

**Pittsfield Board of Health
Wednesday, October 4, 2023
City Hall, Room 203, 6 p.m.**

Present: Chairperson Roberta Orsi; Board Members: Sandra Gattasso, Jeffrey Leppo

Also Present Health Department Director Andy Cambi

Convening

The meeting of the Pittsfield Board of Health was held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at City Hall, Room 203. Chairperson Orsi called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Public Comments:

Anne Carey of 17 Oliver Ave., asked the Board to help find a solution to the cell tower issues.

Katherine Levin of the Scientific Alliance for Education stated that they have received reports of diminished wildlife activity with the activation of cell towers.

Charles Herzig of 140 Plumb St. stated that he has seen decreased wildlife activity since the cell tower was activated.

Brazucca's Tobacco Permit: Andy Cambi gave an overview of this tobacco permit request noting that the business owners have received an extension on their request as they were awaiting funding to be able to open. He stated that his most recent communication with the owners revealed a possible opening date of October 15, 2023. He continued on stating that the owners have had ample opportunity to move this forward and they have already exceeded the 60 day compliance date. Mr. Cambi recommended denying or revoking the application. He noted that the business owners would have an opportunity to appeal such a decision. Board Member Leppo noted the unprecedented delay. The owners of the business appeared and shared that the grant they had been awaiting distribution of was only received approximately one week ago. They noted that they are hoping for an opening date toward the end of November. A motion to deny the application pending further information was made by Board Member Leppo and seconded by Chairperson Orsi. The Board voted unanimously.

Gulf Food Mart- 186 Wahconah St.: Andy Cambi provided the Board with an overview noting that the establishment has been in violation of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue licenses as they were found to have cigarettes with no Massachusetts stamp. He noted that the violation resulted in suspension of their Mass DOR licenses on September 21, 2023. He further noted that because of this suspension, their tobacco permit issued by the Pittsfield Health Department was no longer active. Attorney Michael McCarthy appeared on behalf of the business owners and began by commending Director Cambi for his professionalism. He requested a continuance until the November 1 meeting to allow him more time to gather more information and facts. He requested copies of the state's report from the Board (if they have a copy). He noted that he will follow up with the state and understands that the Board cannot help if the DOR suspension stands. A motion to grant the extension with the suspension standing was made by Board Member Leppo and seconded by Board Member Gattasso. The Board voted unanimously.

Mass Cares Board of Health Resolution Letter: Board Member Leppo explained that the basic concept of Mass Cares is that it is health care for all with the money being held in trust with no profits made and provides health care for a lesser cost. He noted that the formula sheet completed by the

finance director showed that the City of Pittsfield would save \$20 million dollars. Board Member Leppo proposed bringing this information to the incoming mayor. Board Members will sign the resolution in support of this single payer system.

Mosquito Control Plan: Director Cambi noted that Chris Horton provided the Board with an update of the season in August and that a letter was presented to City Council to rescind the no spray vote. He shared that the vote was not overturned. Mr. Cambi noted that there is misinformation affecting this vote. He also noted that after the August City Council meeting and vote three more West Nile Virus positive mosquitos were found. Mr. Cambi shared that he feels that the future steps of the Board should include bringing in additional experts regarding spraying and its impacts to an open forum and to increase public outreach at events such as Third Thursdays. Board Member Leppo shared that there were three positive West Nile Virus cases found in the State of Massachusetts this year. It was noted that the City Council referred this matter back to the Conservation Agent and back to the Board of Health to provide more information. It was further noted that if City Council opts out of the program, the Board of Health is still responsible for control measures and will have to find funding for the same. This topic will stay on the monthly agenda.

Rest of River Clean Up: It was noted that there is a four-year plan to remove sediment that once started is estimated to take 190 days. It was further noted that because Pittsfield is the first breach of the project, education is needed, and the Board will invite the DEP to provide that education to the public.

Health Department Updates:

Public Health Nursing Report: Public Health Nurse Manager Pat Tremblay appeared and presented the Board with an update as to the public health nursing and community outreach efforts. Ms. Tremblay reported that there have been reports of Bordetella Pertussis found in a daycare in Pittsfield. She shared that this was rarely seen prior to the pandemic. She noted that this is not whooping cough because it does not have the whooping cough toxin. She noted that the children most at risk are those under six months because they are not yet vaccinated. Ms. Tremblay shared that she, Gabby DiMassimo and Maria Arias are all now certified car seat technicians, and they will be arranging a car seat event to take place on November 4, 2023. She noted that this is paid for through Baystate Medical Center and provides them to access to 48 car seats of varying sizes to distribute to those in need. She noted that the immigrant population is unaware of the importance of car seats and the encompassing laws. Ms. Tremblay shared that she and Gabby DiMassimo are both now certified in balance and fall prevention. She noted that wellness clinics have been held throughout Pittsfield at Berkshire Peak, the Senior Center and the Christian Center. She noted that she and her team are building trust in the community. She stated that they are looking for ways to serve all ethnicities and they provide nursing services and community/social work services. Narcan kits are provided as well. She shared that there is a coffee hour every Friday at the library where they hand out hygiene kits which are in demand. She and her team have held eight flu clinics this season so far and provide vaccine for the homebound Pittsfield residents as well. She noted that through an ARPA grant they are able to order Covid vaccine. She noted that the price for the vaccine is \$150/dose. She also stated that the vaccine is coming in slower as there is less urgency for it now. She noted that a public flu clinic will be held at Morningside Elementary School on October 5 and people can visit www.vaccinateberkshires.org for clinic sites. Ms. Tremblay noted that wastewater testing shows a clear pattern that Covid increases during the colder months and during the holidays and that both Covid and the flu are predicted to peak in November.

Monthly Inspectional Services Report: Mr. Cambi reviewed the staff roles for the newest member of the Board and reviewed the monthly inspectional services report.

Community Development Snow Angels: Mr. Cambi shared that the Department of Community Development is creating a snow angels program to assist those in need of help with snow removal and that he will provide more details of this when they become available.

Mr. Cambi shared that the permitting software has been updated and is more user-friendly and that permit renewal season begins this month.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Leppo and seconded by Chairperson Orsi. A motion to move to executive session for purposes of discussing litigation and not return to the public meeting was made by Chairperson Orsi and seconded by Board Member Leppo. The Board voted unanimously to on both motions.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Layden, Clerk

Documents/Materials Distributed at Meeting

- Meeting Minutes of August 2, 2023
- Documents relating to Gulf Food Mart DOR License suspension
- Resolution of the Board of Health regarding Mass Cares
- Rest of River Clean up documents
- Presentation of Wellness Clinics
- Monthly Inspectional Services Report