

Meeting Minutes of the Chelsea Board of Health
February 9, 2021

Attendance: Names of members and Participants

Board members, City of Chelsea staff and guests were introduced.

Board Members:

- Ola Bayode
- Corinna Culler
- Allen Jackson
- Emmanuel Tellez
- Dr. Dean Xerras

Guests:

- Airam Paola Mateo
- Kelsey Martinez
- Corinne Dessalines

City of Chelsea Staff:

- Dr. Flor Amaya, Director of Public Health
- Pam Johnson, Law Office Clerk
- Paula McHatton, Public Health Nurse
- Cheryl Watson Fisher, City Solicitor
- Richie Zullo, Supervisor, Code Enforcement, Chelsea Inspectional Services Dept.

Adoption of the Minutes of the December 8 Board Meeting

The Board adopted the minutes from the January 2021 meeting.

Introduction of Flor Amaya, Public Health Director

Dr. Flor Amaya was introduced to the board by Corinna Culler. Dr. Amaya is a Chelsea resident whose family immigrated to the US from El Salvador. She and Corinna worked together at the Boston University School of Dentistry. She holds a master's degree in Public Health and a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Update from Cheryl Watson Fisher, City Solicitor

- **Update on Chelsea Station waiver:** At the last meeting, the Board voted to waive the bar seating requirement pending a site visit by Inspectional Services that 6-feet would be maintained between patrons and customers at the bar. After inspection and revisions to their plan, the restaurant is now open with limited bar seating. The Licensing Division sends reminders to city establishments on the Governor's reopening plans and COVID guidelines.
- **Illegal tattoo parlor:** CPD responded to Emmanuel Tellez's complaint an illegal tattoo parlor. While they have not been caught providing tattoos, the operators have been notified that the situation is being monitored. The City is not fining people for COVID violations but is asking them to correct the issue on the spot.

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MAYOR'S OFFICE
CITY OF CHELSEA

- **Sanitary code violations:** The Board received an email about its role regarding sanitary codes and housing inspections. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the City has placed restrictions on staff visiting private residences. They do respond to heating-related calls. There has been one new food permit issued in 2021, and no new food services permits have been issued in 2021. A potential marijuana licensee is under consideration, as is a proposal to increase the number of commercial marijuana licenses from 4 to 6. The ***Problem Properties Task Force*** will be starting up again soon, and works with properties that are not in compliance with sanitary codes.

In response to a follow up question from Corinna Culler, Cheryl Watson-Fisher explained that sometimes they will receive notification after the fact that a business is being shutdown because of a COVID violation. She continued that one liquor establishment will come before the Licensing Board for COVID violations. Emmanuel Tellez questioned whether an establishment is required to notify the City if they became aware that a worker contracted COVID, and Cheryl Watson-Fisher confirmed that they are.

Richie Zullo from Chelsea Inspectional Services will follow up with Corinna Culler regarding the issues the former Board of Health member raised in their email regarding housing and sanitation inspections. Cheryl Watson-Fisher explained that often, renters will raise sanitary code issues as they are being evicted to justify withholding rent payments. For renters facing eviction, there are several community-based services available, including the Chelsea Legal Services clinic, and noted that evictions in Chelsea are low compared to other areas.

- **Public Health Updates**

COVID Vaccination Updates: Last Thursday, a collaboration between East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and La Collaborativa was launched. The program will vaccinate all eligible persons regardless of insurance or immigration status. Other sites run by local clinics are vaccinating their own patient populations.

A pilot program to vaccinate residents in congregate living was launched at 14 Bloomindale last Friday. The program will use an ambulance to vaccinate elderly residents. Walgreens in Chelsea is also now taking vaccine appointments. For elders facing transportation issues, Dr. Amaya will be in discussion with Mystic Valley Transportation.

Regarding transportation, Corinna Culler asked whether Mystic Valley would transport those in need to any site. Dr. Amaya responded that it would mainly be to La Collaborativa, but elders with transportation benefits through their insurance may be able to make other arrangements.

Dr. Xerras asked how many vaccinations La Collaborativa was providing. Dr. Amaya responded that reporting is just starting to come in, and she will be getting weekly reports from La Collaborativa and other providers.

Emmanuel Tellez questioned what was being done with vaccinations that are about to expire. Dr. Xerras responded that his site is doing outreach to patients that miss appointments to get them in to receive the vaccine, then reaching out find other eligible patients to prevent vaccines being wasted. Dr. Amaya responded that La Collaborativa has backup plans and a wide reach to help prevent vaccine waste.

Corinna Culler asked what type of response providers were getting around vaccine hesitancy. Dr. Amaya reported a positive reception from residents at the 14 Bloomingdale site, and results from the La Collaborativa vaccination will provide details on this issue. Dr. Xerras commented that at the MGH clinic, they are seeing many residents from minority communities get the vaccine.

Paula McHatton reported that through the North Suffolk Public Health Collaborative, nearly 600 first responders were given the first dose of the vaccine in late January, and they will be receiving the second dose this weekend. Another clinic for healthcare workers in late January vaccinated nearly 400 workers. There was no information available at the BI-Lahey vaccination program for their patients near the Home Depot in Chelsea. Dr. Xerras stated that MGH would like to participate with BI-Lahey in this site to be able to vaccinate their patients once they receive more doses of the vaccine.

Emmanuel Tellez wondered if people were being monitored for symptoms for 15 minutes post-vaccination, and who was doing what work. Paula McHatton responded that after receiving the vaccine, a different group of volunteers monitor for symptoms.

Paula McHatton reported speaking to the operations manager of the **Chelsea Stop the Spread** site, who reported that testing has decreased, adding that we need to continue to spread the word on testing.

As of today:

- Chelsea had 18 new confirmed cases last week, 7,770 total COVID cases since the beginning of the pandemic.
- The percent positivity decreased from 9.08% last week to 7.99%.
- The incidence rate decreased from 116.1/100,000 last week to 92.9/100,000.
- There were no communicable diseases, TB cases or flu cases reported last week.

- **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

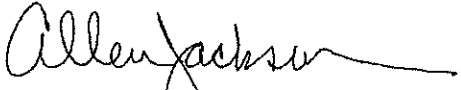
- **New Business**

This will be Cheryl Watson-Fisher's last meeting. She will remain with the City will no longer be helping with BOH meetings. The Board thanked her for her help and assistance. Cheryl Watson-Fisher reminded the Board to complete the ethics training and complete the conflict-of-interest forms.

- **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held March 9, virtually.

The meeting adjourned at 6:11pm.



Allen Jackson, Clerk

3/17/2021
Date