal with this event. DB notes that the Board itself does not have much enforcement capabilities to do so. TM to write letter for approval at next meeting.
- 4) Emergency Dispensing Site Plans are discussed. TM notes that other BOHs in the Foothills feel strongly that the State will require LBOH to manage mass vaccinations around Covid in 2021 and preparations need to begin. TM expresses surprise for this view in that the Board does not have the expertise, infrastructure or resources for such a requirement. MB notes that he would not be surprised if the State did make this requirement in that it often does pass requirements down to the local level without a great deal of thought about the ability to accomplish the tasks. TM notes that if such a requirement were to come down it would be daunting. TM notes that its EDS plan is out of date and should be looked at, as other towns are beginning the process.
- 5) MB reports he is busy with Septic work, noting 2 Pine Island Lake going through many town boards for upgrade of septic and new well. MB also wants the Board to know that Covid case numbers are currently rising and the close contacts of covid cases in our districts member towns are being identified daily.
- 6) RA notes that BOH meeting postings times on Town Website and Belltower are inaccurate and will work to remedy. RA notes that she has fielded an inquiry about this inconsistency. RA notes that MB has questioned why the Board meets when it does given this is time is inaccessible to many.
- 7) TM notes the difficulty of conducting Zoom meeting as well a in person is challenging. RA notes that it is difficult to hear and understand participants in the meeting via Zoom in Town Hall. DK notes it may be easier to meet only on Zoom. TM notes his desire to avoid that scenario.
- 8) Board adjourns and will meet next week.