

City of Somerville
Board of Health Meeting
January 17, 2008

Present: Dr. Brian Green, Board Chairperson
Babette Mello, Board Member
Paula Machado, Board Member
Noreen Burke, Health Director
Frank Wright, Assistant City Solicitor

Absent: Kathy Henkle, Board Secretary

Meeting Call to Order:

Dr. Green. made a motion to call the meeting to order at 5:07pm.

Ms. Machado seconded it.

Accept Minutes:

Ms. Mello made a motion to accept the December 2007 minutes.

Ms. Machado seconded it.

Accept Directors Report:

Ms. Mello made a motion to accept the Directors Report.

Ms. Machado seconded it.

Updates on Emerging Public Health Issues:

Private Wells – A neighbor who complained about an individual at 42 Cross Street who dug a private well which feeds a laundry mat and 2 apartments notified The City of Somerville’s Water Department. This individual did not pull out the proper permits to perform this work. However, he did provide a Well Completion Report from his contractor. The concerns of the Water Department and Health Department are whether there is cross-contamination with the City’s water systems. A full investigation has been on going conducted by the City’s Water Department and Law Office. According to Frank Wright, there are 60 private wells in Somerville and he recommends that the City of Somerville should implement Regulations to govern private wells. Dr. Green brought 3 issues to the table – 1.) Do we regulate private wells? 2.) Do we regulate private wells based on uses of the water? – 3.) Do we need a regulation saying that we cannot connect well water to city systems? Or is that already covered by the state? Ms. Burke, along with Harry Vaughn, the City’s Sanitation Inspector with the help of the Law office will be working on regulations to govern the city’s private wells. Ms. Burke’s hopes to present a draft

to the Board at its next meeting in February.

Massage Regulations – The Health Department received notification from the Division of Professional Licensure that municipalities will no longer have direct oversight of massage therapists, massage facilities, or massage schools. However, local authorities do retain sole jurisdiction over some “body work” practitioners specifically excluded from the new law. The city’s massage regulations will need to be revised and amended. Harry Vaughn suggested that it be known as Body Work Therapy Regulations. The City’s website has been updated with this news.

Hookah Lounges – The current Somerville Board of Health regulation defines smoking as: “Inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying any lighted cigar, cigarette, or other lighted tobacco product in any form. The Board made a motion to vote and accept the definition of smoking from the state law which reads: “Smoking or smoke, the lighting of a cigar,

cigarette, pipe or other tobacco product or possessing a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or other tobacco or non-tobacco product designed to be combusted and inhaled. Dr.Green asked for a vote in favor of the change. 3 members voted in favor of accepting the definition of smoking from the state law.

Directors Report

Needle Kiosk – A meeting scheduled for February 1, 2008 will be held with Somerville Hospital representatives to discuss having the needle kiosk be placed at their facility.

Personnel – Clinical Youth Specialist position has been offered to Patricia Contente She will start in February. Maureen Monagle has accepted the position of Public Health Nurse Manager, and

Liz Quaratiello will take over the part-time Public Health Nurse manager position.

Maureen is still in the school nurse position for the moment until we can hire more nurses. We are currently down 2 full-time nursing positions.

Emergency Preparedness – We have received our annual \$16,000 local allocation, which must be spent by August 8, 2008. **Announcements** – State public health regulators approved a proposal to allow pharmacies to open medical clinics in their stores known as Minute Clinics. These clinics are a great way to keep people from swarming into hospital emergency rooms where an illness doesn't meet an emergency threshold. Customers will be seen by nurse practitioners where they will be able to handle minor medical conditions, such as headaches, poison ivy, sore throats, etc. The nurse practitioners will have access to a physician if warranted by telephone. This was warranted due to hospital emergency rooms being overwhelmed by non-emergency visits, increasing our insurance costs. A shortage of primary care physician's causes month long waits.

The next Board of Health meeting will be February 21, 2008 at 5:00pm

Ms. Mello made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:10pm. Ms. Machado seconded it.

Kathy Henkle
January 23, 2008

