



The City of Worcester

SPECIAL WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2026 @ 10:30am

25 MEADE STREET, ROOM 109 1ST FLOOR. WORCESTER, MA

Welcome

Board members present:

Joseph Kahoro

Patrick Lowe

Frances Anthes

Board members absent

Michael Perotto

Staff present

Nikki Nixon, DPH Director

Jennifer Nakijoba, Chief of Community Health, DPH

Desiree Sutton, Business Manager, DPH

Brenda Wright, Principal Clerk, DPH

1. Call to Order

Chair Frances Anthes called the Special Meeting of the Worcester Board of Health to order at 10:30am

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Frances Anthes welcomed everyone and made special mention of Nikki Nixon.

The Board welcomed Nikki as the new Director of Public Health. Chair Frances noted that she has served in the interim role for approximately six months and has done a great job learning the position and preparing to move the Division's work forward. The Board congratulated her and expressed its appreciation for her work done and welcomed the opportunity to work with her in her new role.

3. Announcements

The Chair reported that the September Board of Health meeting, which was scheduled to be held fully virtually, experienced technical difficulties that prevented some participants from accessing the meeting. To ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Law (OML) and provide appropriate public access, the meeting was rescheduled to September 30, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. The Chair noted that the September 30 meeting will be held in person.

A Special Board of Health meeting was convened to address a time-sensitive matter that needed to be completed prior to the rescheduled September 30 meeting. The Special Meeting therefore included a brief agenda focused solely on that matter.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of August BOH meeting presented.

Motion made by: Patrick Lowe. It passed unanimously with Joseph Kahoro, Patrick Lowe and Frances Anthes voting yes.

5. Tobacco Inspector Appointment / MHOA Grant

Nikki Nixon, DPH Director provided an overview of the Massachusetts Municipal Health Officials Association (MHOA) grant, which provides resources to increase the Division of Public Health's tobacco enforcement capacity.

Through a mutual agreement, the Division will engage a tobacco inspector for one year. The additional capacity will strengthen tobacco compliance and enforcement efforts while allowing Tobacco Prevention Specialist Kyle O'Connor, to focus more on education, outreach, and building relationships with tobacco retailers.

Board members expressed support for the partnership and the additional enforcement capacity. They noted the importance of maintaining inspections while also providing education and building relationships with tobacco retailers.

The Chair called for a motion to approve the appointment of an MHOA Tobacco Inspector for one year who will work with the Division of Public Health.

Motion: To approve the agreement for the tobacco inspector appointment.

Motion made by: Patrick Lowe

Vote:

Patrick Lowe – Yes

Joseph Kahoro – Yes

Frances Anthes – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Board discussions

Chair Anthes reviewed upcoming Board business and noted that the next full Board of Health meeting will be held on September 30, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. She stated that the meeting will include the agenda items from the previously scheduled meeting that were not addressed due to technical difficulties.

Homelessness

The Chair discussed adding an item regarding 'homelessness' to the September 30 agenda, given increased discussions of the issue within the City. She noted that it has been an ongoing issue and

has recently become a topic of discussion at City Council. The Board requested an update from staff at the next BOH meeting on the City's homelessness efforts.

New Tobacco Regulations

Staff reported that there are several requests from tobacco retailers for hearings. The Board agreed to provide an opportunity for them to address these matters. September 30 and October 19 were suggested as potential meeting dates.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Joseph Kahoro. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.