

**Board of Health Meeting
September 15, 2005**

PRESENT: David Osler, M.D., Chairman
Babette Mello, Board Member
Cecilia Sosa-Patterson, Board Member
Cesar Pungirum Tobacco Control Program Director
Noreen Burke, Director

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

Tobacco Update:

Mr. Pungirum addressed the Board concerning the possibility of improving the Youth Access Regulations in all five cities. He has identified and is suggesting a few small changes to the regulations for consistency with other cities and towns. Several examples are: 1. The attorney 's general office regulations prohibit the sale of rolling papers, as well as the city of Cambridge and Revere. The City of Somerville and Chelsea does not include this in their regulations. It would make sense to include this in our regulations to restrict the sale of this product. If they sell the product, it would be subject to a State penalty. 2. Sometime ago the Board of Alderman voted to increase the location of tobacco fee from \$10 to \$25 dollars. The regulations were never changed to reflect this increase. 3. The regulations should also include posting the permit conspicuously, again to be consistent with other regulations and to support enforcement of protocols in the store.

These changes are small but consistent with the State regulations. The Board should consider changing the regulations because of the incident where an establishment had his permit suspended and they still sold during the suspension. The City still possesses ways to collect unpaid fines, including filling a complaint in court as an option. Mr.

Pungirum's plan is to bring these suggested changes to the Board at the next board meeting where the Board can review the changes and determine if a hearing should be held. The Somerville regulations are very good in comparison to other cities, but making these adjustments will make us more compatible with other cities.

Mr. Pungirum also spoke about an e-mail that was sent to him by Eileen Sullivan who is the Director of Policy and Training for the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program. The e-mail pertains to the new regulations concerning the Massachusetts Smoke-free Workplace Law. A copy of the regulations was given to the Board Members. It addresses the guidelines pertaining to smoking in outside areas or structures. The State is holding a training which will include the following topics: to review the new DPH regulations, updates on legal challenges to local boards of health, and responding to challenging situations including private clubs. He explained he will attend the training and extended the invitation to the Board Members.

Dr. Osler asked for an update from Mr. Pungirum after he attends the training. Mr. Pungirum will update the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Pungirum also discussed the status of the Tobacco Program Grant. It was delivered on time, but he has not heard as of yet from the State. They should hear by October. The

budget was decreased by \$12,000.00 but he explained that the program will continue to run strongly.

Ms. Patterson asked Mr. Pungirum if any other city has dealt with a suspension and still sold. Mr. Pungirum indicated that he did not know of any specifically, but in talking with several people concerning that particular case, that as a last resource they could file a criminal complaint in court, they could pay a fine for selling without a permit or bring them before the Board of Health. He then asked Dr. Osler about the meaning of the word revoke and/or the word suspension. It is his understanding that if a permit is revoked it means you don't have a permit any more and you may reapply; and if a permit is suspended the establishment gets the permit back when the suspension is over. Dr. Osler stated that although the regulations are written with the word "revoke", the intention in the regulations was to suspend. Ms. Patterson asked if that should be part of the recommendations put before the Board at the next meeting. Mr. Pungirum explained it is one of the suggested changes.

Accept Minutes:

Ms. Patterson had sent Dr. Osler a list of potential corrections or amendments to the minutes of May 5, 2005. Ms. Mello was not at the May meeting. Dr. Osler stated that the corrections were extensive and that the opinion of the Law Department was needed. Ms. Burke will make a request to the City Solicitor explaining that one of the Board Members had additions or deletions to the May 5, 2005 minutes from a taped transcript and how was the Board to proceed.

Ms. Patterson had several additions/changes to the August 4, 2005 minutes. Ms. Mello asked for the meaning of what exactly are minutes. Ms. Burke explained the minutes should capture the major decisions of the meeting, but it is probably within the Board's interest to have very detailed minutes with the topics the Board discusses.

Ms. Burke made note of the additions and they will be added to the minutes. With those suggested changes made, (adding Rita's position was being paid out of the Health Department and the Police should reimburse the Health Department, suits purchased to avoid bringing bugs to the annex and that bed bugs continue to be an issue and to elaborate on the tobacco update), Dr. Osler made a motion to accept the August 4, 2005 minutes. Ms. Mello seconded the motion. Minutes accepted 3-0.

Cimex Update:

Ms. Burke updated the Board on a couple of press articles concerning bed bugs. One article appeared in the Boston Globe last Sunday in the City Section. And Kat Powers from the Somerville Journal ran the 10-step strategy to help stem growing bed bug problems in the City. The Health Department has been getting calls, sending out flyers and referring people to the City's web-site. The department is also trying to obtain footies for the inspectors for protective gear. Leonina, the Portuguese activist, has been connecting to other communities and taking this on as a crusade. It is still an issue in Somerville, and she has been wonderful in helping the Health Department.

Alex Pirie has agreed to go to a meeting with Alston and Brighton, who is having the same issues with bed bugs. They are willing to help us and we will share our flyers and resources with them.

Dr. Osler asked about the printing cost. Ms. Burke explained that we have money in an extermination line that she has been using to print the flyers. Another batch in all languages was ordered this week

Ms. Burke also explained that not every bed bug call turns into a complaint and the inspectors have been working hard with customer service and are very responsive to each individual case.

She is also working with Aru Manrique, Director of Multi-Cultural Affairs, to pilot a recording of out-going messages in the Health Department in different languages to make the phone lines more accessible to people. We are trying to break down the language barriers and pilot a program that the City could adopt.

Emergency Preparedness:

Ms. Burke informed the Board of a tabletop exercise, Combining Forces Against Bioterrorism, to be held September 29, 2005. The Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the Health Department Inspectors, the Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Burke have signed up to attend. The day-long exercise will be teaching us as a community how to respond if there was to be a big outbreak; to be able to communicate, using the same language when talking about different incidents.

The Health Department is receiving a lot of equipment that was ordered when Jack Vondras was the Director, i.e. medical syringes, palm pilots, bull horns, etc. If we had to set up a mass dispensing sight, the Health Department needs to be equipped. There is suppose to be a trailer coming to the community to help store the big equipment.

Ms. Burke informed the Board that staff would be taken the incident command system training that is being offered. It is a computer-based training and all the Health Department staff has been instructed to attend.

Dr. Osler mentioned that he has read that some of the evacuees from New Orleans were placed in Somerville. Ms. Burke was unaware of that, but there was a call out from Region 4-B, which is our Emergency Preparedness Region, for volunteers to go to the Cape. Leni and Liz were willing to go, but it turns out that we were not needed.

Rodent Control:

The Health Department received a call from Alderman MaryAnn Heuston. There are many hot spots for rats in the City. There is one area at Prospect Street and Concord Avenue, the Somerville/Cambridge line, excavation is going on and is bringing rats around. Neighbors from that area came to a Planning Board meeting. The Director suggested that Alderman Heuston have a neighborhood meeting and that I would ask George Landers and an inspector to attend.

Public Health Update:

Ms. Quaratiello, the Public Health Nurse, wanted to inform the Board that there is a total of five active T.B. cases in the City. She is seeing an increase in lime disease and tick related diseases and she wanted to report that there is a lot of Hep B & C cases. She is regularly attending immigrant services provider groups, which is the leadership of all the different immigrant groups throughout the City. It is really helpful in getting information out there about the public health services the City provides.

Update on Various Hiring Process:

Administrative Assistant: The eligible Unit A person was interviewed for the Administrative Assistant position in the Health Department. She demonstrated she is well qualified for the position, she was offered the position and she accepted. She is the payroll supervisor for the City and there needs to be a transition period, as the City cannot function without a payroll supervisor. The Board of Alderman has still not approved Rita's new position at the Police Department. She is still being paid from the

Health Department's budget. She assists the Health Department in preparing the payroll and paying the bills for three hours a week. Janice, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, is helping in this matter.

School Nurse Position: Dana Jones has been hired for the school nurse position. She lives in Somerville, and she has a Bachelor's Degree in Science of Nursing from John Hopkins. Dana will be deployed at St. Catherine's and St. Anthony's schools. Christine Henebury has done a wonderful job during this transition period this year. We are also about to hire two substitute nurses, which will allow Ms. Henebury to spend more time in her management roll.

The nurses are getting an increase in salary. There has been an Interim Economic Settlement between the City and the Union, which will include retro-active pay. This is a great moral booster, as we feel that the nurses are under-paid in comparison to other cities.

Health Agenda Position:

Interviews were performed for Ms. Burke's old position at the Community Health Agenda. Two top candidates have emerged and Linda Cundiff is coordinating the follow-up. The person will be a real asset to the Health Department and we are looking forward to her coming on board.

Grant Update:

The Health Department is suppose to hear on or about September 21st regarding the grant concerning the Somerville Care About Prevention Program's core funding. This will secure our prevention efforts for the next five years if we receive this money.

New Business:

The Board is starting a transition with Dr. Osler's leadership. The physician that is attracted to the Board, Dr. Brian Green, is an Alliance physician and he lives in Davis Square. He has met with the Mayor and was well received. The only conflict is Dr. Green has Thursday night clinic and he will not be able to attend the Board meetings on Thursday nights. Ms. Burke was hoping to change the meeting nights. Dr. Osler stated Wednesday would be good for him, but this was not a good night for Ms. Patterson. Dr. Osler suggested that Ms. Burke check with Brian and get back to the Board at the next meeting.

Ms. Burke raised another issue concerning Body Art Regulations. A body art practitioner was denied a permit because he lacked two years experience as stated in the regulations. One of the challenges in the regulations is that we do not have an apprenticeship process. Stephanie Almeida, owner of Mongo's Tattoo Madness in Somerville, and who is also a contractor working for the Somerville Health Department, was found to be in violation of the regulations, one of which was she did not have a licensed practitioner working in her establishment. Upon a site visit from the Senior Sanitary Inspector, Harold Vaughan, her records were not at the store and a number of violations were cited. The individual who was denied a license can demonstrate he has the two years experience, he just did not complete the application properly. We are working now to get Ms. Almeida's business open again. However, she wants to see the issue of the apprenticeship brought before the Board and possibly added to the Body Art Regulations. This issue is something that should be considered and be revisited by the Board at the next Board meeting. The regulations will be sent to the Board Members and Ms. Burke will start communicating with the law office.

Ms. Patterson brought up the fact that Bonny Carroll, the Outgoing Director for Family Advocacy and Community Outreach Program, is no longer with the Health Department, and asked if there would be a replacement and what will happen to the funds? Ms. Burke explained that Ms. Carroll had resigned as the Human Services Director and left quickly. She will be working at One-Scholar, which is a woman's program that helps homeless women go back to school and back into the community. At this time the position is vacant and Ms. Burke would like to take this opportunity to restructure, as her position was just incorporated into the Health Department less than a year ago. A list of resources for referral calls were given to the Administrative staff so they will be able to refer calls on different issues such as disability issues, parent issues, etc. to the appropriate agencies that Ms. Carroll dealt with. Ms. Patterson asked if the position would disappear? Ms. Burke stated that the Health Department would hold onto the position, and again rethink and restructure. Ms. Carroll will be receiving a citation from the Board of Alderman for her 19 years with the City.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

The next meeting will take place on October 27, 2005 @ 5:00 PM at the Somerville Health Department, Conference Room located at 50 Evergreen Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Pickett
Administrative Assistant