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**MEETING MINUTES** Approved 6-23-2020

**Tompkins County Board of Health**

**May 26, 2020**

**12:00 Noon**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Present:** Shawna Black; Melissa Dhundale, MD; David Evelyn, MD, MPH; 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; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; 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; Shelley Comisi, Administrative Assistant; and Karan Palazzo, Administrative Assistant

**Call to Order:** Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Privilege of the Floor:** No one was present for Privilege of the Floor.

**Approval of February 25, 2020 Minutes:** Ms. Black moved to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2020 meeting as written; seconded by Dr. Evelyn. The vote to approve the minutes as written; unanimous approval; motion carried.

**Financial Summary:** Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the 2019/13<sup>th</sup> financial period summary included in the packet as closed for the 2019 budget. We fared well with nothing more to add. Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the April 2020 financial report also included in the packet, due to COVID, expenses and revenues are monitored regularly and since there is minimal coming in and higher expenses are expected in other lines to address COVID response. She had nothing more to add.

Ms. Merkel asked, are there contingency plans for external funding if we must pay overtime or other expenses. Mr. Kruppa answered, that the stimulus which is for both state and local municipalities, is unknown right now, but in the interim the County Administrator has directed county operations to continue under the restrictions put in place. Ms. Grinnell Crosby stated the department received \$159k in CDC funding through HRI (Health Research Inc.) which will offset overtime expenses and some supply purchases. Frank stated, financially things are uncertain, maximizing reimbursement is priority

which will ultimately include FEMA. There will be more conversations about where monies come from for different projects and expenses related to COVID.

**Administration Report – Coronavirus Update:** Mr. Kruppa shared a PowerPoint presentation titled “COVID-19 Tompkins County Response” giving an overview of what has happened since the last meeting. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) has been following the disease, informing the public, preparing for transmission in the community and responding to community impacts related to COVID-19, and continuing County operations to meet the community needs including food, childcare and homelessness.

Responding to Community Needs:

- Food distribution: Schools, Foodnet, food banks and pantries
- Child Care: Spots were made available for essential workers and registered facilities that had closed were reopened
- Homelessness: Shelters moved their regular guest into hotels in preparation for walk-ins; Reach Medical provided telehealth services; and other community outreach partners supplied masks for those in the encampments/ jungle

Reopening Considerations:

- Executive Orders/Announcements: Orders expanding testing criteria to include essential workers; phased reopening plan was launched; and the schools were closed for the rest of the year
- County Operations: Operations included mask making; offering two hours of excused leave to essential employees seeking COVID-19 testing; conversations with community leaders regarding reopening; the furlough process was initiated and meeting with higher education regularly
- Communications/Messaging: Paneled participant updates with the Chamber; all staff virtual Q & A with Mr. Molino; PSAs via YouTube page and Twitter to stay home; and Mr. Kruppa’s participation on WRFI radio panel

Mr. Kruppa presented demographic data comparing all positive cases through 5/4/2020 and Tompkins County’s total population. Mr. Kruppa noted the data for ages 20-29 was in line with our general population as well as race and ethnicity. Geographic data was broken down by municipalities, noting some had zero but we are all susceptible and must still take precautions.

Mr. Kruppa stated we are doing well on the reopening guidelines from Governor Cuomo and will be discussing moving into Phase II on Friday. Weekly/regular conversations with the community and higher education leaders, daily conversations with county legislature as well as with Ithaca City Mayor, Svante Myrick and County Administrator, Jason Molino both now appointed to the regional control room. Daily control room meetings consist of Jason Molino, Amy Hendricks and Dominick Recckio, Communications Director. At these meetings many questions are asked by different counties about their issues and on questions that we don’t have answers for, are sent to the control room. Mr. Kruppa referred to the NY Forward website which provides updated, cataloged and comprehensive information of the Phased Reopenings.

Mr. Kruppa reported 141 positive cases, dashboard published, executive orders continued with approved furloughs, ROOPS were submitted, calls to local libraries and landlords, county encourages using

Tompkins County Health Department Moving Forward webpage and continuation of weekly WRFI Town Halls and staying vigilant.

Mr. Kruppa reported COVID-19 related expenses totaling \$58,969.95 as of 5/18/2020 include overtime and emergency leave for Tompkins County.

Mr. Kruppa reported County Reconstitution of Operations Planning (ROOP) is broken down into a two phased approach.

Phase 1 – Partial reopening and doors open

Phase 2 – Fully functioning and operating in the new normal

Staffing considerations, employee engagement, facility considerations, office operation and field operations were all components leadership considered and documented.

Mr. Kruppa reported that Environmental Health handles complaint calls related to reopening business operations; 211 fields, directs and dispatches calls; NYS PAUSE - complaints are lodged via a form on their website; law enforcement is notified when necessary. The public is asked to be respectful and take personal responsibility, if you think someone is not compliant.

Mr. Kruppa ended his presentation with an update on phased reopening: Regional Control Room; Phased Opening by Industry Group; sharing updates; and referring people to the NY Forward website for reopening questions.

Questions from Dr. Dhundale regarding random testing for children and is there any funding available for testing children:

- Mr. Kruppa responded No, testing is only for healthcare workers, sick individuals, essential workers and nursing home, the focus is on new potential exposures. The Cares Act Money is associated as long as we follow the directives and criteria.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding if all childcare facilities are having their employees and children tested.

- Mr. Kruppa responded No, it is not mandated but childcare workers are essential workers and can be tested if they choose. The only mandate is for nursing home employees for twice a week testing.

**Health Promotion Program Report:** Ms. Hillson reported the Health Promotion Program has been put on hold due to COVID.

**Medical Director's Report:** Dr. Klepack discussed testing and referred to Dr. Dhundale's question to random testing for children. He stated an epidemiologist for surveillance testing would give meaning to the data obtained but will probably come later. Dr. Klepack stated most all primary care physician practices are participating in testing and report daily any COVID positive cases. Some pharmacies are also participating in COVID-19 testing.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding antibody testing in the county alone.

- Dr. Klepack stated to his knowledge it is by region, not by county. Mr. Kruppa stated antibody testing is under 3% and they are not focusing resources or attention to antibody testing because of the many antibody testing and are not sure of the reliability of all of them or what they mean.
- Dr. Klepack responded that because of the low prevalence rate we wrestle with the positive predictive value of the tests.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding reporting positive antibody testing to the health department.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that it generally happens through the lab's reporting mechanism and we don't use the antibody testing results to make decisions.

Question from the chat room regarding WellNow tests.

- Mr. Kruppa spoke to the general manager at WellNow who stated that they are doing PCR testing only on symptomatic individuals; they do offer antibody testing and specimens are sent to a lab in Boston, MA with a 7-10 day return; they could not give a capacity number.
- Dr. Klepack stated the turnaround time depends on the testing methodology.

Question from Dr. Dhundale regarding WellNow's reliability.

- Mr. Kruppa responded he could not verify the reliability of WellNow's testing.

Comment from Ms. Black regarding from her WellNow antibody testing results were 94 – 97% accuracy with a turnaround time of 4 days.

- Dr. Klepack responded it depends on the type of accuracy and with a low prevalence rate in the area, you must consider the positive predicted value which could bring it down to 80%. The challenge is the with the positive predictive value and the low prevalence capacity in the region.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding if colleges will be doing their own testing in the fall or is CMC going to take that on.

- Dr. Evelyn responded conversations with the local higher educational institutions look toward a collaborative effort with CMC (Cayuga Medical Center) continuing the testing. Dr. Koppel has heard the same. Mr. Kruppa stated as Public Health Director he has encouraged the colleges to work with CMC as well.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding K-12 testing.

- Dr. Evelyn responded No, we are waiting to see what develops with the colleges and then go through K-12.
- Mr. Kruppa pointed out the prioritization of resources available for testing and with the large higher education population returning to the area from various communities, they are a higher priority.

**Division for Community Health Report:** Ms. Bishop reported their primary activity has been the COVID-19 response to reported positive cases including case investigations, contact tracing, daily video chats and daily phone calls with positive cases; monitoring persons on mandatory quarantine and calling and daily texting persons on precautionary quarantine. Thirty-six staff members have completed the John's Hopkins training module greatly enhancing effective interviewing and communication skills. The department went live with the COVID-19 specific contact tracing software called CommCare. As of

May 25<sup>th</sup>, there were 153 positive cases and 128 of those have fully recovered. Ms. Bishop reported the department is current with all reportable communicable disease investigations and continues to provide limited services; Telehealth/video chat is utilized to keep in contact with clients. All other program service areas continue to be suspended.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding the average number of contacts you trace.

- Ms. Bishop responded the average traced is 6-8.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding how many people do you anticipate tracing in the college environments.

- Mr. Kruppa responded with a recent conversation with Cornell, the challenge is not knowing what the operations /environment is going to look like.

Question from Dr. Dhundale regarding encouraging community members to be trained in contact tracing.

- Mr. Kruppa responded if we get to a time for that need, we would start with other county employees first and they would be trained closer to that time of need as the training is 4-6 hours.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding extending the contact training to the colleges.

- Mr. Kruppa responded with experience in contact investigations, people were more open to giving the department the full story over their employer or educator. The colleges would be valuable in navigating the daily follow-ups.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding the success of unreachable people in contact tracing.

- Ms. Bishop responded that they have been very successful in reaching people.
- Mr. Kruppa stated the new CommCare software has Amazon Connect which masks the phone number as “New York Contact Tracing.”

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding the vaccinations of immunization services status in Phase II.

- Ms. Bishop stated the status of routine vaccinations is on temporary hold. People who had appointments will be rescheduled in the next Phase, with the priority being primary immunizations for children.

Question from Dr. Dhundale regarding relaxing guidelines in the fall for state mandates.

- Mr. Kruppa stated the state has not decided to open schools in the fall.

**Children with Special Care Needs Report:** Ms. Thomas reported the first two weeks all programs were suspended, and the entire staff was immersed in COVID-19 work. After the two weeks all programs were fully operational; referrals were down, no face-to-face visits; therapists and service coordinators are not out in the field and only utilizing virtual platforms, teletherapy or phone conferencing; and continue with COVID-19 work daily and weekend coverage.

**County Attorney’s Report:** Mr. Wood reported courts are now open for filings; hearings are skyped; unsure of jury hearings.

**Environmental Health Report:** Ms. Cameron reported EH involvement in re-opening; receiving complaints under PAUSE; receiving questions regarding the re-opening process; starting to look at

issuing new permits. Ms. Cameron reported that the Grassroots enforcement action was pulled due to Grassroots not holding the festival this year; Country Inn and Suites submitted a request and there are several changes in today's resolutions.

**Report on the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting:** Mr. Kruppa reported that the Community Services Board Meeting in May was an update of COVID-19 and departmental status and activities.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding update of integration activities and an anticipated timeline to re-engage on the topic.

- Mr. Kruppa responded everything has been postponed until August.

Question from Ms. Merkle regarding the availability of mental health support services to the public as we re-open.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that mental health services are available; the suicide prevention crisis hotline calls have almost doubled; the hospital is busy with behavior health clients; both the clinic and family and children are about 50% of intake numbers pre-COVID. Mr. Kruppa stated messages have gone out and will continue informing and messaging the public that services are available.

**Review of Proposed 2021 Environmental Health Division Fees:** Ms. Cameron referred to materials included in the packet and proposed holding all the fees at the current 2020 level with no changes in the fees for 2021.

Discussion of the Budget: Mr. Kruppa stated it is not a usual budget year and believes the county administrator will maintain the June 1<sup>st</sup> - July 1<sup>st</sup> submittal time frame for departments. Submission of multiple budgets with varying degrees of revenue will be more fluid. Mr. Kruppa agrees with maintaining the fees with the uncertainty of the county budget. Ms. Cameron stated the fees are presented ahead of the budget giving the BOH (Board of Health) a chance to make comments but no formal approval is needed.

**Revised Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0006 – Easy Wok, V-Lansing, Violations of BOH Orders #EH-ENF-19-0007 and Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food):** Ms. Cameron stated that Easy Wok is requesting an extension on a previously approved resolution - Easy Wok, located in the Mall is currently closed and not in operation. EH (Environmental Health) is proposing a change in the fee penalty deadline date from July 15<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup> for your consideration.

Dr. Dhundale moved to accept as written with change; Dr. Koppel seconded.

Vote to approve with a change to #1 from July 15<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>. All in favor; motion carried.

**Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0008 – Jim's Mobile Home Park, T-Newfield, Violations of Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Water):** Ms. Cameron explained that there were no changes in the current resolution. In 2019 they failed to submit sample results and this resolution is requiring penalty payment and a sample collection and submission schedule for samples not previously submitted.

Dr. Evelyn moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Ms. Merkel.

All in favor; motion carried.

**Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0009 – Brew 22 Coffee and Espresso, T-Dryden, Violations of Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Water):** Ms. Cameron stated that there were no proposed changes to the draft resolution and stated that Brew 22 failed to submit samples results as required in 2019.

Dr. Dhundale moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Evelyn.  
All in favor; motion carried.

**Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0011 – John Joseph Inn, T-Lansing, Violations of Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Water):** Ms. Cameron explained that this temporary residence cannot currently allow any wedding at their facility. The resolution proposes to extend the \$500.00 penalty deadline to September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Morgan moved to accept resolution as written with change; Dr. Dhundale seconded. All in favor as written with changes; motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of not submitting samples for second, third and fourth quarters of 2019 and that they are compliant with 2020 sample requirements.

**Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0013 – Country Inn and Suites Main Pool and Spa Pool, T-Ithaca, Violations of Subpart 6-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Pools):** Ms. Cameron stated that the enforcement action is about not maintaining adequate disinfection in the operation of their pool. They are requesting the proposed fines be waived or reduced and have submitted an invoice showing purchase of a new flow meter with maintenance done as well as hiring a maintenance company to manage their pool. The pool is currently not open due to COVID-19 restrictions and it is not certain when it will be opened. EH proposes to waive the penalty due to the current situation.

Discussion of eliminating penalty. Ms. Cameron stated they have taken all the measures to make corrective actions as requested, they have not been able to operate the pool, and will have to pass an inspection before they reopen.

Dr. Koppel moved to accept as written with changes; Dr. Dhundale seconded. All in favor as written with changes; motion carried.

Question from Dr. Klepack regarding clarification of Phase to Phase period:

- Mr. Kruppa clarified the phase periods are every two weeks if the metrics don't change.

Question from Dr. Dhundale regarding the board position:

- Mr. Kruppa stated he will follow up with the mayor and it will be put on next month's agenda.

Question from Dr. Klepack regarding an estimate of after hour calls.

- Ms. Cameron stated not many COVID-19 related complaint calls come in after hours. The calls received are not emergency situations and can wait until the next business day.

**Adjournment:** Dr. Moylan adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.