



TOWN OF TISBURY

Office of

THE BOARD OF HEALTH

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MEETING MINUTES – March 31, 2020 – 11:00 AM

The Tisbury Board of Health (BOH) met on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Due to ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Chairman Pratt called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

Commissioners in attendance were Chairman Jeff Pratt, Vice-Chairman Malcolm Boyd, and Dr. Michael Loberg, Clerk. Ms. Maura Valley, Health Agent, and Ms. Catie Blake, Assistant Health Agent were also in attendance.

Guest(s): Jimmy Rogers, Selectman; Selectman Jeff Kristal & Mr. Jay Grande, Town Administrator, joined the conference call midway through the meeting.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Update

Ms. Valley reported that starting today, more demographic information, including gender and age range, for confirmed COVID-19 cases, will be reported in her daily updates to the general public. At 3:30 PM, the update will be sent to Town officials, so they have it for review before it is released at 4 PM to the general public. The Department of Public Health (DPH) has requested that the updates be published on an Island wide basis only.

Island health agents are meeting daily and are maintaining regular contact with representatives from Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH). They are trying to establish a protocol for following up with patients who have not been tested but have received a symptomatic diagnosis by their physician. Such cases aren't being tracked; cases are only recorded if they have been tested at MVH. Only health agents are conducting contact tracing for their respective towns. If a health agent is notified of a symptomatic case, they will conduct daily follow up calls.

Ms. Valley reminded the commissioners that testing is conducted and reported to the DPH by MVH. She believes that private labs, not the DPH, are processing most of the test kits. It is not clear if MVH is expecting to receive "quick tests". She stated that there has been a delay with the reporting which has caused some discrepancies in the daily updates provided by the boards of health and MVH. Health agents and Island Health

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Care (IHC) nurses are working with representatives from MVH and the DPH to reconcile the actual number of positive cases on the Island to ensure alignment with the reporting going forward. At this time, there are eight (8) confirmed cases and (17) pending tests.

Ms. Valley reported that all Island towns have received grant money from Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) to cover expenses related to COVID-19 response efforts. The Town of Tisbury will receive \$5,000 which will cover some of the additional costs incurred for the public nursing contract with IHC, who has been asked to show expenses incurred for COVID-19 response as a separate line item on their bills. Nursing services being provided at this time include follow up with MVH, COVID-infected patients, and consultations with Island health agents.

BOH Operational Update

Ms. Valley reported that Ms. Catie Blake has taped a couple of workouts for her clientele at the Tisbury Senior Center to view on MVTV.

Ms. Valley reported that Counsel for Island towns have approved a plan for drafting back-to-work guidelines for construction. A working group is being assembled to develop guidelines for a phased approach. Mr. Matt Poole, Edgartown Health Agent, is representing the health agents. Mr. Ross Seavey, Tisbury Building Inspector, will also be a committee member. In the meantime, some towns are looking to extend the current moratorium (from April 7th) to April 21, 2020. Ms. Valley will keep the commissioners apprised of the group's progress and details of the phases for their eventual vote.

Ms. Valley asked Selectman Rogers to provide his comments. He stated that he (and Brian Packish and Vineyard builders) supports the implementation of a written protocol for back-to-work guidelines, which should outline restrictions for working on a jobsite, put safety first, and are enforceable by the health and building departments. There are still concerns, though, that workers commuting from off-island won't practice social distancing on the ferries, especially The Patriot. He reminded the attendees that Governor Baker could change pending back-to-work plans during his press conference later today.

In general, it was agreed that implementation of the guidelines on April 7th may be too ambitious. Ms. Valley also agreed and stated that there will most certainly be an uptick in the number of Island cases and timing for release of the guidelines to the general public will need to be strategic in relation to the uptick and frequency of cases reported.

As soon as there is a recommendation from the working group, Ms. Valley will notify the commissioners. The meeting may need to occur before the next BOH meeting on April 7th. Hopefully, information will be available for meeting on Friday, April 3rd. The BOH commissioners and Town Selectman will need to sign the back-to-work order.

BOH Staffing

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Ms. Valley reported that Ms. Blake has been working in the BOH office in the mornings. She has been doing a great job at conducting site visits with restaurant and grocery store owners. Valerie has been providing phone coverage in the afternoons for general and COVID-19 related questions and comments. Such split coverage is necessary so Ms. Valley is available to attend the many COVID-19 specific meetings, conduct contact tracing calls and respond to other health agent related tasks.

Ms. Blake reported that most restaurants and grocery stores are ahead of the curve in responding to the restrictions for working. Employees are wearing gloves and most are wearing masks. Plexi glass barriers have been or are in the process of being installed at cash registers. There were a couple of setbacks with Stop & Shop, but their management has resolved the issues. The Vineyard Grocer has also improved the way they are dealing with the restrictions. A number of restaurant establishments have opted to close and not offer curbside service.

Chairman Pratt commended Ms. Blake on her calming and affirmative efforts during her visit to the food pantry. The volunteers were very appreciative of her visit.

Green Burials

A discussion was postponed pending information from the property owner (and the State).

Disposal Works Application(s) for Review

DWA 4250 Amy Aronson / 156 Hines Point / 11-A-22 – Approved with installation of a NitROE system, which will provide better treatment for a three (3) bedroom dwelling versus two (2) bedrooms with a standard Title 5 system in a coastal district and with lot size restrictions. Ms. Valley stated that such a proposal is not atypical of other installations at Hines Point.

With no further business to conduct, the Board of Health commissioners adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Soushek
Administrative Secretary

Document(s)

The Board of Health commissioners accept the meeting minutes, dated March 25, 2020, as presented.

Date: 5/4/20

Signed: Jeff Pratt
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DocuSigned by:
Malcolm Boyd
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Michael D. L...
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