



Town of Agawam

Board of Health

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Gladys Fernandez-Largay, MD	- Chairman
Mary Jo Safford, NP	- Vice Chair
Mary Lee Bertrand, BSN	- Member
Michael Theroux	- Health Agent
Sherry Petrucci, RN	- Public Health Nurse
Beth Ceccarini	- Secretary

Meeting Minutes - November 10, 2021
Agawam Senior Center - 954 Main Street at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance : all members present

Documents distributed at meeting :

-Board of Health Agenda
-BOH Meeting Schedule for 2022
-COVID 19 statistics to date

Meeting Called to Order : 4:59 pm

Approval of minutes : A motion to approve the October BOH minutes was made by Vice Chair Safford and seconded by Member Bertrand. Motion to approve minutes: 3-0.

Citizen Speak Time : None attended the BOH meeting.

Old Business: Job Postings (Sanitarian & School Nurse): Agent Theroux stated last week the Sanitarian job got posted and passed out a copy of job description to the members. The job has been unfilled for almost a year. Due to the urgency, the posting was able to go out to the public as well as in-house. He is not sure how much interest there would be for qualified applicants internally. Hopefully the Health Department can get some qualified applicants, do some immediate interviews and get them settled into the position before the first of the year. The Board members expressed their enthusiasm at the idea of resuming to a full staff during this pandemic, noting it has been an extremely busy time in our office the last 2 years.

Nurse Sherry told the Board that the School Nurse posting has been put on the "School Spring" website by the School Department. She told the Board there was a real good candidate for the position interviewed last week but she declined due to the pay scale. She noted there was another interview scheduled for next week. The Board members asked Nurse Sherry if the nursing pay scale was lower than other surrounding towns for School Nurse positions and she replied yes. She noted it was hard to get and keep nurses because they just go on other town websites and see what they are paying their nursing staff per year. Chairman Fernandez stated that all entities of the health care field seem to be looking for nurses. Nurse Sherry stated they are currently retiring at a rapid rate due to burn out and work overload.

Heritage Village : Agent Theroux told the Board he received no updates on this property. He reached out to the lawyer for the Association's Board to no avail or response to his phone calls. He stated they do have until the New Year to get all the locking mechanisms fixed. He doesn't believe they will make the deadline with the locks due to the lack of communication over the past 2 years about any progress made to that condo complex. Agent Theroux also had complaints from their residents about when the heat would be turned on. He noted that the heating season actually starts on September 15th but the condo

association seemed to pick some random date to turn on the main heating unit, which was in October. After the first of the year, he and the Associate City Solicitor will address them one more time for Correction Order updates. If there is no response, we will start Housing Court proceeding with them to get the Correction Ordered work done.

79 Carr Avenue : Agent Theroux told the Board that all unregistered vehicles are finally gone off the property and the garage needs to be demolished by the end of the year. The owner did pull a permit to demolish the garage but it is not done yet. They also need to cut back some of the brush and grass in the back yard. The Associate Solicitor might try for a receiver to get the rest of the work done if need be. He noted that the colder weather is here and that might hinder further progress on cleaning up the yard and demo. He may try to do another full inspection on the inside to check on the progress of the Correction Order to address remaining safety concerns.

New Business : Agent Theroux told the Board he has had more housing inspection calls with follow up inspections especially in apartment complexes in town. One currently he had to inspect was for 2 separate units of 313 Springfield Street. That is located above the old bike shop on the corner of Rowley and Springfield Streets.

Trailer Park : The owner is still cleaning out one of the trailers where the man passed away. A member of the Board asked Agent Theroux about the status of the trailer where the fire had taken place. The owner of the trailer and the owner of the trailer park complex are going back and forth about who is responsible for what. We are in talks with the Law Department about orders to remove that trailer from the park site all together. The trailer seems to be on the owner's property so the owner would need to be issued the citation. The Agent noted there was another death in the in the trailer park last week. Unfortunately, that trailer needed to be condemned so the owner needs to clean it out. He is also in talks with the Associate Solicitor for getting individual inspections for each of the trailers in the park. It has been far too long and we could have gotten a jump on the condition of the decedent's trailer if we were aware it was in such poor condition.

Unclaimed Bodies: The Health Agent told the Board this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Often there are unattended bodies in town that have passed away alone or with no immediate family members located. He stated there is a need for serious conversations with the City Council and the Town Attorney to allocate monies for these situations. The Medical Examiner's Office can refuse to take bodies if there is no next of kin and have refused in the past. There have also been instances where the M.E.'s office didn't have refrigerated space for decedents. These poor people are left at their final location until the next of kin can be notified which could be days even with multi-agencies working on that. When that is the case, a police officer needs to stay with the body until a resolution can be found. He has seen a case or two that has lasted a few days which could become very costly for the town not to mention the actual health concern for the decedent or Police Officer assigned there. The Police Department, Detective Bureau and even Health Agent try to help find out where family members are located. Funeral homes reluctantly take them on the condition a family member will be found for reimbursement of storage of the body or services for the decedent. These funeral homes have too often gotten stuck for paying the entire bill especially during the opioid crisis with deceased bodies at a rapid pace needing a place to be stored. We also need to reach out to local funeral homes for help or some incentive program to help with this tragic issue. Maybe use them exclusively or they could have reduced rates for the town in these situations. The bottom line is there are no monies in any budget to cover the costs of this process and it is happening now. The Board members lauded the Health Agent and Public Health Nurse for their continued commitment to the workload and for all the extra duties they take on regarding these circumstances. Chairman Fernandez added she appreciates their continued out-reach and social working responsibilities to our residents.

Body Art regulations: The Health Agent was at a convention in Falmouth last month and there was a speaker from Boston. The speaker was an inspector for body art and body art regulations. The Health Agent seemed to think their model of regulations and inspections would be a good fit for Agawam. He noted that Boston has been using these model regulations for the last few years. He is working with the City Solicitor on modification for Agawam.

School Nurse Activities :

Nurse Sherry told the members the position of school nurse is posted with interviews next week. She noted that COVID 19 cases with school children are on the rise. Granger school had some cases as did the E.C.C. Classrooms located in the elementary schools. Doering School has had some cases in their

fifth grade.

A program called "I Cloud" was purchased by the School Department to work in conjunction with the S.N.A.P. program for our nurses. The SNAP program is utilized for such things as putting in medications, office visits, screening results and new student records. The School Department IT was supposed to manage the I Cloud program but they are not doing any technical support for our nurses. They decided to have one of the school nurses become the "administrator" for the system, even though she has no technology background for it. By October the two systems still have not been merged. The nurse at Doering decided to become the "administrator" so she has been doing extra work trying to get the system merged and running for each of the other schools on top of her daily duties. She needed to incorporate each school individually and there are 8 schools in Agawam that need to be transferred. You can imagine her extra work load.

Public Health Nurse : There is still a mask mandate in the schools. When the students and staff of each school reach 80% vaccination status, it could be rescinded going by the Governor's mandate. The Test & Stay program is still going on at Robinson Park School from 6:30 - 8:00 a.m. M-F for the foreseeable future. She has been continuing home visits for flu vaccines. She will be going to Heritage Woods to vaccinate their staff next week.

COVID 19 updates: Sherry gave an update on the recent COVID 19 statistics. There are 60 total cases as of today. In the community there are 57 active cases and 3 active cases in the elderly complexes.

She noted the vaccination rate for Agawam by age groups is the following:

12-15 ~ 49 %	65-74 ~ 84%
16-19 ~ 60%	75 + older 72%
20-29 ~ 55%	
30-49 ~ 65%	
50-64 ~ 71%	

The town is now at 60 % vaccination rate, up from 58%

She told the Board the Health Department will not be doing any COVID 19 booster vaccines for residents. They agreed there really is no extra time for clinics in the near future.

She would put that information on the Town's Website as well as the Health Department site about what pharmacies are available and what vaccine they currently have.

Adjourned: Motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Fernandez seconded by Vice Chair Safford. With a vote of 3-0, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm.

BOH/bc