

Board of Health Meeting
May 5, 2005

PRESENT: David Osler, M.D., Chairman
Cecilia Sosa-Patterson
Noreen Burke, Director
Rita VanSteensburg, Administrative Assistant

Dr. Osler called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM.

Accept Minutes – April 7, 2005:

Upon review of the April 7, 2005 board minutes Ms. Sosa –Patterson requested to table the minutes to next month. Her reason was to discuss add-ins to the minutes relative to the Board moving forward to establish a revolving or escrow account for the Health Dept. She stated that she wants to “keep clean files and this would make sense.” She presented Board members with a letter that addressed Cimex, Somerville Code of Ordinances, Article II pertaining to the Board of Health, the Somerville city Charter and the Board of Health Autonomy according to MGL, Chapter 111. She stated that she would also like to address the exploration of Board members from three to five members. She asked what are the expectations and what is the reasoning behind the suggestion? Discussion followed and Dr. Osler explained to her that minutes are a reflection of what was discussed at the last meeting. He asked if the minutes accurately reflect what we talked about last month. Her retort was generally, yes. She then stated “there is no clear language that states the commissioners are in favor of having five members and there was no official vote.” Again, Dr. Osler explained that the minutes are a reflection of what was discussed at the last meeting. Dr. Osler asked if there were any other issues she wanted to address. Ms. Sosa-Patterson referred to the last paragraph on page 2 of the minutes re: the inclusion of “representation” of persons of minority and ethnic groups should have said “presentation” from persons of a minority and ethnic groups in order for the commissioners to learn about the different groups in the City and their struggles. Dr. Osler went on to say that is not what he said and it shouldn’t be in the minutes. He said we can talk about presentations at future meeting but this was not said last month. Ms. Burke interjected that she didn’t know what the presentation was about and Dr. Osler stated that during prior meetings, discussion was to have presentations from different minorities before the board to talk about issues pertaining to their ethnic groups. Dr. Osler stated the intent of his statement last month for representation of persons of minority and ethnic groups was to have it put back on the docket. Ms. Burke stated that she thought we were talking about cultural competency and language capacity and the need to have more representation in the Health Department as well as on the Board. Dr. Osler again reiterated that the point was to put it back on the agenda for future meetings under the guise of strategic planning. Dr. Osler then stated whether we call it presentation or representation he wasn’t sure if it differed. Noreen stated for her it is two different sets of work. Ms. Sosa-Patterson stated that this has been pending since last June. Ms. Sosa-Patterson made a motion to approve the minutes with the change of wording from “representation” to “presentation”. Dr. Osler seconded the motion and the motion passed two to zero. Ms. Mello was absent from the meeting.

Massage Regulation Amendment:

Ms. Burke reported that Board members are in receipt of information that addresses students who practice hands on message. Upon the recommendation from the City's Legal Department it is suggested that such language should be adopted under its own heading of the regulation. The new language recommendation is as follows:

All students at institutions licensed to teach massage therapy in the City must provide a statement in writing from a licensed physician in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that he or she has examined the student within the past thirty (30) day period prior to the student conducting any hands on massage therapy and believes the student to be free from all communicable diseases transmissible by the practice of massage or the close physical contact ordinarily associated with massage. Such statement shall include a certification that the student is free of tuberculosis in a communicable form as set forth by the Department of Public Health in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Such statement must be provided whether or not the student has or intends to seek a license to practice massage therapy and a copy of the statement must be kept on file at the school. Ms Burke noted that notice of the Public Hearing was published and there has been no protest against the regulation.

Ms. Sosa-Patterson made a motion to accept the recommended language and Dr. Osler seconded the motion. Motion passed two to zero.

Director's Report: Ms. Burke presented the March Joint Public Health Board report that details activities performed by staff and programs within the Health Department. Dr. Osler and Ms. Sosa-Patterson reviewed the report.

Ms. Burke mentioned that she presented the Health Department's initial budget proposal to the city's finance team. The budget was presented in two forms – a line item budget and the Somerstat budget that identifies activity outputs and costs associated with each task.

Strategic Plan: Noreen will get back to the Board next month with an update.

Memorandum of Understanding: Noreen met with Sam Lipson, the environmental coordinator from the Cambridge Health Dept. and received a model that identifies responsibilities between the Inspectional Services Division and the Health Department. She will continue her research and report back to the Board on the progression of the MOU.

Emergency Preparedness Operations Plan: Noreen reported that we have hired Bryan Murphy-Eustis, a consultant to work on the Emergency Preparedness Plan for the department. His salary is funded through the emergency preparedness grant. Other grant-funded expenses will provide trainings for Noreen, Liz and Rita. Noreen reported that she is taking incident command system training on May 13, 2005 and Liz will be going to the Logan Airport exercise to represent the department.

Tobacco update: Cesar Pungirum will appear before the Board at the June meeting and update the members re: new regulations.

Cimex: the ten steps for landlords and tenants brochure is currently being translated in three major languages. The Committee will meet one more time to discuss the distribution of brochures. The non-provider alert letter will be sent out shortly. Noreen stated that Jennifer Birk, the intern from Harvard who was instrumental in researching Cimex would come before the Board at the June meeting.

Board Orders: Rodent Control – Noreen will be meeting with the Mayor to update him on the Rodent Control Policy.

Hypodermic needles: Alderman Provost has found some needles and Noreen and Liz have met with the Police Dept's. Lt. Paul Upton and they are working on a protocol, which will be presented to the Board when complete.

Memorandum from Ms. Sosa Patterson:

Ms. Burke said she would attempt to respond to each topic as follows:

- (1) Cimex – complaint of meeting schedule. Ms. Burke stated that meetings were scheduled around the majority of members that could attend. She also stated that members are notified by e-mail and since Ms. Sosa-Patterson's home e-mail has not worked since the inception of the working group she was notified by phone. We have left messages on both her home and cell phone numbers. Ms. Sosa-Patterson complained that last month's meeting was scheduled for the day after the regular Board meeting and she didn't get notified until the day before the meeting. Noreen mentioned that the most recent meeting was cancelled due to Passover and subsequently Ms. Burke spoke to Jennifer Birk and it was decided that we no longer need group meetings because the project is near completion. The only tasks left are translation and distribution. Noreen and Jennifer are communicating and will complete the project as soon as possible.
Ms. VanStensburg asked to be sponsored to follow-up and comment on the meeting notification. She stated phone calls are made to Ms. Sosa-Patterson shortly after each meeting to both her home and cell phone numbers. If there is no response or we do not hear back from Ms. Sosa-Patterson, follow-up calls are again made closer to the meeting date. Ms. Sosa-Patterson's responded that the breakdown in communication occurred when Rita was on vacation in January. Her understanding was that she was part of the Cimex effort and she should have been included in the planning of agendas and other pre meeting prep with Noreen Burke and Jennifer Birk. Dr. Osler interceded that if Ms. Sosa-Patterson had issues with communications it might have made sense for her to say to Ms. Burke or Rita that she wasn't getting the information she needed. Since the memo has been introduced as a formal document Noreen Burke reiterated that we will continue to notify Ms. Sosa-Patterson in a timely fashion and in addition will add her work e-mail address to the distribution list. Noreen will also make sure that Ms. Sosa-Patterson receives Jennifer Bark's contact information and will be notified if and when there is a last and final meeting. Ms. Burke stated that in her memory Ms. Sosa-Patterson was not able to attend many of the initial Cimex meetings and further scheduling was based on those in attendance. Ms. Burke was equally frustrated that Ms. Sosa-Patterson did not step up to the plate to Chair the Cimex group as was earlier discussed in the early stages of the process.
- (2) Somerville Code of Ordinances & City Charter:
In terms of procedure Ms. Sosa-Patterson addressed general guidelines of the board of health including the Somerville City Charter and Chapter 111. She stated that she wanted to point out that the Board is supposed to be following guidelines and regulations. Dr. Osler asked what is the issue? Are you saying that these are not being adhered to or are you just bringing this forward as a point of information? Ms. Sosa-Patterson's reply was yes, a point of information, stressing that this may be useful information to Babette Mello and any new person that may join the Board. Regarding Noreen Burke's strategic Plan Noreen clarified that the Charter Change relative to expanding the Board to five members

is not a work in progress. At this stage it is an exploration and by presenting it to the board she is looking for ideas and feedback. Ms. Burke reiterated to Ms. Sosa-Patterson if she has any questions relative to this she is always willing to talk to her and explain any issue.

At the end of the discussion Dr. Osler stated that it seems like Ms. Sosa-Patterson's memo was adversarial and she should talk to the people she may have issues with; if there is no resolution that is the time to take it to the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 6:3p.m.

The next meeting will take place on June 2, 2005 @ 5:00 p.m. at the Somerville Health Department, Conference Room located at 50 Evergreen Avenue, Somerville, MA
Respectfully submitted,

Rita VanStensburg
Administrative Assistant