

City of Somerville
Board of Health Meeting
May 17, 2007

Present: Dr. Brian Green, Board Chairperson
Babette Mello, Board Member
Paula Machado, Board Member
Noreen Burke, Health Director
Kathy Henkle, Secretary to the Board
Dr. Michael Coffey, Supervising Physician of Schools
Christine Henebury, School Nurse Leader

Meeting Call to Order:

Dr Green made a motion to call the meeting to order at 5:05pm
Ms. Machado seconded it.

Accept Minutes:

Ms. Mello made a motion to accept the March minutes.
Ms. Machado seconded it.

Accept Director's Report:

Ms. Mello made a motion to accept the Director's March Report.
Dr. Green seconded it.
Dr. Green made a motion to accept the Director's April Report
Ms. Mello seconded it.

Dr. Green acknowledged to the board members on the media attention that Shape-Up-Somerville has gotten in the last few days. Articles appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, Somerville Journal and Ms. Machado saw it on the MSN website. There will be an event next Wednesday, May 23 at City Hall will there will be a short presentation on it's first year accomplishments. The event will start at 5:00pm.

Metamorphosis Aesthetic Trends/Julia Bowers – Ms. Burke passed around Ms. Julia Bowers's folder with all necessary and completed documents for review. Dr. Green made two points. Is Ms. Bowers free from all communicable diseases and has her license ever been suspended? The application indeed stated that her license has not been suspended and she is cleared of all communicable diseases. On that note, Dr. Green moved to vote to approve Ms. Bowers's application for a Body Art Practitioner License. Ms. Machado seconded it. A vote was taken – 3/0

Central Variety Store – Ms. Mello was in contact with the Tobacco Director, Cesar Pungirum, regarding the recent robbery and a young girl was pushed. Ms. Mello brought in a copy of the Somerville Journal's report of the incident. The reason for robbery was that the owner of the store would not sell him cigars but she has been selling cigars to other miners and he was upset. Ms. Mello requested that the Tobacco Director keep a close eye on this store and be diligent with compliance checks when it comes to Central Variety

Director's Updates:

Trans Fat Issue – Ms. Burke spoke briefly that the Town of Brookline is considering banning trans fats from schools and restaurants. They will be voting at their next town meeting on May 29, 2007 and if it passes Brookline will be the first Bay State municipality to ban trans fats. Ms. Burke wants to keep the trans fat on the radar. Most likely the city of Somerville will be discussing this in the near future.

Tobaccoless Hookah Lounges – Mr. Pungirum, the Tobacco Director informed Ms. Burke that a couple came into his office on April 23, 2007 to find out what they needed to do to open a hookah lounge in Somerville and then again on May 10, 2007 two other people came into his office with a similar request. A hookah is a water pipe common in middle –eastern countries. It burns a specific type of tobacco mixture that includes molasses, fruits, and other herbs. The smoke is cooled by a liquid in the base of the pipe and then drawn through a hose that is shared by several smokers. Each smoking session typically lasts between 40 and 45 minutes. Concerns – enforcement would be nearly impossible and smokings of non-tobacco products would create other public health concerns. In conclusion, an easy solution would be to amend the definition of “smoking” in the Somerville Board of Health Tobacco Regulations is to include the smoking of non-tobacco products.

Needle Disposal Update – The state asked if the City of Somerville would like to get involved to pilot receiving a kiosk to properly collect and dispose of hypodermic needles. As of July 1, 2007, it will be illegal to dispose of needles in the trash.

Personnel – The new Assistant Director was hired. Ms. Kenya-Elisa McLaren will start May 29, 2007.

Somerville Schools Asthma Action Plan Project – Ms. Burke invited Dr. Michael Coffey, the Supervising Physician of Schools and Ms. Christine Henebury, the school Nurse Leader to give a short power-point presentation on the asthma action plans. Highlights of the presentation were that 20 million Americans are chronically affected with 10 million suffering from allergic asthma. 12.8 million school days are missed annually. Barriers to asthma action plans are lack of communication from physicians; poor physician by in and physicians may not have peak flow data. What the schools did with the help of Tufts medical student James Avruch, they acquired peak flows on most Somerville students with asthma and letters were sent to all doctors with patients in Somerville public schools k-8 informing them that their patient did not have an asthma action plan (aap). The result of the 2006-2007 school year thus far is that 51 asthma action plans of 153 students have been done which is 33%. This is up from 7% last year. Future plans are being worked on which include shifting focus to students with “active asthma”, defined as students who access nurse’s office regularly for asthma –related care. We will keep trying to get aaps from students’ doctors. Nurses will send letters to parents encouraging them to bring their child to see a doctor this summer.

Dr Green made a motion to closed the meeting @ 6:20pm
Ms. Machado seconded it.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Henkle. Secretary to the Board
May 25, 2007