

**Board of Health Meeting
November 17, 2005**

PRESENT: David Osler, M.D., Chairman
Babette Mello, Board Member
Noreen Burke, Director
Brian Green, M.D., Pending Appointment Board Member
Maria Luisa Parra, Pending Appointment Board Member
Jason Zube, Co-Owner, The Painted Bird
Jack O’Kane, Co-Owner, The Painted Bird

Dr Osler called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Accept Minutes:

Motion by Babette Mello to accept the 11/17/05 minutes.
2nd by Dr Osler – Minutes accepted 2-0.

The May 5th Minutes:

The May 5th minutes were discussed and Dr. Osler suggested keeping the minutes as they are and that they cannot be formerly approved. But note that the recommendations are from a Board Member, Cecilia Sosa-Patterson who is no longer on the Board and is unable to vote on these minutes. Note at the end of the May 05 minutes that this Acknowledges her suggestions and makes them part of the record.

Updates: by Noreen Burke, Health Director

Tobacco Regs Changes: Noreen will ask Cesar to come to the December 15th meeting to provide and overview to new Board members of the 5 City Tobacco Control Program Babette Mello already was in contact with Cesar to go over some suggested changes to the Youth Tobacco Regulations.

Body Art Regulations – Noreen would like to follow the same procedure as we did with the cimex (bedbugs) prevention and to put together a working group. She has already been in touch with staff at Cambridge and Quincy Public Health Departments who are dedicated to the body artwork to find out about their apprenticeship process. Noreen informed Jason Zube that she wants to invite him to a planning meeting on November 23 at her office. Also, Frank Wright, an Attorney for the City made recommendations that all meetings should be public meetings and to post these meetings. It was also mentioned that the owners of the two tattoo parlors currently in Somerville, Mongo’s Tattoo Madness and the Painted Bird would have great ideas on how to strengthen the regulations. Jack O’Kane mentioned that he didn’t see how the City of Somerville could have more tattoo parlors unless they go down by the Holiday Inn because there was a limit on how many can be in certain areas. There are zoning regulations that have to be zoned industrial IA. From what he checked into; there was no other IA zoning outside of the Holiday Inn area. Jack seemed to thing that the most, which Somerville would have

for tattoo establishments in the future, would be 4. In regards, to the apprenticeship issues, to be written into the regulations there should not be more than 2 to 3 apprentices working under an artist. Having 5 to 6 working would be unrealistic. Dr Osler also recommended that we get in touch with pre- med-student Jennifer Birk who volunteered her services during the cimex outbreak and that she was great. Maybe she would like to help out in the body art regulations.

The fee increases that are governed by BOH regulation, and tobacco regs changes are on the immediate horizon for discussion and decision.

Noreen and Dr. Green have already talked about the relationship building with the Chamber of Commerce and just making the rounds to get Brian introduced. Noreen would like to provide education as much as possible before making decisions on issues. Another education strategy for new Board members is to invite each of the Program Directors who work in the Health Department to attend a Board meeting to go over their programs over the next several months. It was mentioned that Maria Luisa Parra and Brian Green should meet and get to know the Inspectors.

Strategic Planning and Consultants – Noreen mentioned that she would like to hire a coach/planner to assist her in developing a Strategic Plan for the Health Department. Dr Osler questioned whether Directors ever get evaluated on their job performance. The answer is no. But the City has hired a new Personnel Director who comes with a lot of experience and Noreen hopes evaluations will happen. Right now we have the Somerstat program which focuses on outcome and accountability with various departments within the City. Somerstat is going in the right direction. Noreen also stated that the Health Director really needs an Assistant Director because this job is too far huge for one person to do. The things we need to do to advocate for is an Assistant. The Health Department is also in dire need for an additional Public Health Nurse, and for additional administrative support. Dr Osler also said during the budget process, which happens Feb/Mar that we include funds and get the city to fund these positions so the Health Department can be run a lot more efficiently. Also we need to get the Alderman involved and let them know what the Health Dept does. Ask them for assistance in advocating to the Mayor that these proposals are necessary. Dr Osler also recommended that Dr. Green and Ms. Parra should meet the Alderman too.

Cimex: Cimex brochures are printed in Spanish, Portuguese, Creole, and we are still getting some calls. People arrive at our office with their bedbugs in paper bags and we are trying to set some ground rules. We don't want these bedbugs to get into the furniture. We would have a whole building infested. We are in the process of getting the inspectors protective equipment

Emergency Preparedness. There are huge demands about our preparedness at the local level if a bioterrorist threat were to become real or other terrorist incidents. We are part of Metro Boston Homeland Security Region, the communities that touch Boston. Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline, Quincy and Revere make up this so-called Metro Boston Homeland Security Region. The Public Health Nurse has been going to many of

these meetings. We are also part of Region 4B a configuration of communities created by MDPH.

One of the things we been talking about as a region is developing a Medical Volunteer Corps so we would have a large number of trained people to call upon in the event of a large-scale terrorist event. We have a database of doctors, pharmacists, and nurses, nursing assistants who are licensed in the state and who live or work in Somerville. It needs a dedicated staff person to get this Volunteer Medical Corps up and running. A lot of communities are looking at this Volunteer Medical Corps as a way to increase their capacity. We are an under resourced Health Dept. One of the major issues would be getting your staff to come from outlying communities and assist during an emergency event. Staff will need to be protected first against the illness or the strain and to protect their family so that they can safely work. Public health has a major function in the event of a bioterrorist incident or flu pandemic. For example in the event of a flu pandemic, we would be running Emergency Dispensing Sites called EDS Sites. We have to engage in identifying our sites; plans to get our own staff protected first and their families so they would actually come to work and show up and feel safe. The Mayor is talking about hiring or finding a well-qualified person to be an emergency preparedness Coordinator for the city. Noreen would like to have Dr.Green and Ms.Parra go to more emergency trainings because in the event of an incident, we would set up an Incident Command System. The Health Director would be the Incident Commander, a medical officer is necessary, and having mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities that would come help us. We made a good start last year and hope to continue with more consultant dollars to increase readiness for Emergency Preparedness. Maria Parra questioned how the education dept (school system) would be involved. Would they make the community aware of what they need to do if a flu outbreak would occur? If I need to go to work, who would take care of children if they were home sick? We need to start making the community aware of the need of organizing. Through the Dept of Education, we could start making the community aware of what they could do, educate the parents, students in a preventive way when emergency arises. Noreen stated that we have a new superintendent that we are building a very good relationship with, and he invited Leni to talk about crisis response within the schools. The key is having the relationships in place before the crisis even happens The key is then for people to recognize the expertise that the public health has, but for educators to do what they are good at which is giving information to parents, teachers their network. Dr. Osler suggested that Dr.Green meet with the School Superintendent or have the whole Board meet the new School Superintendent.

Fee Increase – There are a number of fee increases that the Mayor has on his agenda. The BOA as part of his budget passed it. He has asked to increase various license permits and fees and some, which pertain to the BOH. Some of these we adopted a state statute a few years ago and they can be raised, and number of them has to come before the BOH because of regulations. They are: location of tobacco, massage practitioners, massage establishments, body art practitioners, body art establishments, dumpster users, and dumpsters contractors. New fee schedule enclosed. Dr. Green wanted to know what location of tobacco meant. Noreen told him it was stores who sold tobacco products like your local convenient stores for ex. 7-Eleven. Dr. Osler also mentioned that the fee

increase puts a burden on small business owners. The board has the power not to increase the fees. Dr. Green mentioned that what the board sense of the benefits of the community verses the benefits too the city. Ms. Parra and Noreen would like the revenue come back to the Health Dept. It currently doesn't. It goes into the General Fund.

Noreen also informed the two new prospective board members that meetings are held on the 3rd Thursdays of each month.

Babette Mello made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on December 15, 2005 @ 5:00 p.m. at the Somerville Health Department, Conference Room located at 50 Evergreen Avenue.

Respectfully submitted.
Kathy Henkle
Administrative Assistant