



**CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**Division of Public Health**



Michael P. Hirsh, MD, FACS, FAAP  
Medical Director

**SUBJECT:** BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES  
**DATE:** AUGUST 31, 2015  
**START TIME:** 6:30PM  
**LOCATION:** 25 MEADE STREET, ROOM 109  
WORCESTER, MA 01610

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**IN ATTENDANCE:**

*Board of Health members:* David Fort, Edith Claros, Joanne Calista, Dr. Jerry Gurwitz, Abigail Averbach

*Division of Public Health staff:* Karyn Clark, Zach Dyer, Dr. Michael Hirsh

*Members of the public:* Jay Gardiner

**Meeting called to order at 6:38 PM**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- a. Dr. Jerry Gurwitz served as the chair for this meeting

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

- a. Minutes of the 8-3-15 meeting are unanimously approved following a motion to the chair.

**3. Organizational Structure & Processes**

- a. Dr. Gurwitz leads group in a priority setting exercise. Board members write down top 3 priorities for addressing. Board members participate in an exercise to visualize the institutional role of the Board of Health.
- b. In discussion of priorities, board expresses willingness to make bold policy decisions. Hopes that the board is not slow to act—that it can quickly synthesize information and concerns and act on them. Agreement that to make the best use



- of time, Board needs to act on data, respond to information rather than responding to what is in newspaper.
- c. Discussion of the importance and role of a very active chair to facilitate information gathering. Questions whether the Board should be involved in operations of the Division.
  - d. Jay Gardiner discusses the importance of engaging the community, tapping resources that exist in the community; also, the importance to celebrate victories/successes and communicate that well.
  - e. Mr. Gardiner asks for Alliance Board members to be invited/connected to Worcester Board of Health. Asks for the Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance to be valued in decision-making.
  - f. Priorities were placed on a matrix of low-high priority and easy-hard achievability. Violence/community safety, opioid use, mental health issues, racial and ethnic disparities, were all ranked as high priority and hard achievability. Teen pregnancy/STDs were ranked slightly lower priority and slightly easier achievability. Smoking/tobacco/hookah bars were ranked lower priority and easier achievability. Question of if there are CHIP policy priorities that align well.
  - g. Board asked for list of CHIP policy priorities that relate to the issues identified by the Board.
  - h. Board discusses the difficulty in communicating to get work done and move information along.
  - i. Through discussion, Abigail Averbach volunteers to serve as Chair through August 31, 2016. Jerry Gurwitz makes a motion to recommend Abigail Averbach chair. Ms. Averbach volunteers to draft roles and responsibilities for chair and vice chair, for discussion at next meeting. Ms. Averbach requests meeting with Karyn Clark to discuss procedures for setting next agenda.

#### **4. Next Meeting**

- a. Next meeting will be Monday, October 5, 2015 at 6:30pm.

#### **5. Adjourn**

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 8:00 following a motion of the chair.

