

NORTHAMPTON BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

December 16, 2010

On this date a meeting was held at the City Hall Hearing Room, 2nd Floor, 210 Main St.

Present: Donna Salloom, Chair, Suzanne Smith, M.D., Joanne Levin, M.D.

Ben Wood, Director; Heather McBride, Clerk

At 5:30 pm Chairperson Donna Salloom called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comment

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Joanne Levin moved and Suzanne Smith seconded to approve the minutes from the November 18th meeting. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Regionalization continuing discussion
 - Ben Wood discussed that the state Department of Public Health has revised its plan for regionalization grants in that only planning grants will be available this year. The grant money can be used for a very broad range of items. The planning grants will be awarded in April 2011 and the implementation grants will be awarded Oct. 1, 2011.
 - Joanne Levin raised concerns that there would be insufficient time for towns to receive approval from their mayors or councils.
 - Mr. Wood noted that what was expected by the Department of Public Health at this time was a planning proposal and a "letter of support" from 50% or better of the towns included. He also stated that the Town of Amherst continues its support of collaboration with Northampton and that the Hampshire Regional Council of Governments (COG) has expressed marked interest in collaboration with Amherst and Northampton. This is a tremendous opportunity and regionalization will need to be a continuing discussion point for the next several meetings.

2. Nicotine Delivery Products Signage discussion

- Joanne Levin presented proposed nicotine delivery products signage that the Board of Health could require to be distributed or posted in all locations selling these products.
- Suzanne Smith raised questions about what is enforceable in this instance. Dr. Smith suggested that posted regulations may be more enforceable than a handout.
- Ben Wood stated that he had spoken with Cheryl Sbarra, Mass. Association of Health Boards and that the proposed signage was an acceptable posting requirement. He approved of and Dr. Smith and Chairperson Salloom concurred, the wording on the proposed sign.
- Donna Salloom, after discussion, decided that this matter needed to be referred to MAHB and the city attorney for opinions and further guidance.

3. Procedures for mold related inspections

- Ben Wood asked that the Board consider recommending procedures for mold related inspections so that Orders to Correct will be more effective. For example, in an ongoing case at the McDonald House, the Health Department is dealing with mold related issues that are not very clear cut. The State Sanitary code provides guidance in some cases but not all. Mr. Wood proposed that the Board of Health adopt a two part plan, 1st adopt the EPA's Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings guidelines as a guide. 2nd check with DPH to use the State Sanitary Code and the Mold Book as a resource for concrete Orders to Correct.
- Suzanne Smith stated that having an endorsed book in hand would be a good resource and provide much needed guidelines. Dr. Smith moved to endorse Mr. Wood's proposal of operating guidelines as a framework for mold inspection and removal.
- Donna Salloom seconded. All voted in favor.

4. Standard Operating Procedures

- Ben Wood asked if the board wanted to discuss the draft of the proposed Standard Operating Procedures or if the board would like to wait until the city finishes the proposed ordinance change.
- All agreed to keep the procedures in draft form as a work in progress and revisit them at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion and vote on referred Board of Health charter change and Ch. 55 of the Code of Ordinances.
 - Donna Salloom explained the main points of the changes include expanding the Board of Health from a 3 person to a 5 person member board; continuing with the Board of Health structure model; the board would be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Ordinance change would establish a Health Department reporting to the Mayor and the Board of Health Charter change would expand the board. Ms Salloom added that this is an up or down vote to amend.
 - Suzanne Smith stated that her opinion, upon review of the submitted documents was a vote in favor of the charter change and opposed to the ordinance change as the ordinance language in effect removes power from the Board of Health, vesting those authorities with a newly formed health department.
 - Joanne Levin added that this was her opinion as well.
 - Donna Salloom moved 1st to approve the charter as received 2nd not to indorse the ordinance change as written and request that that the ordnance change be rewritten, specifically 55-2a, to reflect the Board of Health Charter.

1. Septic Permits and Conservation Commission procedures

- Ben Wood presented that regarding septic permits, the Health Department has not historically asked for proof of Department of Public Works issued trench permits or, in the case of wetlands, Conservation Commission approval. These approvals are required by the state and Mr. Wood would like for the Board to officially require such proof as part of the Septic Permit process.
- Suzanne Smith moved that prior to the issuance of a septic permit, the installer/homeowner would be required to provide proof of a trench permit prior and sign off from the Conservation Commission.
- Donna Salloom seconded, all approved.

2. Non- Profit fee schedule

- Ben Wood proposed that the Board make a formal declaration allowing non-profit food service establishments, who can provide the Health Department with a proof of non-profit status, to receive a food service permit without paying the required fee.
- Suzanne Smith made a motion to approve this permitting process. Donna Salloom seconded. All voted in favor.

3. Solid Waste changes to MGL Ch111, S150A

- Ben Wood explained that under changes made this year MA Department of Environmental Protection has made changes increasing the responsibilities of the Board of Health for both issuing site suitability reports and for permitting small scale transfer stations. There is a new transfer station being proposed for Easthampton Road. Mr. Wood expects that the proposed station will not be small enough to require action from the Board of Health but he will keep the board posted on the status.

4. 3rd Hand Smoke Exposure

- Ben Wood said that there has been interest in smoke exposure in residential units. He asked the board if they would like to explore the idea of some type of residential smoking bans.
- Donna Salloom stated that the Council of Governments is also looking into this matter and that she would like for the Board to explore it further.
- Ben Wood stated that he would invite Christine Sass to speak to a future meeting about the COG's role in this issue.

Donna Salloom adjourned the meeting at 7:10pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Heather McBride