



Town of Swampscott
Select Board and Board of Health Joint Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 18, 2020 – 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellios (Chair), Naomi Dreeben (Vice Chair), Don Hause, Polly Titcomb, Laura Spathanas

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, (Chair), Emily Cilley, Stephanie Goodman

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Ron Mendes, Assistant Town Administrator of Administration and Finance; Gino Cresta, Assistant Town Administrator; Jeff Vaughan, Health Director; Graham Archer, Fire Chief; Ron Madigan, Police Chief; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm

COVID-19 UPDATE

Board of Selectmen Chairman Peter Spellios opened the meeting by explaining the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

The purpose of the meeting is to engage in conversation with the Board of Health and Select Board about the Swampscott Emergency Management Team's response to the COVID-19 virus. The Emergency Management Team consists of the Fire Chief, Police Chief, School Superintendent, Public Health Director, Public Health Nurse, Chair of the Board of Health, Senior Center Director, Town Administrator, Select Board Chair Peter Spellios, Select Board Vice-Chair Naomi Dreeben, and other Town staff. The group meets daily to discuss updates and strategize an organized approach to addressing the implications of the virus.

Marianne Hartmann, the Chair of the Board of Health spoke with an update about the public health situation. There is one presumptive case in Swampscott and there is limited information that can be shared about the case. She emphasized that this is not the only case in Swampscott and people need to practice social distancing and not gather in public spaces.

Public Health Nurse Neia Illingworth provided an update on COVID-19. She described the virus and discussed how it can be transmitted from person to person. She shared a “Flattening the Curve” graph to demonstrate the importance of social distancing.

The Swampscott Health Department has developed a pandemic plan and a continuity of operations plan. They are holding regular meetings with town officials and communicate regularly with Mass DPH and other Boards of Health and Health Departments in surrounding communities. They promote consistent messages on social distancing and to counteract fear and confusion. They also monitor individuals and isolation and quarantine to ensure people are in compliance.

Fire Chief Graham Archer provided an update on the Emergency Management Team’s response including changes to emergency service protocols, regular contact with the Mass Emergency Management Agency, daily meetings of the EMT, and preparations for prolonged period of social distancing protocols and further disruption to normal activities. He also provided information on services available to the community including grab-and-go lunches and Senior Center outreach.

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald provided an update about Town services including closures of Town Hall, schools, library, and senior center but described programs that are still operating such as food delivery and pick-up services and virtual activities through the library, senior center, and recreation department.

There was a discussion among the board about safe ways to still get exercise, engage with others from a distance, and stay active while remaining safe and practicing social distancing. The board also discussed how to support local businesses including restaurants while staying safe, particularly regarding takeout and curbside pickup. The board discussed how to enforce group gatherings in public spaces such as fields. Members of the board expressed concern about closing the fields to the public as people need to be able to be outside in open spaces for physical and mental wellness.

The meeting was open for questions from the public. A resident expressed concern that school buildings are not adequately set up for appropriate handwashing and asked if there were plans to upgrade the faucets and replace antiquated soap dispensers. Marianne responded that the School Committee and Superintendent are currently addressing this issue.

A resident asked what is being done to reach populations that are not necessarily connected, such as people whose first language is not English, people with disabilities, and people who are undocumented. Chairman Spellos provided information about how the Senior Center is reaching out to the senior population.

A resident real estate agent discussed issues being faced by agents and homeowners, specifically a moratorium on utility readings and smoke detector appointments. She suggested technology be utilized to get around safety issues with employees entering buildings. Homeowners are concerned about being able to move forward on sale transactions.

The Select Board and Board of Health will hold joint meetings weekly to provide updates on the COVID-19 situation.

Ms. Hartmann emphasized that while there is only one presumptive positive case in Swampscott, she feels confident that there are more people who are asymptomatic or awaiting test results so people need to practice social distancing, practice hygiene, and avoid gatherings.

Mr. Spellios provided information on how to sign up for the emergency alert robocall and encouraged people to stay tuned into the Facebook page.

The boards revisited the discussion about potential field closures. It was decided that the conversation would be continued by the Emergency Management Team and addressed at a future meeting.

On **MOTION** (Hause) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn the meeting.

On **MOTION** (Cilley) and **SECONDED** (Goodman) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

True Attest,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allie Fiske".

Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Select Board 4/29/20