CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Jacob D Wilson
MAYOR

KARIN CARROLL
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

MINUTES
BOARD OF HEALTH
September 17, 2026

Open Conference / Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present:
Brian Green. MD (Chair)
Alyssa Dubois, Board Member
Colin Zeigler, Environmental Health Manager
Karin Carroll, Director of Health & Human Services

1. **Meeting Call to Order**: Brian Green made a motion to open the meeting at 6:01 pm. Alyssa Dubois seconded. All in favor.

2. **Minutes' Approval**: Brian Green made a motion to approve the minutes from June 18, 2026, with the following changes;
    - The minutes being approved in June should have stated "May" not "June"
    - The members present in June should not have included Alyssa Dubois.

    Alyssa Dubois seconded. All in favor. Alyssa Dubois

3. **ISD Updates -**Colin Zeigler

Departmental Restructuring and Public Health Operations

The restructuring has been progressing well. Historically, ISD Health, which oversees enforcement and education functions for the Board of Health, operated under the Building, Zoning, and Building Commissioner. This structure presented challenges in prioritizing public health, as a single individual was responsible for overseeing three major departments. Consequently, amendments to ordinances, the development of new ordinances, and the implementation of standard operating procedures were not always addressed in a timely manner.

The separation of public health from this structure has allowed for greater focus on public health priorities. Departmental leadership continues to work with staff, the HHS Director and other HHS team members to identify best practices, improve procedures, and implement operational changes related to public health enforcement and education. Health inspectors are conducting daily sweeps for sharps throughout the city and have reviewed licenses and permits for over 200 events.

The placement of public health nursing and vaccination services within HHS has also been beneficial. Although the PH Nurse Director has established effective processes and has scheduled over 30 clinics to date, the new structure is expected to streamline access to necessary resources and budgetary support.

HHS continues to collaborate closely with Shared Services. Stacia has provided valuable assistance with the PHE grant and the distribution and allocation of grant funds. Existing experience working with Shared Services has also supported coordination and implementation efforts, especially in Rodent Control. A new Rat Czar has recently been hired in ISD.

Overall, the restructuring has positioned public health enforcement and education functions more directly within the public health framework, supporting improved coordination, resource allocation, and operational effectiveness.

Kratom Enforcement and Compliance

Enforcement related to kratom presents challenges because the substance may be incorporated into a variety of products without being explicitly marketed as kratom. Potential products include beverages, food items, and products sometimes referred to as “gas station pharmaceuticals,” such as large pills and other items sold behind the counter.

Effective enforcement will require inspections of retail establishments, product reviews, and examination of ingredient labels to identify products that may contain kratom. This will be a learning process, and Tobacco Control staff will be available to provide assistance. Bonnie's experience working with these retailers will be a valuable resource in identifying establishments that may be noncompliant or require additional support to achieve compliance.

A coordinated approach will be necessary to address these challenges. However, DPH has not designated kratom enforcement as part of the formal scope of Tobacco Control. Responsibility for kratom enforcement therefore remains with the Board of Health.

4. **HHS Updates – Karin Carroll**
   Director Carroll provided the following updates on departmental operations, budget planning, and divisional activities.

   The department’s quarterly report is being finalized and is expected to be presented at the next scheduled meeting.
   The transition to the department’s new divisional structure is progressing well. The administrative team continues to work through job description revisions and regrading in coordination with the relevant union.

   Community Wellness: Mobile markets experienced a 40% increase in activity this summer and continue to address an important community need. Planning is also underway for the winter warming center.

   Immigrant Advancement Council: The division has been coordinating cultural and community events, including Brazilian Independence Day celebrations and Welcoming Week in September, highlighting and celebrating Somerville’s immigrant communities.

   Council on Aging (COA): The COA held another successful Senior Picnic in September, featuring live music, lunch, and gifts for attendees. The Ralph and Jenny Center, which hosts many COA programs, is now owned and managed by the city. The transition has proceeded smoothly, without interruption to COA programming.

Human Services: The division is reviewing how services are delivered throughout the City, with the goal of streamlining and standardizing service delivery, policies, and staff training. Nancy Bocci will lead this effort. This work is particularly important in light of significant reductions in federal benefits.

Health Administration: Anoop Malik, Finance Manager, has recently hired and trained a Grants Manager. The department also plans to hire a Procurement Manager to support the substantial volume of grants and contracts managed by HHS.

Director Carroll reported that the public health vending machines continue to experience high utilization, dispensing approximately 400 items per month. Inventory has recently been updated for warmer weather and includes items such as mosquito wipes, hydration kits, and sunscreen.

5. **Next Meeting :10/15/2026**

Meeting Adjourn: Brian Green moves to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 PM. seconded by Alyssa Dubois seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Barrows
Board of Health Recording Secretary