



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Public Health



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Matilde Castiel, MD
Health & Human Services
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark
Public Health
Director

DATE: February 4, 2019
RE: WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
START TIME: 6:30 PM
LOCATION: WORCESTER DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
25 MEADE STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM 109
WORCESTER, MA 01610

Welcome & Introductions:

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

Members present: David Fort, Chair, Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD and Abigail Averbach WDPH Staff: Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director of DPH, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH

Approval of the January 7, 2019 Minutes:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of January 7, 2019 made by Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair Second - Abigail Averbach – Approved

Review and act on medical marijuana dispensary license for The Botanist:

Chris Tolford, General Manager: Located at 65 Pullman Street, Worcester, formally known as Prime Wellness. Worked with various departments within the city to change name to The Botanist. Opened on December 21, 2018. We average 35 patients per day. We operate in 19 states across the country. We have been working on our standard operating procedures from seed to sale.

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: This meeting is to make BOH aware of the new ownership and name change and learn more about their operation. Also if you have any questions. A new permit needs to be made due to the name change.

Chris Tolford, General Manager: The rules and regulations for the Massachusetts Medical Marijuana originally required all companies be formed as a non-profit entity. Last year, the Mass DPH, changed and allowed companies to go through a for profit company. Chris is more than happy to give any of the BOH members a tour of the facility. Edith and David are interested.

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, made a motion to issue a license to operate a medical marijuana dispensary for The Botanist. All in favor. The motion was passed unanimously



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Review and act on update relative to BOH vacancy update:

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: Karyn Clark, Director of PH and I, along with City Hall staff have conducted five interviews. At this time, a recommendation will be made to the City Manager. A decision will be made in the next couple of weeks.

Review and act on discussion regarding the composition of City Boards and Commissions:

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: Last BOH meeting, Casey Burns and Brenna Robeson, from the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, spoke about the current Boards and Commissions in the city and how many of the members had any type of health background. In 2014, 35% had a health background and in 2018 43% have a health background. Now that the data has been collected, we can ask Casey if there are any types of strategies for next steps.

David Fort, Chair: It would be great to get some data on the racial ethnic diversity of these Boards. I want to make sure that there's a diverse panel on every board.

Michael Hirsh, Medical Director DPH: The city announced the new affirmative action policy. Our diversity officer, Suja Chacko, has derived an overarching theme that if all things are equal and there's an underserved minority population for the same position, as a city we will always commit to hire the underserved population.

The board would like to invite Suja to an upcoming meeting to discuss the new affirmative action plan.

Review and act on discussion relative to the reorganization of BOH:

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: Reviewed the principles of operation, which is to be discussed every May in terms of Chair and Vice Chair. Need to have a discussion to think about the rules or any reorganization that you want to consider.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Potentially in the interim we can decide as a board on some recommendations we might make to the City Manager, allowing him to make the final decision.

BOH members: Before making a decision for Chair and Vice Chair, make a formal recommendation to the City Manager for approval. Discussed possibility of Edith as Chair and Jerry as Vice Chair.

Review and act on continued discussion regarding CHIP priority areas:

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: Crosswalk distributed. This is an opportunity to look through the different priority areas and strategies. If there's anything you want to pursue or start to work on regarding the CHIP.

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: Looking at Access to Care, our action is a position statement. I think we can move forward on this. Access to Healthy Food, need more information on the ordinance.

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: The City Council passed the Urban Agriculture ordinance. We can put that on our agenda to learn more about the ordinance that was just passed at an upcoming meeting.

David Fort, Chair: There are a number of position statements under the “action “column that we can move forward on. Would like to see if we can draft a position statement for the different priority areas and have it ready to distribute at the next couple of meetings.

Abigail Averbach: April is Minority Health Month, would like to request having presentations on the most significant racial disparities and health outcomes for the City of Worcester. That would be a good way to write a position statement.

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: Think about what action steps we could take that leads to a reduction of opioid overdoses?

Colleen Bolen, Deputy Director DPH: You can download the *Stigma Free Worcester* app on your phone this will let you know the places in Worcester for treatment, housing and food.

Abigail Averbach: Would like the board to be notified of any communicable disease outbreaks/concerns.

Motion to adjourn; Abigail Averbach, second by Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair

Adjourn: 7:30pm

Next Meeting -- March 4, 2019 at 6:30pm

Future Meeting Topics:

Presentation regarding diversity on City Boards and Commissions

Presentation on Racial Disparities

Access to Care draft position statement

Update on communicable diseases

Update on needle exchange