



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

KARIN CARROLL
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

MINUTES
BOARD OF HEALTH
September 19, 2024

Open Conference / Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present:

Brian Green, MD (Chair)
Robert MacLean, Board Member
Lucy Barrows, Recording Secretary
Connor McCombs, Director of Health & Human Services
Bonny Carroll, Tobacco Control Coordinator
Nicholas Antanavica, ISD

Roll Call: Brian Green

- 1. Meeting Call to Order:** Brian Green made a motion to open the meeting at 6:04 pm. It was seconded by Paula Machado. All in favor.
- 2. Minutes Approval:** Brian Green made a motion to approve the minutes from June 20, 2024. All in favor.
- 3. 46 Porter Street Unit 3 – Nicholas Antanavica**

Nicholas updated the board about an apartment inspection at 46 Porter St after a report from the occupant stating the air conditioning was not working in the apartment.

 - a) This was determined to be a violation of the sanitary code that the owner shall ensure all appliances are properly installed and operational. The owner has requested that the tenant use window air conditioners, but the tenant has asked that the main system get fixed.
 - b) The board is requested to decide the variance if air conditioners are considered part of the sanitary code, or to allow for the window air conditioners.
 - c) The variance may be dependent on whether the apartment included language in the lease or marketing as an air-conditioned unit, and whether the rent was appropriately adjusted for this attribute.
 - d) Additionally, the other units in the condo building will not allow for air conditioning condensers to go on the roof or side of the building, and other restrictions that would prevent the system being fixed reasonably.
 - e) Tenants since 2016 when the A/C was initially installed and found not to be appropriate for cooling the building have always been informed that they should not rely on the system.



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Tenants in the past, including the owner, have used window ACs but the current tenants (moved in 2020) claim there is not enough ampage to run the AC. In May 2024, an electrician confirmed that window units will not cause electrical problems in the building, and two separate HVAC experts assessed the same conclusion that the central AC was not possible without violating the regulations on the condo.

- f) The board has decided that it's not necessarily required as part of a health and safety codes, particularly if the air conditioner was not functioning prior to the tenant moving into the building and there was never an expectation for air conditioning provision. However, the owner must make the use of window units a viable option and supply units to tenants, despite their previous refusal of that offer.

4. Contan Liquors 115 Alewife Brook Pkwy – Bonny Carol

- a) On June 23, 2024, an underage buyer (<21) was able to purchase a pack of Marlboro Gold cigarettes. This violation triggered a penalty of \$1,000 fine and a 3-day suspension of the permit to sell tobacco products. This was the first violation.
- b) Owner Rahul Patel remarks: The store primarily sells liquor and is diligent about checking IDs digitally with Intelli Check software as well as confiscating fake IDs. The employee who made the sale violation has not been identified of those working at the time of the sale. The 3-day suspension has been completed and the owner would like to contest the fine because this was a first violation for the establishment.
- c) BOH clarifies that every sale must require ID check regardless of the age appearance of the buyer to remove subjectiveness of employees. The Board has decided to enforce the legal fine regardless of this was an employee oversight or digital equipment problem. d)

5. Youth Services updates – Kristina Bergquist

- a) Youth Services is a new HHS division, and it is their first time presenting to BOH. They are focused on direct youth program facilitation right now and strategic planning to build collaboration in our existing relationships
- b) Mayor's Summer Jobs program: 214 jobs were available at 25 different sites across the city. There is a significant amount of increased interest in the program since last year.
- c) Youth Services implemented supports for supervisors, youth career orientation training and designated employment cohorts to enhance the operation of the program. They are considering expansion for a year-round employment pilot in Spring 2025. A formal commissioned Needs Assessment is in the process of being published.
- d) Youth Services is collaborating with Parks & Rec as well as Somerville Public Libraries to solve the Central Library closure decision.
- e) Proposal to survey teens hanging out within 50 ft of the Central Library entrance to best inform creating a new supervised space with Prevention.

6. Inspectional Services Update from Karin Carroll:

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- a) ISD is collaborating with HHS to create warming centers in Somerville for this winter.

This is a big concern as we have seen an influx of unhoused families this year in Somerville and the Somerville Homeless Coalition does not have the capacity to work with children.

- b) Improvements will be implemented based on last year's feedback about the process, communication and center procedures.
- c) ISD workload has increased significantly in application intakes, wage theft and housing health violation claims, and changes to the food code. Program visits is the most significant increase in workload.

7. Update from Karinn Caroll on HHS:

- a) The Public Nursing unit held 39 various vaccine clinics for Chicken Pox, Hep B, MMR, Polio and TDAP in preparation of K-12 enrollment requirements, especially for families which are new to the community and may not have a provider. Seasonal flu and COVID clinics are being held throughout the fall.
- b) The Community Health Worker Division, only a year-old, now has three full time CHWs. The CHWs distribute harm reduction materials, heat safety kits, and warming kits in the winter months. The team compliments our collaboration with Fenway Health in providing services to our most vulnerable residents. A fourth Clinical CHW is in the process of being hired.
- c) The LGBTQ+ Division had a successful Pride flag raising earlier in the summer and is continuing to guide the Somerville Trans Task Force which is staffed across multiple departments. A bid has just been made for city-wide sensitivity training to staff.
- d) The Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities has provided almost 3500 Taxis to Health and over 700 meals. Food Access is fully ARPA funded. There is a lot of discussion on how to sunset these popular programs and what continuity options we can find as alternatives. The Senior Taxi Program is continuing to provide seniors with rides to primary care visits.
- e) Prevention distributed over 300 Narcan.
- f) HHS Communications has focused this summer primarily on messaging and outreach about extreme heat and safety for target groups who are at risk. Tick and food-borne diseases have also been a community concern.
- g) SomerPromise produced a multi-lingual Summer Camp Guide for this year.
- h) Council on Aging has begun to provide durable medical equipment to seniors who need it.
- i) Mayor Citations read in recognition of the years of service for Board members Paula Machado and Robert McLean. Dr Green and Director Carroll thanked the two Board members as well.

8. Next Meeting: October 17th ,2024

Meeting Adjourn: Brian Green moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM. Paula seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,