

**LOWELL BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**341 Pine Street**  
**Lowell, Massachusetts 01851**

**January 24, 2018:**

A meeting of the Lowell Board of Health was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 in the Mayor's Reception Room, City Hall, 375 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA. 01852. Chairwoman Jo-Ann Keegan called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

**Present:**

Jo-Ann Keegan, RN, MSN  
William Galvin  
Kerry Hall

Chairperson  
Board Member  
Board Member

**Chairwoman Jo-Ann Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.**

**Order of Business:**

**1. NEW BUSINESS**

**1.I For Acceptance:** Minutes of the December 20, 2017 meeting of the Board of Health.

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of the December 20, 2017 meeting of the Board of Health made by William Galvin, seconded by Kerry Hall. All in favor.

**1.II Informational:** Health and Human Services Director of Finance Introduction of Mr. Brendan Flynn, Deputy Director of Finance. Mr. Flynn was unable to attend this rescheduled meeting but will be attending the scheduled meeting on February 7, 2018.

**1.III For Review:** Tobacco Control Monthly Report submitted by Cesar Pungirum, Program Director. The Board accepted and placed on file.

**1.IV For Review:** Trinity EMS Reports for December 2017 Monthly Opioid overdose/hometown reports. The Board accepted and placed on file. Chairwoman Jo-Ann Keegan noted the increase in this month's figures.

**2. OLD BUSINESS:**

**2.I Communication:** From the Commonwealth of Mass. Executive Office Of Health & Human Services Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health to Salah Khelfaoui, Superintendent of Lowell Public Schools, dated December 27, 2017 RE: December 12, 2017 Indoor Air Quality Assessment at Lowell High School Complex.

Jim Green, Deputy Commissioner, DPW was present to discuss the report with the Board. Chairwoman Keegan informed the Board that she has discussed the report's noted CO2 levels with DPW Commissioner Tom Bellegarde and Building Commissioner Shaun Shanahan as well as Mr. Michael Feeney, Director of the Indoor Air Quality Program for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Mr. Feeney informed Chairwoman Keegan that CO2 levels of 1000ppm are considered safe, levels of 1500ppm are of concern and levels over 2000ppm are considered critical. Discussion on the CO2 levels in the various buildings occurred. It was noted that the larger number of classrooms with higher CO2 levels occurred in the Freshman Academy. Mr. Green noted that the air circulation in this building was easier to correct and he would look at

adjusting the air intake to correct the problem. Mr. Green also noted that in the 1922 building, fresh air enters through small vents in the hallway so if the doors and transom windows are kept shut, it can affect the air flow. This building is more reliant on open windows for air exchange but windows cannot be opened in extreme temperatures or when the air conditioners are running. The classrooms in this building where higher CO2 levels were noted tended to have more students in them when the reading was taken. Once the students left, the CO2 levels decreased.

In the 1980's building there were more classrooms with higher readings, the computer monitoring system was not tied to all the classrooms yet. Once the computer system is running at 100% the air exchange will be modulated automatically. Chairwoman Keegan asked that room 556, noted as not having a window, be checked to see why the CO2 level was so high. Mr. Green thought it might be a storage closet but will check and report back to the Board. It was also noted by the Board that the majority of classrooms with CO2 levels over 1500 had carpeting and inquired if that could be part of the reason for the higher levels. Chairwoman Keegan noted that Mr. Feeney had recommended the carpets be removed and replaced with tile.

Discussion on the reports suggestion of remodulating and balancing of the air circulation systems occurred. Mr. Green noted that although the report recommends this action occur every five years, every seven to ten years is the norm and it is very expensive to do. The Board inquired if the contract to replace the roofs in the Lowell High Complex had been awarded yet and was informed by Mr. Green that the design contract had been awarded, but the contract for the roof replacement would come later. It was noted that the roofs handled the recent snow storms well. Board Member William Galvin asked if there was a way to build a ventilation system into the roof. Mr. Green said that the ventilation could be looked at in the design phase. Currently the 1922 building has 2 units that may be replaced and 2 other units may be added for fresh air which will need to be heated. Member Galvin suggested a short term solution would be to let the staff members, who may be in the classrooms for longer periods of time, know they should leave the room and go to other areas of the school to allow the CO2 levels to decrease. Mr. Green added that Rick Underwood, Director of Facilities-LPS, is working on cleaning the air registers and other repairs that are considered housekeeping items while DPW is handling the larger repairs when students are on vacation. The Board requested Mr. Underwood attend the next Board Meeting to update them on the current status of ongoing cleaning efforts and repairs. Mr. Green added that the new Head of Students has an air thermometer and when there are reports of cold classrooms she is going to that class to measure the air temperature. What is being found is that the people taking the temperature may be near or facing a window and will get a cold temperature reading; however, when the ambient air temperature is measured, it's much warmer.

The Board was concerned that the staff and students may have problems being in the rooms with higher CO2 levels. Member Kerry Hall asked if bladeless fans could be purchased and used in the classrooms to try to circulate the air out into the hall for the registers to recirculate. Chairwoman Keegan commented that Mr. Feeney suggested cracking the windows open to assist with recirculation and that fans would not help. However, some of the rooms are already too cold. Additionally, the staff would have no way of knowing when the CO2 levels were increasing to know to open the window.

Mr. Green informed the Board that he would attend the February 7<sup>th</sup> Board meeting with an update. Chairwoman Keegan asked if he could have a plan in place for the February school vacation and address the rooms with the higher CO2 levels. Member Galvin agreed, adding he was concerned about the elevated CO2 levels and would like a report on how it's being addressed and an update on getting the computer on line in the 1980's building. Mr. Green added that DPW would be working on replacing ceiling tiles and increasing the fresh air in the Freshman Academy.

Member Hall inquired if there would be another testing of the air quality and was informed by Mr. Green that the school complex had been given a very good rating so there was no schedule for them to come again unless a problem was reported. Chairwoman Keegan added that Mr. Feeney told her that if the Board felt there were items not being addressed he would be willing to come back and talk with DPW.

Member Hall inquired if Mr. Green has a machine that will measure gasses in the air such as CO2. The Board suggested that Mr. Green borrow the machine and take more readings in the rooms with the higher CO2 levels to find out if the ppm has decreased.

Chairwoman Keegan recognized Laura Ortiz of 1248 Lawrence St. Lowell, MA. Ms. Ortiz inquired if the Indoor Air Quality Program has gone into all the schools to test the air quality. Mr. Green informed Ms. Ortiz that the School Department would need to request the testing be done. Ms. Ortiz stated that she has a child in the Freshman Academy who is being constantly dismissed due to headaches and another at the Pyne that she is concerned about. Mr. Green stated that he could go check those classrooms for her. Ms. Ortiz replied that other schools are worse and other schools with roof issues. Chairwoman Keegan felt that if staff members were getting sick, they should report it to the Health Department. Mr. Green informed Ms. Ortiz that DPW repairs any reports of roof problems as soon as they are received. Ms. Ortiz inquired how many students at Lowell High School have asthma and are getting headaches. She was informed that the Health Department would have that data. Ms. Ortiz asked if the City was going to follow the recommendations in the report. Mr. Green stated that the City was working on those recommendations now and many of them were housekeeping issues that the custodians would take care of, while the air quality recommendation would fall to DPW.

The Board requested that Mr. Underwood attend the February 7, 2018 Board meeting with a report on mitigation efforts.

**2.II Communication:** 58 Fay St. #4.

Communication from Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services, to Attorney Andrew Sabourin re: 58 Fay St. #4 letter of compliance.

The Board accepted and placed on file.

**3. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**3.I Update:** Divisional and Departmental Reports

The Board accepted and placed on file. Member Galvin commented on the previous discussion regarding headaches and reports of feeling ill and wondered if the LHS nurses see these students and could determine what room they were coming from. Chairwoman Keegan thought the staff going to the nurses may be better to track and determine if they were coming from the same room. Member Galvin added he would be interested what the numbers were for people coming in for nausea, headaches, vomiting, light headedness and dizziness. Chairwoman Keegan suggested asking Health & Human Services Director Kerran Vigroux to have the Nurse Coordinator Mary Beth Moffett to reach out to the LHS nurses to determine if there has been an increase in the number of students and staff with these complaints. Member Galvin suggested educating the nurses on the symptoms of CO2 levels. The Board agreed that Ms. Vigroux should give Ms. Moffett a copy of the Air Quality Report and that the LHS nurses be made aware of the report so they may keep an eye out for people coming in with symptoms. If it is determined there is an increase that needs to be better defined, then a survey for the staff be considered.

**Motion:** To adjourn.

Motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM was made by William Galvin, seconded by Kerry Hall. All in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH: FEBRUARY 7, 2017 @ 6:00 PM  
MAYOR'S RECEPTION ROOM CITY HALL**