

MEETING MINUTES Approved 10-27-2020

Tompkins County Board of Health

September 22, 2020

12:00 Noon

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Melissa Dhundale, MD; David Evelyn, MD; Ravinder Kingra; Edward Koppel, MD; Susan Merkel; Janet Morgan, Ph.D.; and Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President

Staff: Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Greg Potter, ITS Director; Adriel Shea, Public Health; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Shelley Comisi, Administrative Assistant; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

Excused: William Klepack, MD, Medical Director

Call to Order: Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:01 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor: Mr. Vorhis addressed the floor with an apology for the issue at hand. Mr. Vorhis stated he has been out of work due to COVID and experienced financial hardships and medical issues. Ms. Black thanked Mr. Vorhis for his attendance, and the Board will review his request to waive the sewage permit application fee in light of his situation.

Approval of August 25, 2020 Minutes: Dr. Koppel moved to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2020 meeting as written, seconded by Dr. Dhundale. The vote to approve the minutes as written was unanimous; motion carried.

Financial Summary: Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the 2020/7th month financial report summary included in the packet. Ms. Crosby had nothing more to add.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa reported that three people are needed for the nominating committee for Dr. Morgan's seat as her term is ending December 31, 2020. Press releases will go out for applicants to begin the process.

Dr. Morgan stated her seat is one of the at large seats, and candidates can come from anywhere in the county.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding nursing or healthcare background. No, Mr. Kruppa responded that it is an only-at-large seat as the only requirement is to have three physicians on the Board, which have been filled. Anyone eighteen or older and a county resident can serve.

Ms. Black, Dr. Moylan and Dr. Dhundale volunteered for the nominating committee.

COVID Updates:

Mr. Kruppa reported there are 20 active cases.

Cornell University: Mr. Kruppa reported a spike in cases related to a cluster of about 130 students with Cornell, of which about 45 ended up positive. As we identified close contacts, through contact tracing, quarantined them, and many of the positives that resulted were in mandatory quarantine. Mr. Kruppa complimented Cornell Health and the larger Cornell in helping get them into isolation and making this successful. Cornell is surveillance testing between five and six thousand a day, with the relationship between Cornell and CMC remaining strong.

Grades K-12: Mr. Kruppa reported that Dr. Dhundale has been in the middle of trying to help the school districts understand the guidance from DOH as it is challenging. The guidance requires the students to return to school and must meet all three criteria; a negative test, an evaluation documented by a health care provider and a resolution of symptoms. So, all three requirements must be met before a student can return to school. We hope for updated guidance from the state. Frank stated another related issue is of siblings and household members and when they can return to school, but we will only require a negative test and not the same high standard. Clarification will be forthcoming. With seven districts, guidance for New York State Education and New York State Department of Health is not the same, so we do our best to clarify and support it. Dr. Dhundale added that the requirement has been very challenging as some students' providers are writing notes to go back to school, and others are not and the accessibility to health care. Dr. Dhundale requested people to call Governor Cuomo and Mr. Zucker to remove the note requirement; it would benefit children from being out of school unnecessarily.

Dr. Koppel commented and complimented how good the system worked with the Tompkins County Health Department and Cornell Health in managing people in isolation and quarantine and appreciated Dr. McQueen's guidance with the very sick.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson, Director of Health Promotions, reported no updates to her report. She added that a drought advisory press release is forthcoming this afternoon and actively working on additional flu promotions with Dr. Klepack airing public service announcements over the radio and paid advertisements.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Klepack was not present, but Dr. Moylan encouraged everyone to read his extensive report included in the packet.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding the official isolation period. Mr. Kruppa responded they have worked with the ten days as a general release dependent upon the individual's underlying conditions and later symptomology severity. For most, it has been ten days, but it can be longer for some based on their situation.

Ms. Black took over the meeting as Ms. Moylan had to leave.

Division for Community Health Report: Mr. Kruppa reported Ms. Claire Espey was hired to fill Ms. Bishop's position and is currently in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For the last ten years, she's been working in East Africa on everything from maternal and child care programs to drinking water supply systems. Ms. Espey holds a Master of Public Health degree from Columbia University, where she was a program director at Columbia Post Graduate for four years. Ms. Espey's start date is November 30th.

Children with Special Care Needs Report: Ms. Thomas apologized that she could not supply a report due to the spike in COVID cases, as the staff was involved with case investigations. We are currently working on early intervention pre-school special education classes; two of them restarted at the beginning of September and seemed to be going well.

County Attorney's Report: Mr. Wood was not present.

Environmental Health Report: Ms. Cameron also apologized that she could not supply a report as they were involved with COVID spike issues. Ms. Cameron reported they worked with Ms. Hillson on the water conservation press release and coordinate with the three big water suppliers on the drought conditions. The county is in a moderate drought, and EH meets every two weeks with the water suppliers to discuss concerns and check the status. Ms. Cameron noted that one improvement since the 2016 drought is that the city has its full plant up and running, which increases the amount of water they can produce. She shared that EH is currently reviewing applications and adjusting workloads to replace a public health sanitarian, Kate Walker, who recently resigned. Ms. Cameron noted they are doing little regular Environmental Health work, mainly in the sewage work program. Most of the work focuses on COVID complaints and COVID-related inspections at facilities.

Ms. Black asked about the number of calls for retail providers that have people not wearing masks. Ms. Cameron stated she will have to check the numbers but believes it has been a general decrease in calls.

Report on the Community Services Board Meeting: Mr. Kruppa reported last month's meeting focused on the 2021 budget. Based on Mr. Kruppa's recommendation, County Administrator Jason Molina recommended in the 2021 County budget to close Health Homes. Health Homes is a DOH based subcontract from Health Homes of New York, which the county has been subsidizing since 2013 when it first came into existence and transitioned from case management. The model was not designed for us to be financially sustainable for the work needed. Health Homes will contract with another agency to provide these services in Tompkins County. It will impact ten employees, and Tompkins County has committed to providing full-time employment to seven employees somewhere else within the county government.

Derrick Vorhis Request to Waive Sewage Permit Application Fee, 974 Ridge Road, T-Lansing: Dr. Koppel moved to accept the request for the waiver as written; seconded by Ms. Merkel.

Ms. Cameron explained that the property owners have a failed sewage system and have requested the sewage system permit fee be waived due to financial difficulties. EH supports this request. In response to a question from Ms. Merkel, Ms. Cameron stated that EH first needs to issue the sewage system permit. If other difficulties arise, they will be dealt with at that time. Mr. Shea added that EH supports waiving the fee so the owner will have more resources to put towards necessary rental equipment or hire a contractor. Dr. Koppel asked if a new permit is needed. In this case, Ms. Cameron responded that

a new permit was required. Ms. Black suggested Mr. Vorhis give Tompkins Community Action a call for assistance.

The vote to approve the waiver was unanimous.

Administration: Mr. Kruppa reported the nominating committee was established, including Ms. Black, Dr. Moylan, and Dr. Dhundale. Mr. Kruppa shared that strategic planning restarted, and representatives from the two boards met with the consultants. The staff meeting between the two groups is this week. Mr. Kruppa clarified that there is not an expectation that the strategic plan will come to the boards for a final vote of the draft. The strategic plan is operational and has an operational component but asks the Board through their representatives to be advisory to the staff committee in developing the plan. Communication with the Boards about the process and what unfolds allows the Board to weigh in.

Adjournment: Ms. Merkel moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Kingra; meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.