



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Boston Board of Health (Board) was held at 4pm on Wednesday, January 10th By Remote Participation Pursuant to *An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency.*

Board Members Present

Dr. Galea, Ms. Gutman, Ms. Laptiste, Dr. Taveras, Mr. Valdez, Mr. Wilmot.

Chairperson's Remarks

Dr. Galea: Good afternoon, fellow Board of Health members, Boston Public Health Commission staff, and members of the public. Welcome to the January 2024 meeting of the Boston Board of Health.

This meeting is being conducted by remote participation as authorized by state law and any votes will be taken by a roll call of the members.

In keeping with the Board's usual practice, members of the public are welcomed to observe the proceedings and Board staff will use the moderating features on the Zoom application to keep all on mute other than Board members, BPHC presenters, or those who may have signed up to testify during a public hearing.

This afternoon, we will hear a report from the Executive Office well as reports on BPHC's Strategic Plan, the FY2025 Budget, and a public hearing as required by state regulation regarding a proposal by a construction waste recycling transfer facility, ReSource Waste Services, to increase their daily tonnage limit.

Later in the agenda, I will introduce Attorney John Shea who will further serve as the hearing officer for this portion of the agenda.

I will start by turning it over to Dr. Ojikutu for the Executive Office Report.

Executive Office Report

Dr. Ojikutu: I would like to start by wishing everyone a healthy and Happy New Year. I especially want to take the opportunity to thank the Board and BPHC's staff for all you have contributed to BPHC's work this past year. I am deeply grateful for the role you all play in making Boston a healthier, and more equitable city. I especially want to acknowledge BPHC staff who have worked to provide essential and appreciated services to our residents during this holiday season.

We continue to note increasing cases of respiratory viral illness and hospitalizations in Boston. Upward trends have been noted in several COVID-19 metrics, and Suffolk County is currently at medium community risk level, per the CDC. In response, effective last Thursday, January 4th, BPHC programs providing services to residents returned to masking. We continue to recommend masking for staff who are at high risk of severe illness and hospitalization due to respiratory illness including COVID-19.

Staying up to date on vaccines remains the best way to prevent severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19. We continue to offer standing COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics remain at the Bolling Municipal Building, in Nubian Square, Thursdays through Saturdays from 12-6 pm and at Boston City Hall, Room 115, Mondays from 7 am-1 pm & Wednesdays from 12- 5 pm.

Now, more than two months after efforts to place individuals from the encampment at Atkinson Street, we are continuing to focus on ensuring shelter, housing, mobile outreach, and sustaining connections to services. The Recovery Services mobile outreach teams provided over 1,600 outreach encounters since November 1st including harm reduction supply distribution, Narcan distribution, substance use treatment and shelter referral, and transports. Our PAATHS, AHOPE and outreach teams have placed over 300 people in substance use treatment over the past two months.

Overall, we are seeing continued success in maintaining placements in shelter including the six low-threshold sites in the city, maintaining connections to services, and working in close collaboration with our partners in public safety to address quality of life issues. In the new low-threshold site at 727 Mass. Ave that we opened to support the encampment resolution, we have seen high rates of client engagement in services (retention at the site, housing planning, and initiation of medication for OUD); a level of engagement that would have been impossible in an encampment setting.

We are also continuing to monitor and work to alleviate capacity issues in our individual emergency shelter system, including our 112 Southamptn St. Men's shelter and Woods Mullen women's shelter. As you know, shelter census numbers typically increase during winter months, and are also experiencing added pressures both from individuals that have come in from the street, as well as a significant number of individual asylum seekers.

We are doing the continued work with our recovery services outreach teams to make sure that we are still connecting as many people as possible with harm reduction and treatment services, and continuously adapt our system of services to better meet individual needs.

I was pleased that many of you were able to join us last night at Mayor Wu's State of the City address. It is clear that the work we have done over the past year in public health is both a point of pride, and a demonstration of what Boston is capable of when we work together. I look forward to the work ahead and building on this energy and spirit of collaboration to advance the vision that the Mayor articulated of making Boston a place to call home and a place where we refuse to give up on each other.

With that in mind, our charge is to work in partnership across sectors to identify new solutions to persistent health inequities and their root causes. We are better positioned than ever to leverage our city's resources and strengths to address social determinants and narrow inequities.

Our equity work will be supported by the CDC Boston REACH Racial and Ethnic Approached to Community Health 2023-2027 grant project. With approximately \$1m in annual funding our Chronic Disease Division partnering with Boston's Office of Food Justice to increase access to fresh, healthy food in Boston's food pantries and food distribution sites and to develop a sustainable farmers market affordability program. The project will also develop policy systems changes city-wide with a community engagement focus on Black and Latinx populations in East Boston and Mattapan.

BPHC will also serving an important role in helping to set a vision for Long Island. More will follow for this group collectively, but you will be hearing more about a planning process that will ensure that will set a vision for public health services on Long Island that addresses the needs we see, supports a more coordinated system of care, and makes the best use of this unique resource for generations.

Turning toward our plan for the work of the Boston Public Health Commission over the coming years, I am excited to

share an overview of new strategic plan for the Boston Public Health Commission that will help to build stronger public health foundations to enable us to better achieve our health equity goals. I want to thank the many staff and other stakeholders who thoughtfully contributed to the development of this plan. I am excited to engage our staff in our efforts at an All-Staff Town Hall on Wednesday, January 31st. We will be discussing our new Strategic Plan, our Workforce Improvement Initiative (WIIN), our goals for the upcoming year and much more. I look forward to sharing the full plan with the Board and returning with updates and highlights.

Lastly, I am excited to announce the appointment of Taneesha Peoples to the role of BPHC's first-ever Chief People Officer. This role is a critical centerpiece of our CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant, our Strategic Plan, and our overall anti-racism and workforce improvement initiative and workforce development initiatives. Taneesha joined us in December 2022 as our Human Resources Director, contributing immediately to our ongoing work to strengthen our HR functions and support our workforce generally. She is a seasoned strategic and innovative HR leader with a track record in translating organizational vision into HR initiatives that improve performance, growth, and employee engagement, previously holding senior HR roles at WGBH, and several other organizations. Congratulations, Taneesha!

I want to close by saying that I am inspired by the ability of our team to meet the challenges of 2023 and I am excited to see what we will be able to accomplish in 2024. I welcome any questions you may have.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes from the November 8th, 2023 Meeting

Dr. Galea introduced a motion for the acceptance and approval of the November 8th Board meeting.

Mr. Valdez moved to approve the minutes, Dr. Taveras seconded the motion, and it was approved by a roll call vote.

Dr. Galea: Now I will introduce Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Planning PJ McCann to provide a report on BPHC's Strategic Plan.

2024-2027 Strategic Plan Update

Mr. McCann: Good evening. I'm here to give just a brief preview of our strategic plan for 2024-2027. I want to start by thanking everyone who contributed to developing this plan.

From the beginning of this process, we wanted to prioritize staff voices and alignment with our Mission, Vision, and Core Values, lift up our anti-racism commitments, workforce improvement efforts, and our performance management and quality improvement plan.

I think the level of thought and internal engagement, and close alignment with our core values and existing priorities will go a long way to making this plan actionable, and something that everyone can see their contributions in and benefit from.

We also wanted to make sure that the plan responded to changes in the public health landscape over the last four years, leveraged our role in organizing and harnessing new interest and resource resources to build public health infrastructure that will enable us dismantle health inequities.

As you see, the broad priorities that rose to the top – workforce and infrastructure, equity and anti-racism, data and innovation, and community engagement and partnerships – are foundational, set us up to be a better performing agency across the board as we seek to achieve health equity goals and respond to emerging challenges. I'll briefly walk through the 12 high-level objectives, and we will share the 42 time-limited and measurable strategies in the full document shortly.

As you can see, we are at the start of the implementation phase. Next after this, we will engage staff at the All-Staff Town Hall at the end of the month, and the process of forming workplans for each strategy, and quarterly monitoring, and lifting up accomplishments, through our Senior Leadership Team meetings and other staff engagement pathways.

We also want to make sure the document and our strategies stay relevant and adapt when needed, so we have built in an annual review that will be an opportunity to both take stock of accomplishments more broadly but also identify any needed changes to the plan. We look forward to including the Board in this implementation and monitoring phase. Again, more to follow again, thank you to everyone who has contributed, happy to answer any questions.

FY2025 Budget Update

Mr. Harrington presented an overview of the FY25 Budget.

Mr. Wilmot asked if recently announced 9C state budget cuts would have any cascade effects on City and Commission?

Harrington: In last several years has not had significant direct impacts, but have continued conversations with the State about positions here at the Commission.

Ojikutu: We can provide a deeper update on state-collaborative programming at a future meeting.

Public Hearing Regarding Recycling Facility Proposed Minor Modification

Dr. Galea: Again for the record, I am Dr. Sandro Galea, Chair of the Boston Public Health Commission acting as the Board of Health. I call to order this virtual public hearing on the Resource Waste Service of Roxbury, LLC Request for a Minor Modification of Site Assignment for its construction and demolition waste processing and transfer station at 101-111 Gerard Street in Roxbury.

This Zoom public hearing will be conducted under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 111, Sections 150A and 150 ½, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Site Assignment Regulations at 310 CMR Section 16.00.

My colleagues and Board members who will review the Request for Minor Modification with me are: Rebecca Gutman, Phillomin Laptiste, Gualde Valdez, Gregory Wilmot, Dr. Elsie Tavares and Dr. Alastair Bell. We are joined by Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, the Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission, and Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston as well as other senior BPHC staff who may be called to participate as needed.

This public hearing was noticed in writing in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean Portuguese by certified mail, by publication in the Boston Globe, and by posting under the Open Meeting Law.

Resource Waste Services is requesting an increase in its authorized daily tonnage acceptance rate for construction and demolition debris by 49 tons per day, from 750 tons per day to 799 tons per day.

The MassDEP Site Assignment Regulations set out the procedures for the review of site assignment applications and for conducting public hearings. Under the Regulations, the Board of Health selects a Hearing Officer who is responsible for conducting the public hearing. This Board retains the sole responsibility and authority to evaluate the evidence received during the hearing, to vote on whether to grant the modifications of the site assignment, and to issue a written Decision. After the close of this public hearing, the Board will deliberate and vote at a public meeting, and issue its Decision within 45 days of today.

It is my pleasure to introduce our Hearing Officer, attorney John Shea, a Partner with the Boston law firm Burns & Levinson. Attorney Shea has acted as Hearing Officer in over 30 site assignments throughout Massachusetts and has practiced environmental law for over 40 years. On behalf of the Board, I welcome Mr. Shea and turn this public hearing over to you.

Mr. Shea leads hearing including presentation from applicant.

Mr. Shea described the procedural requirements of the relevant state law and regulations, role of the hearing officer, and expectations of the Board of Health.

Mr. Shea noted that preparing for this hearing, he reviewed the entire August the second two thousand and twenty three request for minor modification to increase the authorized daily tonnage for C and D material by forty nine tons per day from seven hundred and fifty to seven hundred and ninety, nine tons per day of C and D; the application before the Board is eight pages with many attachments, and it speaks to demonstrate compliance with the relevant DEP regulatory siting criteria.

Mr. Wilmot Asked a background question regarding current authorization of daily tonnage, any context as to how that original number was set? And moving to 799 tons, any additional information on how that number was arrived at?

Stanley Walczak of ReSource Waste answered that the average truck is roughly three tons and we process around 100 tons a week. This increase would be around three additional tons per hour, which is doable. We never hit the yearly limit. Something that has been cost-effective is the creation of nightly collection routes. Unfortunately, we cannot currently accept any inbound materials on Saturday afternoons or on Sundays. This increase would help us reach the annual tonnage limit and also benefit the community. We would alleviate approximately 24% of the traffic that hits Mass & Cass/Gerard with this increase.

Mr. Valdez asked about traffic impacts and traffic management, noting that a lot of language in application reflects anticipated conditions. You are operating in a heavily-congested area; what mechanisms of recourse do you have with the community should there be traffic management needs?

Mr. Walczak: We would be happy to send you reports we've shared in the past. Traffic at the facility picks up again from 6:30-7:00 and onwards because companies doing nightwork avoid the high-congestion windows.

John Farese of ReSource Waste: Drivers also don't want to sit in traffic either, so will go in non-peak hours. We are also at processing capacity from 3:00-5:00 pm anyways while experiencing a lull in inbound traffic.

Mr. Walczak: We have pushed our customers to deposit inbound materials outside of peak hours. We feel that we can continue that push by getting the extra 4-8 hours a day.

Ms. Laptiste: Of those who sent letters of support, one of the abutters was Orchard Gardens, were there other residential abutters?

Mr. Farese: The biggest residential complex near us is Orchard Gardens, and met with them before we started to get their sign-off. We meet with them a couple of times a year and we have an open door policy.

Public testimony of Patrick Brophy, Vice President of State and Local Government Affairs, Suffolk Construction: I am speaking in favor of this application as VP of Suffolk County Construction. ReSource Waste's operation differs significantly from other transfer stations that generate smell and other impacts. Stanley and John have always been cooperative and helpful and we have submitted written testimony in support of their application. I wanted to get our strong support of ReSource Waste Services' application on the record.

Mr. Valdez: Did ReSource reach out to anyone who had concerns, and if so, how did you address those concerns?

Mr. Walczak: We did not receive many concerns. Before starting the process, we reached out to local organizations and businesses to make them aware of our intentions. They know that our traffic impact would be minimal. We do not have any trucks parked on Gerard Street. It is understood that we do not do that and will no do that.

Mr. McDonald, Resource Waste Counsel , Nutter: The majority of the activities on this site occur indoors. There is significant capacity to stage trucks on the property.

Mr. Walczak: We have enough room to safely fit 40 trucks.

Mr. McDonald: That means approximately 120 tons of material of the proposed 799 could be housed on-site at one time. In our perspective, the worst case scenario would be for a truck to arrive and we must turn them away. They would either have to go to a different company or go to a different staging facility and come back after midnight. We don't have anything else to add but would be happy to answer any additional questions.

Mr. Shea noted that regarding letters of support from political leaders of residential constituents, was pleasantly surprised. Waste facilities are not typically embraced as was evidenced in the written testimonials included in this application.

Dr. Galea called for a motion to close the hearing.

Mr. Valdez moved, Mr. Wilmot seconded and an affirmative vote was taken by roll call.

Attorney Shea thanked BPHC staff for their assistance in facilitating the review.

Adjourn

Dr. Galea adjourned.

Attest:

/s/ PJ McCann

Board Secretary