



**Town of West Boylston**  
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

## **The Board of Health Meeting Minutes**

<b>Date / Time / Location of Meeting</b>	<b>01-12-2022 / 6:00pm / held via Zoom</b>
	<b>Meeting available to view at <a href="https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/wbpa-public-access-tv">https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/wbpa-public-access-tv</a></b>
<b>Members Present – by roll call</b>	<b>Robert Barrell, John Sullivan, Tracy Gagnon, Christopher Whelan, Thomas Mullins</b>
<b>Members Not Present</b>	
<b>Guests</b>	<b>Julie VanArsdalen, CMRPHA; Chris Rucho, Select Board</b>
<b>Welcome – Call to Order</b>	<b>Time: 6:00 pm</b>
<b>Welcome new Board members</b>	<b>Mr. Barrell welcomed new Board members Mr. Whelan and Dr. Mullins.</b>
<b>Approval of Previous Minutes</b>	<b>December 14, 2021 meeting minutes, reviewed via email by members, were approved and signed, after Mr. Barrell requested consensus on a clarification made by Dr. Sullivan after the initial draft was sent out reporting the COVID self-tests distribution, adding “low-income” to the sentence describing the focus of resident distribution.</b>
<b>12-14-2021 Minutes - Motion to Approve</b>	<b>Ms. Gagnon</b>
<b>Motion Seconded</b>	<b>Dr. Sullivan</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>Approved unanimously via roll call.</b>

- Tobacco Sales Violation vote**

**Motion to Approve**  
**Motion Seconded**  
**Result**

The Board was advised by the Town Administrator to enter a vote on the decision at the 12-14-21 Board of Health meeting to waive the inspector’s recommended fine for a business’s violation of the Tobacco Sales regulation. Mr. Barrell reiterated the details of the violation and asked the Board to vote on the decision. Dr. Sullivan entered the motion to approve.

**Dr. Sullivan**  
**Ms. Gagnon**  
**Approved unanimously by those present at 12-14-21 meeting**

- Permit signature authorization vote**

**Motion to Approve**  
**Motion Seconded**  
**Result**

During the 12-14-21 Board meeting, the Board agreed to allow CMRPHA representatives to sign Board of Health permits as needed. A vote to validate this decision was recommended, therefore Mr. Barrell asked for a motion for this decision. He also requested Ms. VanArsdalen provide an overview of the services CMRPHA provides to West Boylston for new members.

**Ms. Gagnon**  
**Dr. Sullivan**  
**Approved unanimously via roll call.**

*The information contained in this electronic message is legally privileged and confidential under applicable law, and is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or disclosure of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete this communication without copying or distributing it.*

- COVID-19 Update

Masking requirements – the mandatory mask requirement is still in effect. Mr. Barrell noted that two other central MA communities recently enacted mask mandates in addition to Worcester, Shrewsbury, and West Boylston. Ms. VanArsdalen reported that Millbury also enacted the mandatory mask requirement, effective today. Ms. Lee asked about enforcement and Mr. Barrell responded that he will be meeting with the Town Administrator; with perhaps a consultation with the Town's Attorney.

Mr. Whelan asked for the rationale regarding the continuation of the mask mandate, in order for the public to understand the Board's decision. Dr. Sullivan provided the rationale, citing that we are in the worst surge of transmission of COVID since its arrival in 2019. He noted that wearing masks to prevent transmission is a well-established proven mitigation. He also reported that recent studies show that cloth masks are much less effective than surgical masks, which are less effective than N-95 masks, but cloth masks are better than nothing. Mr. Whelan stressed that taking the opportunity to educate residents via these discussions is important. He asked that the Board members educate themselves with ongoing research relative to mitigating the spread of the virus in order that continued education be provided to West Boylston residents. He recommended revisiting mask effectiveness and other information related to COVID at our next meeting to inform town residents.

Ms. Gagnon spoke about the upcoming COVID Vaccination clinic on Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 11am to 2pm at the Major Edwards Elementary School gym. She encouraged the members to be present, as it is the Board of Health's role to welcome attendees and answer questions. Masks will be required. She reviewed her coordination for this event with the School Superintendent, the Fire Chief, and the Town Administrator. She noted that this clinic was modeled after the clinic in Lancaster. The second vaccination clinic is scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Barrell asked the Board to consider what is needed to support the effort, such as the Board trailer. Tom Welsh, the Fire Chief, has agreed to check the trailer for helpful items. Mr. Barrell and Ms. Gagnon will also meet this Saturday to review the trailer contents. Ms. Gagnon noted this clinic is open to the general public; it's not for West Boylston residents only.

Dr. Sullivan made a motion to approve the Board of Health sponsorship of the COVID Vaccine Clinic.

Motion to Approve  
Motion Seconded  
Result

Dr. Sullivan

Ms. Gagnon

Approved unanimously via roll call.

Dr. Sullivan addressed contact tracing at the public schools; he reports being approached by Superintendent Meagher about contact tracing process change because of the Omicron surge, the most infectious of the variants. He read the Wachusett School System Superintendent's Notice to Parents (see attached), detailing info about the change in process and

*The information contained in this electronic message is legally privileged and confidential under applicable law, and is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or disclosure of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete this communication without copying or distributing it.*

proposes we allow the West Boylston School Superintendent to put the same system in place.

Mr. Whelan asked if contact tracing is impossible or a challenge; Dr. Sullivan opined that it is impossible due to the variant being so highly transmissible. He noted that a significant number of school staff were out with COVID; and that while approximately 75% of Middle School students and 90% of High School students are vaccinated, only about 32% of Elementary School students are vaccinated. Additionally, the Omicron variant is breaking through vaccination protection.

Also, the Governor recently announced that home tests will be available next week to schools and teachers. Mr. Barrell reports he spoke with our Public Health Nurse, who said that with the high numbers of Omicron infection, accurate contact tracing is “impossible”. Home tests do not have to be reported, and therefore ineffective in regards to monitoring the spread.

Mr. Barrell related that he met with the Select Board last week and discussed how rapid, antigen test results are under-reported, resulting in inaccurate reports. He stressed that contact tracing at this time is extremely difficult, supporting the changes proposed by the School Superintendent. He asked for a motion and vote to support the recommendation by the Superintendent to change the process for tracking COVID in our schools in keeping with Wachusett Public Schools.

Motion to Approve  
Motion Seconded  
Result

Mr. Whelan

Dr. Mullins

Approved unanimously via roll call.

Mr. Barrell reported on the distribution of 1098 COVID test kits we received for the low-income, higher risk population. He said that all the kits have been distributed. Dr. Sullivan voiced his disappointment with the Select Board’s criticism of the efforts of the Board of Health to distribute the tests to those at most risk and low-income residents. Mr. Barrell noted that the Select Board did not seem to understand the directive the Board received regarding distribution.

Dr. Sullivan reported on recent Biobot results from Blackstone (testing of sewerage to quantitate the amount of COVID virus in communities). It appears the virus is peaking based on what the information is showing, and likely that we will begin to see a decrease in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Barrell noted that reports from our public health nurse show no significant recent change in the positive numbers for our community. He also praised the work she is doing for the town. Mr. Barrell asked the Board’s two physician members to explain the better and longer protective response from the vaccine vs. protective response from infection. They also noted the Omicron variant’s ability to “break-through” both vaccine and naturally acquired immunity from infection.

- **CMRPHA Reports (Local & Regional)**

Ms. VanArsdalen provided an overview of inspector responsibilities for the new members, and summary of Local inspections completed since the last report by our CMRPHA

*The information contained in this electronic message is legally privileged and confidential under applicable law, and is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or disclosure of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete this communication without copying or distributing it.*

inspectors. The inspectors continue to follow up on complaints related to mask violations.

There was no new CMRPHA report received this month.

- Bill approval, Financial report

Ms. Lee provided a summary of the most recent financial report, noting invoices received since our last meeting. She noted that the account balance is now more in keeping with our typical balance after the majority of permit fees have been received for 2022 permits.

- Office report

Ms. Lee reported the updates in the Title 5 report since last month. She reported that the sewer hook-up for 45 and 49 Central Street is going forward with Jeff Hawley hired as the contractor; the abandonment fees are still due, and Mr. Hawley is working with Ms. VanArsdalen on mitigation regarding concerns reported by the previous owner that there may be dental waste in the cesspool of 45 Central Street. She also reported that while the plans for a new septic system at 154 Prospect Street were submitted in August 2021, they have not yet been approved and that a contractor has not yet been hired for the project. She contacted the Design Engineer, who has not had any recent contact with the owner.

**Body Art Regulations clarification**

In relation to our Body Art Regulations, the Board voted to adopt a minimum of 2000 hours apprenticeship for Body Artist to include Piercing, and a minimum of 500 hours apprenticeship for Piercing only.

**Motion to Approve**  
**Motion Seconded**  
**Result**

Ms. Gagnon  
Dr. Sullivan  
Approved unanimously via roll call.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Motion Originator**  
**Motion Seconded**  
**Result**  
**Time of Adjournment**

Dr. Mullins  
Mr. Whelan  
Approved unanimously via roll call  
7:05 pm

**Signatures**

---

Robert J. Barrell, MPA, Chairman

---

Christopher Whelan, MEd

---

John Sullivan, MD

---

Thomas J. Mullins, MD

---

Tracy Gagnon, MEd

**Submitted by:** Margaret Lee  
**Date Submitted:** 02-09-2022

*The information contained in this electronic message is legally privileged and confidential under applicable law, and is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or disclosure of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete this communication without copying or distributing it.*

## COVID-19 Notifications

Dear Families and Staff:

As you know, our community is experiencing a sharp increase in cases due to the Omicron variant. Due to this surge, we are making some changes to our notification protocols related to known cases in our schools. The following measures have been endorsed by our local Boards of Health & the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE).

- **Given the current volume of active and emerging cases, it is no longer feasible to perform effective contact-tracing for each case.** However, our previous experience has shown a very low in-school transmission rate due to the various mitigation measures in place. Therefore, we are suspending contact-tracing at this time.
- **Beginning today, COVID-19 notifications will be more general in scope.** Rather than identifying and notifying potential close contacts for each case, families will receive updates from their school principals with relevant information on new cases. At the Pre-K and elementary school levels, families will be notified by classroom since students spend so much of their day with the same classmates. Middle and high school cases will be reported daily to the whole school community so that parents will know the prevalence of new cases in their child's school. As always, it is vital that families remain vigilant in monitoring symptoms and following protocols whenever symptoms arise. Please see the important resources below for more details:

[Self-Screening protocol](#)

[Updated COVID-19 Quarantine Protocols](#)

[COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

[Superintendent's Presentation to School Committee - 1/10/21](#)

Thank you,  
Darryll McCall  
Superintendent

*The information contained in this electronic message is legally privileged and confidential under applicable law, and is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or disclosure of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender and delete this communication without copying or distributing it.*