

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERSON BOARD OF HEALTH WAS HELD ON THURSDAY MARCH 12, 2020 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE BOROUGH HALL.**

Roll Call: Cindy Bischoff, Linda Lahey and Elaine Palumbit

Also present were Councilwoman Argenzia, Borough Administrator Rob Hermansen, Rebecca Pigoncelli, REHS, NWBRHC, and Liz Morris, Board of Health Secretary

Sue Gibbons and Angela Musella, Health Officer NWBRHC dialed into the meeting

Apologies: Corey Melillo

Board of Health Secretary notified the Board of Health members that in case of a fire to follow the Fire Exit sign above the door and exit calmly.

Roll Call: CB–yes LL –yes EP –yes

The Board of Health meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Board of Health President Cindy Bischoff.

The Board of Health Secretary was asked if the Borough Administrator had been contacted regarding the licensing of pet pigs to confirm that the process that was suggested at the meeting was acceptable. The Secretary told the meeting that it had been discussed and approved but when the resident who had made the initial inquiry was contacted she said that they had decided against getting a pig. There was a typographical error in this section which will be corrected.

Motion by Linda Lahey seconded by Cindy Bischoff, that the minutes of the Sine Die and Reorganization meeting of February 13, 2020 meeting be approved with the change noted.

Roll Call: CB–yes LL –yes EP –yes

The Animal and Financial Reports for February were given. There were 68 dog licenses and no cat licenses issued in February. The secretary reported that residents were paying late fees.

Payment of vouchers

Two standard payments, one to the State for the January dog licenses, \$406.20 and the monthly payment to NWBRHC of \$5,001.09 were made in February.

**Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission Activity Reports** for February was circulated to the meeting along with a fact sheet on COVID 19 and a document which lists precautions that should be taken with the flu which apply to COVID 19 as there have been no specific instructions for that disease.

The Spring Food Handlers Courses were scheduled and flyers mailed/emailed to all food establishments.

### Inspections

There were six inspections done, all were satisfactory. During the inspection at Memorial School the REHS found that they were doing construction for a new kitchen. NWBRHC are reviewing the plans.

Plan reviews & consultations-None to report

Temporary Licenses-None issued

### Complaints

There was a report of an individual with Hepatitis A who had visited a food establishment in Emerson. REHS notified the establishment and reviewed illness symptoms, provided a food handler exclusion chart. The inspector observed appropriate handwashing and glove usage.

### Inquiries

A resident called wanting to know how to license a miniature pig. The Health Officer researched this and found no ordinance that would prohibit this.

### Animal Bites-

One skunk to dog bite and one incident where two dogs bit each other.

### Summonses/Abatements/Violations-

None

### Court Appearances-

None

### OPRA requests-

One from a student who works as a part time dispatcher at the Borough required a copy of a Health Inspection Report for one of his classes. NWBRHC provided one from Jersey Mike's

Servsafe Food Handlers Classes- One food handler's manager's course was held in Waldwick and a representative from Franco's Pizza, Kinderkamack Rd attended.

### Vital Statistics

There were 7 deaths reported and 1 marriage license issued in February.

### Health Education-

Chantal Folkes, the health educator sent correspondence to all school nurses regarding coronavirus, provided FB posts for February's health observances, searched for coronavirus FAQ'S sheets, submitted a grant application for coronavirus, submitted flu roll call application, organized complaints from 2019 and called Urgent Care centers about coronavirus.

### Public Health Nursing/Communicable Disease Investigations

The Emerson blood Pressure Screening was held February 13. There were two residents came for blood pressure screening. Vital signs were within normal limits and no distress was noted.

There was one case of campylobacter, one hepatitis A and one Lyme Disease.

There will be no more blood pressure clinics until the end of April because of the coronavirus situation.

Correspondence-No correspondence received or sent

### **Council Liaison Report**

- The last meeting started an hour earlier to allow for the review of the budget. There were requests from the Police Department, the Ambulance Corps and the DPW which were reviewed to ensure that they were necessary.
- The Open Space grant was discussed where the state will match funds that the Borough save. The projects that this funding may cover will be put on the referendum for voting.
- There is a concern amongst residents that the Kinderkamack Pedestrian crossing next to Faustini's is dark and this is a risk to safety.
- The traffic situation on Palisade Avenue by the schools and related safety concerns were discussed. A suggestion has been made to have a yellow blinking light or a sign with a message that kids are around because school is open or evening activities are taking place.
- The Borough phone system will be upgraded.
- Solar panels will be installed on the Library roof.
- The Borough electronic sign at the train station is working again.
- Emerson Bible Church is holding a food drive at the Borough Hall for all the community and not just a part.
- A new transportation system called HIP has been started which will have passenger vans to transport people into New York city. It will have three scheduled pickups for weekdays but not weekends. The service is about 10% more expensive than mass transit but has Wi-Fi and better seats. It was scheduled to start March 13, but this has been delayed because of the coronavirus outbreak. Passengers can book seats on whichever service they need on the company's website. There is also information on the Borough website. The Borough is currently identifying a location for passenger pickup that will allow them to park close to the stop. The service will only wait one minute for passengers who have booked the service and then depart. It is possible to reschedule to the next service if there are seats available.

- The updated Borough Personnel policy is scheduled to be heard and adopted at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mayor and Council. As part of the new policy, employees, officials and volunteers will have to submit a copy of their Drivers License to be checked by the State
- The Borough has started a lawsuit against the redeveloper.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### Coronavirus

Angela Musella, NWBRHC gave an update on the current situation with the coronavirus by phone. Cindy reported that she had listened to the call with the Bergen County Executive, James Tedesco and Municipality Mayors and Borough Administrators. Angela was concerned that NWBRHC was unaware that the meeting was going on and Rob Hermansen agreed. There was a discussion about the process for closing schools which states that the Governing Body and Health Officer put a written request to close the schools to the Superintendent of schools. This did not happen and there was a concern about how the closing of the schools would affect the 180-day school year requirement. As of the meeting, NJDOH has not sent any guidance on how this should be handled. Angela thought it was possible that the statement from the County Executive allowed for school closings. Rob said he would send her the link for all the calls from the County Executive so NWBRHC has the same information as everyone else and encouraged them to reach out to the County to ensure that they are included. Weekly calls from the County Executive are planned.

Cindy let Angela know that as a result of the call with the County Executive the Mayor and Borough Administrator took the decision to close the Senior Center in Emerson. They also recommended that the Library Director that the library stop all group activities. The library director agreed but the library will still be open for residents to take out and return books. At this point in the meeting it was noted that the Borough of Park Ridge had suspended all Borough sponsored events, gatherings and meetings and closed Borough Hall to the public. Emerson is not going this far at the moment but recreation activities have been cancelled for the next week. This will be reviewed when new information is received from the County Executive. The County Executive stated that there should be no visitors to Nursing Homes or Assisted Living except for patients in hospice or other end of life situations. The Borough is looking at how this could be implemented in Emerson. Angela said she would reach out to these institutions but thought that they would have already put procedures in place. Englewood, Fort Lee, Teaneck, Bergenfield and Leonia are reporting cases but none closer to Emerson.

Cindy reported that the Mayor said Councilwoman Argenzia received a call from a resident saying that the professional building next to Marra's had been evacuated because of coronavirus. Angela said she had not seen a report of this case and she was receiving calls from many sources, day and night so NWBRHC are being routinely updated. There was some concern that in addition to this report helicopters had been flying overhead but it was not known what organization they were from. The Police Chief was contacted and he said he did not know anything about this situation.

Angela reported that there were no cases in Emerson and no one with testing pending as of March 12<sup>th</sup>. Emerson will be informed if there is a case but HIPPA laws prevent release information about the patient. New information is posted on the NWBRHC website as it is received and they also recommend people check the CDC website. They have also been answering lots of phone calls about coronavirus from people concerned whether they should be tested because of their circumstances or whether NWBRHC can conduct tests. They are also monitoring their communicable disease reporting system. Their role is investigating and quarantining. There has been a report that NY state officials are checking that known cases are maintaining their quarantine restrictions but NWBRHC is not doing this at the moment.

There has been a report from NY that 20 in-state labs have been approved to start testing and the state will cover the cost of these. Sue asked Angela if she knew if New Jersey had any plans to do the same. Her view was that they did not but did say that Hackensack Hospital had just been approved to start testing. Their test is quick with results available in hours rather than days and they will be able to test 24 people every 8 hours, 72 in a 24-hour period. Councilwoman Argenzia reported that a company called Viracor were able to do testing but NWBRHC did not know anything about this organization. LabCorp is taking 5 days to provide results but it is not known why this is taking so long. Hackensack is the only hospital in New Jersey that is testing. It is not clear which patients will be given the test, Emergency Room, In-patients, patients with symptoms or anyone.

The Borough Administrator reported that an 89-year-old nursing home resident had been in contact with someone who had just returned from Greece showing symptoms. NWBRHC did not have any information on this case which may have been because on investigation it was found that the patient did not meet the criteria for testing.

Although there are no cases in Emerson at the moment, this may not be the case in future and Angela, who has worked in Public Health for 36 has not seen anything like this before. That said, it is important to remind anyone from the public who contacts the borough to stay calm, wash your hands, don't touch your face and keep 6 feet away from people. Virus can remain on surfaces for 9 days but disinfecting is effective. Valley, City MD and Atlantic are reportedly testing but NWBRHC could not confirm this.

Shortages of masks are being reported. There is a national stockpile and it is hoped that these will be released and New Jersey will receive some. There do not seem to be any plans to do this in the near future which may be positive as it implies there are sufficient supplies. That said, some towns are down to twenty or thirty masks which is very concerning, particularly for first responders.

New Jersey is in the moderate risk category and mitigation is the focus. Guidance on this was sent out by NJDOH.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Discussion re: Ordinance to ban the sale of vaping products

This item was tabled for next month's meeting. Sue will pre-circulate a draft of the ordinance for comment prior to the meeting.

Discussion re: Application to pasteurize and store breast milk

There was no discussion about this item as the application is still being considered by the Land Use Board. Their next meeting is March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Discussion re: Recodification of Borough code

The Borough Administrator briefed the meeting on this project which was initiated to update the Borough code by reviewing all ordinances. Every three to four weeks a package of documents is being sent to the Borough Attorney for his review. When he has added his comments, these are being circulated to all departments for review. Any amendments should be reviewed and approved at a meeting and not by email. This will be confirmed with the Borough Attorney.

Each member of the Board of Health will make their comments and then send them to the Board of Health Secretary. She will then collate them and circulate one week prior to the next meeting so they can be discussed and approved. The final version should be done by June.

Replies with comments should be sent to no more than two people on one email. There was a discussion about whether any suggested changes would mean rewriting the ordinance which would need to be read and approved.

Motion by Cindy Bischoff, seconded by Elaine Palombit, that the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Morris,  
Board of Health Secretary