

From: "Ken Elstein" <kenelstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Mon, 9 Dec 2024 16:17:26 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: Re: Tobacco Free Generation
To: "Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz" <wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org>

Attachments:Economic Benefits of Nicotine Free Generation.pdf (63.08 KB)

All ten of the nicotine dealers received copies of both the proposed regulations and the notice of the public hearing. According to Health Director Andrea Crete, none have responded, nor informed us whether they will attend.

My analysis (attached) of the economic impact of NFG is very positive for Belchertown. According to a University of Washington study, a majority of customers enter convenience stores to buy snacks, beverages, and food. Only 3% of customers enter a convenience store to buy nicotine. In comparison, five times that number buy lottery tickets. And the proposal would only affect a small portion of that 3%.

Two meetings ago, one vendor did appear, and we allowed him to speak. He did not mention the Nicotine Free Generation topic at all. However, he discouraged us from eliminating nicotine oral pouches below 6 mg., which is what he sells. He said some people sell up to 18 mg. These are especially popular among teenagers.

FYI, under MGL, the Board of Health is not required to hold a public hearing regarding tobacco regulations. However, we are doing this as a courtesy.

I hope you do testify, either at the hearing remotely, or at least by email to acrete@townofware.com.

Do you know whether any of the other Select Board members will appear?

Thank you.

--Ken

On Mon, Dec 9, 2024 at 9:40AM Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz < wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org > wrote:

Hi Ken,
I will most likely not be able to attend in person this week. I will try to join remotely. I have received about 200 emails at this point from people asking to not support the recommendation. But only 2 have Belchertown addresses. I would love to know what our local business owners think. But not one of them has sent us an email- have you all heard from the local businesses or surveyed them?

If they are not concerned, or engaged, that seems like taciturn approval.

Thanks Ken.
Whitney

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From: Ken Elstein <kenelstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 6, 2024 5:12:29 PM
To: Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz <wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org>
Subject: Re: Tobacco Free Generation

Whitney,

Thank you for your supporting words.

Might you be able to speak at the Public Hearing on Wednesday at 6:45 pm in the Town Hall Auditorium? It would be helpful to have a Select Board member.

Thanks again.

--Ken

On Mon, Nov 4, 2024 at 8:32PM Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz < wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org > wrote:

Good evening, Ken,

Thank you, and everyone, for coming tonight. I very much appreciated hearing from everyone. And though I understand my option does not matter, I have decided to support the board's decision to put forward the generational ban regulation. Good luck with the public forum and please let me know if I can be supportive.

Whitney

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From: Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz <wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org>
Sent: Saturday, November 2, 2024 10:20:02 AM
To: Ken Elstein <kenelstein@gmail.com>; Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz <whitneyjorns@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Tobacco Free Generation

Thank you Ken,
These notes are helpful. I've done a bit of my own research as well and I admit I have not yet solidified my position in the matter. I look forward to hearing from the BOH Monday.

Whitney

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From: Ken Elstein <kenelstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 2, 2024 8:13:27 AM
To: Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz <whitneyjorns@gmail.com>; Whitney Jorns-Kuhnlenz <wJorns-Kuhnlenz@belchertown.org>
Subject: Tobacco Free Generation

Good morning, Whitney,

Kris Hoag and Andrea Crete are scheduled to appear before the Select Board on Monday to discuss the proposal to amend the Tobacco Sales Regulations. I have attached some notes on the subject.

I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Best,

Ken

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Economic Benefits of Nicotine Free Generation

Many people consider it immoral to equate dollars with human lives. Though the Board of Health's responsibility is to help reduce the diseases caused by nicotine use, there also are important economic implications. This topic can be addressed directly.

Sadly, some people prefer to emphasize the small negative impact on local nicotine dealers. In contrast, there is a very strong case that the positive economic benefits of Nicotine Free Generation for all Belchertown residents outweigh that on dealers.

- Academic researchers suggest that a (modal) average for smokers is about 15 cigarettes per day. Obviously, some smokers smoke a couple of daily cigarettes, whereas others smoke several packs. Nevertheless, 15 is a good, defensible approximation.
- In round numbers, that means that the average smoker spends about ten dollars a day, or \$3,650 annually on cigarettes.
- If there are over 1000 smokers in Belchertown (a decent estimate), then they are spending over \$3.6 million per year. Most of that money is leaving Belchertown, leaving Massachusetts, and is going to Big Tobacco. That same \$3.6 million could be spent here in Belchertown restaurants and other retailers.
- Regarding Nicotine Free Generation (NFG), for every 100 young people who do not each start spending \$3,650 annually on cigarettes, they will collectively have \$365,000 more annual disposable cash in their pockets. That is money they can spend on recreation, education, and other positive uses.
- There is evidence that many people successfully quit smoking when they are educated about the financial benefits of quitting.
- The "elephant in the room" is the enormous additional costs all of us pay for tobacco-caused health problems. Our taxes are higher. Our Medicare premiums are higher. Private medical insurance premiums are higher. Non-tobacco businesses suffer increased costs when employees have higher rates of absenteeism and illness, estimated at an astounding \$365 billion. Families suffer when smokers cannot work.
- In effect, all of us are subsidizing the profits of Big Tobacco for the negative economic effects of their addictive drug nicotine. (Oh, and 480,000 Americans die every year from nicotine addiction.)

* * *

In a University of Washington study of the reasons people visit convenience stores, a majority go to buy snacks, food, or beverages. Only 3% go to buy nicotine. Five times that number buy lottery tickets. NFG will affect only a tiny fraction of that 3%.