

**MEETING MINUTES** Approved 8-25-2020

**Tompkins County Board of Health**

**July 28, 2020**

**12:00 Noon**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

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

**Staff:** Karen Bishop, Director of Community Health; Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; William Klepack, MD, Medical Director; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Skip Parr, Senior Public Health Sanitarian; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Jonathan Wood, County Attorney; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

**Excused:** Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program

**Call to Order:** Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:05 p.m.

**Privilege of the Floor:** Tony Busse from TOSA Apartments was present. Mr. Busse sought to address each line item from the final resolution adopted on June 23, 2020, regarding his property on 1289 Ellis Hollow Road. Mr. Busse stated his main concern is communication and believes a one-on-one meeting to go over the process of monthly reporting would be helpful. Mr. Busse noted corrective measures taken regarding the boiled water order in which an engineering company was enlisted to submit engineering reports. Mr. Busse said he informs new tenants to control the use of the water and does not understand why the plumbing system is labeled unsatisfactory as he has no control of tenants clogging the system. Mr. Busse stated he contracts with The Drain Brain company to service the septic system quarterly. Mr. Busse concluded by requesting communication to explain the reporting process and a reconsideration of the violations. Board members had no questions. Dr. Moylan thanked Mr. Busse for attending and informed him that someone will get back in touch with him.

**Approval of June 23, 2020 Minutes:** Ms. Merkel moved to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2020 meeting as written; seconded by Dr. Morgan. The vote to approve the minutes as written was unanimous; motion carried.

**Financial Summary:** Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the 2020/6<sup>th</sup> month financial report summary included in the packet. Ms. Grinnell Crosby reported that no reimbursements were received from state

grant claims but was reduced by @ 14.4%. Ms. Grinnell Crosby reported receipt of the first payment for the COVID-19 grant from federal funding.

**Administration Report:** Mr. Kruppa announced the retirement of Ms. Karen Bishop, Director of Community Health after 40 years of service. Mr. Kruppa thanked and wished her well for all her years of service for the department and our community and graciously acknowledged Ms. Bishop for leading our COVID-19 response since the start. Ms. Bishop stated it has been her privilege to serve at the Health Department and have thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone and wished all the best in carrying out the Public Health vision and mission. Thanks and congratulations were given from the entire board and staff members; noted are a few words describing Ms. Bishop: pleasant, professional, knowledgeable, caring, helpful, reassuring, supportive, an opinion that carries a significant amount of weight and the best of the best of the nursing profession.

Mr. Kruppa shared a slideshow presentation on COVID-19's demographic information that was provided to the legislature earlier this week and which can be found on the Tompkins County website.

Grades K-12: K-12 school reopening guidance has been posted.

- Districts in regions in Phase 4 can reopen with an infection rate remaining below 5% using a 14-day rolling average.
- Schools will close if the regional infection rate rises over 9% after August 1<sup>st</sup>; final plans must be submitted to the state by July 31<sup>st</sup> as the governor is expected to decide about school reopening the first week of August.

Mr. Kruppa conveyed that school districts will vary in how many students will be in attendance and times periods so with Dr. Dhundale's help in assisting in the coordination of health aspects with the school nurses, student screenings and exclusions, how to deal with sick children will be uniform.

Travel Advisory: Mr. Kruppa reported that three more states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. have been added to the travel advisory list. Much public information to get people to complete the online form to be placed in the system for quarantining upon their return from these locations.

Higher Education: Mr. Kruppa reported they continue to work with the higher educational institutions on their approaches to deal with students as things evolve.

Demographic Information: Mr. Kruppa shared updated demographic information via his slide presentation.

- Currently, there are 202 positive cases and things are about the same since the last report as far as our cases with the demographics of our population at large.
- Hispanic and African Americans populations are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 which is seen across the country, which will be kept in mind as we continue forward.
- Demographic distribution across municipalities align well with the population density, with the City of Ithaca having the most cases, but as the slide illustration shows, no municipality has been spared.
- Point of exposure trended down in June and increased in July but there is no link to another known positive which much has to do with persons traveling to more impacted parts of the country; several cases of local gatherings prompted press releases; monitoring of the disease

spread and communicating effectively to the community of the importance of following the guidance continues.

Mr. Kruppa reiterated that the slideshow presentation presented can be found on the Health Department's website.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding closing guidelines for higher education vs. K-12.

- Mr. Kruppa responded "No, higher education is different in that it is treated as a business and the governor has included them in the broader matrix being used for the different regions related to the phased reopening. The Board of Health will work closely with them on any changes to their protocols if needed.

Question from Ms. Black regarding the regional infection rate rises over 9%; total population or for people that are tested positive.

- Mr. Kruppa responded "It is a 9% positivity rate against the people tested positive.

Question from Ms. Black regarding a separate line of data for higher education students.

- Mr. Kruppa responded, "Yes, there will be a separate line of data but still working on it.

Question from Ms. Black regarding a separate line of data for higher education students.

- Mr. Kruppa responded, that yes, there will be a separate line of data and currently working on that data.

Question from Ms. Black regarding fines for people who tested positive after traveling but did not quarantine.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that all tested positives have been followed. We have not been able to effectively monitor travelers traveling to one of the states on the travel advisory list, but we do not want the specter of a penalty to cause people not to want to cooperate with our contact tracing in fear of a fine.

**Health Promotion Program Report:** Mr. Kruppa provided a brief update as Ms. Hillson was not present. He reported that Ms. Hillson and Mr. Schiele continue to work with Communications Director, Dominick Recchio updating the webpage making it easily accessible in different formats; The Healthy Neighborhood Program is up and operational conducting a lot of virtual visits and assisting the Environmental Health team with enforcement work.

**Medical Director's Report:** Dr. Klepack reported on new guidance from the CDC regarding the length of isolation and new thoughts of the duration of contagiousness with nuances. One change is if one is immunosuppressed or has a severe illness, the length of isolation is different. We will use these recommendations for people in isolation moving forward. Dr. Klepack noted another change is increased confidence in clinical criteria for releasing people from isolation so we may back away from re-testing people.

Dr. Klepack spoke of practitioner concerns which center around the use of PPE and K-12 school reopening precautions and whether masks will be required. At this time, no position has been taken. Regarding higher education, he is unaware of what the plans are as communication is being conducted by higher education on various platforms. Still, as board members, he recommended, be knowledgeable about their plans as the public is concerned. In reviewing the CDC guidelines for K-12, Dr. Klepack found it very comprehensive, leaving a lot of flexibility to the districts as to how to implement the

guidelines. Dr. Klepack emphasized using masks and adhering to the travel advisory list. Dr. Klepack referred to his attached report, which included supervised injection facilities information and was open to address any questions.

**Division for Community Health Report:** Ms. Bishop gave an update to her written report of cumulative COVID cases as of today is 219 and of those, 186 have fully recovered. They were successful in bringing back immunizations services for one day but due to COVID had to temporarily discontinue to respond to COVID. Ms. Bishop stated in her final summary “The capability of the staff has expanded exponentially between nurses within the whole department who had not been accustomed to being a part of the communicable disease team and more specifically to COVID case investigations and contact tracing. They have done a tremendous job in which I am extremely proud and know will continue with everybody’s effort to stay on top of case investigations as they present themselves. Thank you all and good luck”.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding who to call in Ms. Bishop’s absence.

- Mr. Kruppa responded to call the Supervising Community Health Nurse, Ms. Melissa Gatch until the end of August when she retires but has agreed to come back on a part-time basis during the transition as positions are filled. Both positions have been advertised and will interview an applicant next week. Ms. Grinnell-Crosby will provide administrative and leadership support to the division if a replacement has not been found after August.

Question from Dr. Morgan regarding the definition of fully recovered.

- Ms. Bishop responded, in the assessment, it is people that have symptoms resolving but may not be resolved but they are not needing acute care, not in the hospital, at home and there is some resumption of their normal daily activities.

Discussion of Immunizations for children.

- Dr. Klepack opened the discussion about the 60 children needing vaccinations in July and August 2019 who may not have a primary physician, health insurance, or were new arrivals. The public health nurses tried to connect them to a medical home to meet their needs but was not always possible. TCHD is unable to mount our usual vaccine clinics for such children. To solve the problem he has reached out to two area primary care practitioners asking if they would be interested in picking up these children who need this service as a public service. Since there was interest, he will need to explore this further reaching out to all primary care practices as this is a critical need. We do not want to see measles or other communicable diseases rise due to missed opportunities to vaccinate. In addition, vaccines are required for school entry.
- Dr. Dhundale stated they are going to try to assist our students and families obtain insurance and pair them with a primary care provider as we realize that this is a very important time by working with Laura Paria and Cayuga Health Partners. In conversations with school nurses, parent navigators could help eliminate some barriers. Dr. Dhundale believes partnering with Dr. Klepack would be a great idea and Dr. Klepack agreed and input to recruit the assistance of Ms. Gatch.

**Children with Special Care Needs Report:** Ms. Thomas reported that the Children with Special Care Needs nurses and support staff continue to help with the COVID-19 response. Some face-to-face visits started on July 1<sup>st</sup> for early intervention and preschoolers with our therapists but only for children where teletherapy has not been successful.

**County Attorney's Report:** Mr. Wood had nothing to report.

**Environmental Health Report:** Ms. Cameron had nothing additional to report.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding 2019 hydrilla.

- Ms. Cameron clarified that the hydrilla was identified in 2019 and then treated in 2020.

**New Business Items:**

1. New Board Member: Mr. Kruppa reported that applicant Michael Ravinder Kingra was recommended for the vacant City of Ithaca board member seat by the nominating committee, his application was signed off by the mayor and is being presented to the board for a full board review for a recommendation. Mr. Kingra is a Cornell professor with a background in Food and Beverage Management and Hospitality.

Dr. Dhundale moved to recommend Mr. Kingra; Ms. Merkel seconded; all in favor; the decision was unanimous.

Mr. Kruppa stated that the approved recommendation will be forwarded to Ms. Black at Health and Human Services and then onto the Legislature. If all goes well, Mr. Kingra should seat for the August meeting.

2. Reopen the discussion of the fines for TOSA apartments aka Tony Busse:  
No member opened the discussion and no discussion was had.

**Report on the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting:** Mr. Kruppa reported that the Community Services Board's July meeting discussed the restarting of strategic planning and off in August and will meet next on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment:** Dr. Evelyn moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Koppel; meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.