



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
*HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT*

Jacob Wilson  
MAYOR

*KARIN CARROLL*  
*DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES*

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**March 19, 2026**

Open Conference / Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present:

Brian Green, MD (Chair)

Alyssa DuBois, Board Member

Margaret H Coit, Board Member

Colin Zeigler, Environmental Health Manager

Nikki Spencer, Interim Director of Health & Human Services

- 1. Meeting Call to Order:** Brian Green made a motion to open the meeting at 6:04 pm. Alyssa DuBois seconded. All in favor.
- 2. Minutes Approval:** Brian Green made a motion to approve the minutes from February 12, 2026. Alyssa Dubois seconded. All in favor.
- 3. Tobacco Enforcement Update:** Bonny Carroll

The board heard a presentation from Bonny Carroll about FDA Marketing Granted Orders. It has recently come to the attention of MTCP (the Six City Tobacco Initiative's funder) that many electronic delivery systems and nicotine pouches currently being sold in Somerville Adult Only Retail Tobacco Stores do not have a Marketing Granted Order from the FDA and therefore are being sold illegally. The assistant city solicitor agrees that it is within the law, and necessary, to have retailers remove those products. These actions do not necessitate a public hearing or regulation amendments because they are already stated in the initial permit application. A letter to retailers was approved and an enforcement date of May 1 was set.

- 4. Presentation on Social Consumption of Cannabis – Cheryl Sbarra**

The board heard from Cheryl Sbarra, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards regarding new cannabis social consumption sites. She stressed that there is not a model regulation yet though she is part of the Cannabis Commission Committee that is crafting the regulations. Cheryl walked the BOH through new regulations around the social consumption of marijuana. Local municipalities need to opt into regulations allowing consumption sites if they choose to.

- 5. ISD Updates -Colin Zeigler**

Over the past month, we've conducted 15 business license reviews, including body art, farmers market, and pools. Renewal Lettes for the food establishments are going out soon. The sharps' pickups have dropped significantly due to the weather. Colin Zeigler shared that over the past few weeks they have been conducting dumpster audits and found 52 dumpster violations and issued 1200 tickets for various violations. The Rodent Assistance Program has restarted as of Tuesday and has conducted 72 visits to inspect and treat properties. We are working with Modern Pest to deploy smart boxes which both zap and count rodents as they get near the building. Biosafety permits and licenses that have been issued have just gone through the renewal period which ended March 30<sup>th</sup>, and all permits were in compliance and were renewed. The Somerville Biosafety Committee reviews applications that come in to operate utilizing RDNA or biological agents, which is a very broad umbrella of materials. The labs file reports through their own internal biosafety committees and then report back to us so we can keep track of changes that might be occurring in practices or in the physical spaces of the laboratories here in Somerville.

## 6. HHS Updates-Niki Spence

We have been working with the Mayor and Finance department to plan our work for the next year. It is a challenging time for the municipalities financially, but we anticipate maintaining our excellent standards of service while focusing on the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

- **Veterans**
  - Women Veterans Wellness and Appreciation Day in partnership with high school – part of larger effort to reach more veterans and loop them into our services.
- **Council on Aging**
  - Joined the Massachusetts Councils on Aging's Active Agers – effort to promote physical activity for seniors.
- **SomerPromise**
  - Hosted Summer Activities Fair with roughly 300+ in attendance.
  - Gearing up for Week of the Young Child 4/11-4/17 – celebration and focus on needs of young children – send information on events when available.
- **Youth Services**
  - Youth Skill Development and Career Exploration Opportunities – Resume, interviewing skills, financial literacy.
  - Preparing for the Mayor's Summer Jobs program, applications open April 1, 2026.
- **LGBTQ+**
  - Community Resources Fair in partnership with CHA and the library, Valentine's Day, hosted free pizza, STI testing, along with other critical social supports. Planning the next one for May 26th.
- **Public Health Nurses**
  - One more free flu and COVID vaccine clinic April 9th – hosted 30 so far, this respiratory season.
- **Community Health Workers**

- 2 staff are now certified community interpreters – allowing them to facilitate access to public services for those who have limited English proficiency.
- 1 staff certified in Motivational Interviewing
- By the end of May 3 CHW's will be certified in both community interpretation and MI.
- **OFAHC – Office of Food Access and Healthy Communities**
  - Working to stay up to date on federal cuts and the state budget as it relates to SNAP.
  - Conversation with Mayor on how to advocate for residents who receive SNAP benefits
- **Prevention**
  - Warming Center continues to see high attendance in 50s-60s on a nightly basis, going smoothly; worked with Housing Families, the Somerville Homeless Coalition, and the Medical Reserve Corps to keep the warming center open on 2/23 during the worst of the blizzard; thank you to partners and city staff
  - Gearing up for Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) conference on April 1st – HOPE framework is strengths-based approach to reducing risky behaviors, focuses on promoting positive childhood experiences and connections with trusted adults to support wellbeing.

## **7. Next Meeting :04/16/2026**

**Meeting Adjourn:** Brian Green moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 PM. seconded by Margaret H Coit seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Barrows  
Board of Health Recording Secretary