



CITY OF GARDNER
OFFICE OF THE
BOARD OF HEALTH
95 PLEASANT ST, ROOM 29
GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS 01440



Members Present: Lauren Saunders – Health Director
Susan Avallone, RN – Chairperson
Michele Parker, MD – Member
Geoff Tobia, Esq. - Member

Board of Health meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday February 23, 2022

4:35 Meeting called to order.

4:38 The minutes from the January 24, 2022 Board of Health meeting was reviewed, discussed and approved pending 1 revision.

4:43 COVID Updates: The municipal mask mandate that had been put in effect on 12/22/21 is discussed. At the 1/20/2022 BOH meeting, the positivity rate was 20.61% in Massachusetts and 26.05% in Gardner. As of 2/17/22 the positivity rate is 4.22% in Massachusetts and 8.89% in Gardner. The positivity rate has significantly decreased. The Gardner Public Schools Safety Committee has already decided to let the school mask mandate expire on 2/28/22 per DESE guidelines. The Board votes unanimously to end the municipal mask mandate effective immediately. The Board also votes unanimously to adopt the MA DPH community mask advisory.

The city is holding a free rapid home test kit distribution on 2/24/22 from 12:00pm - 7:00pm at the PACC. Residents can also come to the Health Department office and get up to 3 boxes of kits for free.

4:50 Old Business: Lauren gives an update on 35 Graham Street which was the hearing held at last month's meeting. Mr. Eresian has attempted to gain access to the property to identify the heating issue, but the police were called so Mr. Eresian left. The repairs have not been completed. The Health Department has consulted the City Solicitor and filed for a hearing in housing court. That hearing is scheduled for Friday 3/11/22 in Leominster. The City Solicitor plans to be present at the hearing. The Health Department has also filed another housing court case that will be heard the same day, this is related to a failure to correct multiple violations in an apartment.

An emergency condemnation of a private residence occurred on 1/27/22, the Health, Building, Fire, and Police Departments were all present along with EMS. The Health Department obtained an administrative search warrant for these departments to evaluate the property. After inspection, property was condemned as unfit for human habitation as there was no electricity, running water or working bathroom facilities, ceilings were falling in, there is mold, and the property was not weathertight to the elements. The resident is currently in temporary housing and the Health Department along with the Senior Center and CAC are working to secure this individual permanent housing locally. They have also assisted her in completing an application for health insurance.

There is a Food Establishment Permit holder that has had repeat violations during food inspections and also property violations. Lauren would like to call both the property owner and the manager of the business before the Board for a hearing. The violations include expired food, food removed from bulk packaging for individual sale, and water leaking from the ceiling.

There had been some issues with curbside refuse collection mentioned at the last meeting with as EL Harvey; much of the staff had COVID, but the service seems to be back to normal at this time.

- 5:05 New Business: The City of Fitchburg applied for a substance use prevention grant, called MASS CALL 3, and stands for ‘Massachusetts Collaborative for Action, Leadership, and Learning 3.’ This grant has been awarded under the substance misuse prevention grant a program through DPH. While Fitchburg is the lead community for this grant, Gardner is one of the communities included in the grant. Our Prevention Coordinator will be working with the Sue Christianson who is the Grant Coordinator and also the Prevention Coordinator for Fitchburg on this grant.**

The downtown trash barrels are going to be replaced. The current Victorian barrels are open to the elements, they fill with water, snow and ice which make them difficult to empty. There have also been past complaints of pests, mice and trash overflow causing trash to fall out and litter the area. The new receptacles purchased will be more sanitary. The funds have been approved by City Counsel and will be ordered soon.

Lauren updated the board that she has completed her course requirements and has been approved by NEHA to take the Registered Sanitarian exam.

- 5:10 Next meeting: Monday March 28, 2022 at 4:30 pm; this will be an in-person meeting; adjourn.**

Susan Avallone RN, Chairperson

Atty. Geoffrey Tobia, Member

Michele C. Parker MD, Member

All conversations are documented on recordings identified as BOH February Meeting 2/23/2022