

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERSON BOARD OF HEALTH WAS
HELD ON THURSDAY MAY 14, 2019, AT 7.30 P.M.**

This meeting of the Board of Health of the Borough of Emerson was be held via the teleconferencing app GoToMeeting on May 14, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

ACCESS INFORMATION

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Roll Call: Cindy Bischoff, Sue Gibbons, Cory Melillo and Elaine Palombit
Also present were Councilwoman Nicole Argenzia, NWBC Health Officer Angela Musella, and Liz Morris, Board of Health Secretary.

Apologies: Linda Lahey

Roll Call: CB-yes SG-yes CM - yes EP-yes

The Board of Health meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes of March 12, 2020 meeting.

Motion by Sue Gibbons, seconded by Cory Melillo, that the minutes of the March 12, 2020 meeting be approved.

Roll Call: CB-yes SG-yes CM - yes EP-yes

The secretary reviewed the he Animal and Financial Reports for March and April saying that the revenue is quite low because most dogs and cats were licensed in January and February and the revenue from NWBRHC was lower because of Covid-19. These were accepted as submitted.

Vouchers submitted for both months were the fee due to NJ state for the dog's licensed in Emerson and monthly payments to NWBRHC. There was also a payment for printer ink.

Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission Activity Report for March and April

March

Inspections

At the last meeting the pandemic was only just beginning and NWBRHC were only checking on travelers. Three regular inspections were done which were all satisfactory. There were also checks of the salad and hot bar at ShopRite and Stop and Shop to discuss coronavirus precautions.

Plan Reviews & Consultations

None

Temporary Food Licenses

None issued.

Complaints

One complaint about rats. The resident had used an exterminator but the rats keep coming back. REHS visited, provided information on rats and recommended getting the company back or using a different company. Most adjacent properties did not seem to have any issues, but one had a single rodent burrow and a second had and two. A rodent box was observed at this property

Inquiries

NWBRHC has been inundated with inquiries because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Animal Bites

One animal bite reported, groundhog to dog. The groundhog tested positive for rabies so the dog owner was told to get a booster shot and quarantine the pet for 45 days.

Summonses/Abatements/Violation

None Issued

Court Appearances

None

OPRA Request

One request for environmental records for 99 Palisade Ave.

Vital Statistics

There were 13 deaths reported and 1 marriage license issued in March.

Servsafe Food Handlers Classes

None

Health Education

Chantal has been involved in education on Covid-19 getting as much information as possible out to the public through the website, Facebook, emails etc.

Communicable Disease Investigations

Sixteen cases of Covid-19 reported and one death.

Blood Pressure Program

No clinics because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Correspondence

None received. NJDOH information on sanitizing sent to Cradles to Crayons at their request.

April

The Public Health Nurse was doing active monitoring of individuals designated by CDC at airports.

NJDOH are participating in daily webinars and conference calls with the NJDOH and CDC.

Many calls from EMS, OEM's, police officers concerned about their exposure to Covid-19. The website was kept up to date as new information was received. Urgent Care Centers were called to make sure they were up to date on what was going on. At the start of the outbreak Chantal gave presentations on Covid-10.

There were a lot of case investigations, 1000 cases across the towns that NWBRHC cover. It's been very busy with reports of new cases coming in through the Communicable Disease Reporting System. When these reports are received, they all have to be followed up which can be complicated because information about cases is often incorrect or absent. The actual investigation is also time consuming so many of the NWBRHC's routine activities did not happen in April

Inspections

None done

Plan Reviews & Consultations

None

Temporary Food Licenses

None issued.

Complaints

None

Inquiries

NWBRHC has been inundated with inquiries because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Animal Bites

None

Summonses/Abatements/Violation

None Issued

Court Appearances

None

OPRA Request

None

Vital Statistics

There were 45 deaths reported and no marriage licenses issued in April.

Servsafe Food Handlers Classes

None

Health Education

Chantal has been involved in case investigations on Covid-19.

Blood Pressure Program

No clinics because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Correspondence

None received

Communicable Disease Investigations

One hundred fifty two cases of Covid-19 reported and a total of 36 residents have died from Covid-19 in Emerson. Most of the deaths were in long term care facilities (LTC'S).

When LTC's have a case of Covid-19 they must report it to the NWBRHC. Once patients are identified as having Covid-19, the LTC's have to monitor these patients and their cohorts on a daily basis and ramp up their infection control procedures. They have to provide daily lists of Covid-19 patients who are symptomatic to NWBRHC who in turn have to report this to the NJDOH. The LTC's are required to create and submit an implementation plan for testing of staff and patients at their facility by May 19th and start implementing the plan on May 26th.

Keeping on top of daily updates and reporting has been an extensive task for NWBRHC. At the start of the outbreak, NWBRHC were reporting addresses of residents testing positive for Covid-19 to OEM's so they could input it into the CAD system. Using this system, the first responders would know if an address they were called to had any Covid-19 patients and make sure they were appropriately protected. After the first two weeks this changed and the OEM coordinators sent reports of new cases to county.

They also had enquiries from police officers about their level of risk and a lot from residents who are worried about the outbreak.

Keeping up with all the guidance from the state has been time consuming and if a close contact tracing program to support efforts to open up the state is put in place, this will increase the workload. The state is developing protocols to open up the state.

In the first two weeks of the outbreak approval for testing and sending results to the state was being done through Angela which meant she was on call for 24 hours. Once the labs started reporting directly to the state that part of the work eased.

This has been a very busy period for Angela and all of the NWBRHC staff.

Corey asked how frequently the patients and staff at long term care facilities were being tested. She knew of a 22 year old who was diagnosed through symptoms and a chest x-ray but tested negative for the virus.

On behalf of the board, Sue thanked Angela for all the work that she and the other staff at NWBRHC were doing. Angela appreciated the thanks and said she would pass them on to the rest of her staff. Cindy added her thanks, particularly in these trying times

Cindy reported that she is on a committee looking at how schools can safely be reopened as the nursing representative. The discussions have highlighted the magnitude of the challenge, PPE equipment, masks, protective gown and the question was posed if the danger is still so great why are plans being made to open schools. If staff and students will need to wear masks this would present a big problem for special needs students as they would find it difficult to wear protective masks.

The Board asked Angela if there was anything they could get involved with to assist NWBRHC with the reopening of the state. The most effective way to help would be to publicize all the educational information about Covid-19. Using credible information sources, remind people about social distancing, not gathering, wearing masks, gloves, staying home when you are sick. It is also important to encourage people to get tested and letting them know where they can get tested, especially as testing is now open to all residents and not just those who have symptoms or are first responders/healthcare workers.

Anything that is forwarded to the Board of Health secretary will be sent to the OEM coordinator, Mayor, Borough Administrator and Borough clerk. If the information is not confidential then it will be put up on the Borough website. Information can also be tweeted and anything urgent sent out through the Borough Swift reach program.

In response to a question about repeat testing to allow Covid-19 patients to come out of isolation, Angela said there were two trains of thought. If a patient is symptom free or their symptoms are significantly improved for 10 days and the fever is gone for three days without fever reducing medication then patients can come out of isolation. Retesting is the second option. If patients have two negative tests within 24 hours of each other allows them to end isolation. The downside is that a positive result means that patients have to go back into isolation for 10 days.

Angela was asked what her view on testing for antibodies was as it could give a false sense of security if people tested positive for antibodies. The NJDOH has not recommended their use, and

said there is limited value in antibody testing. Cindy volunteers at the Newbridge Hospital where the CEO has said all employees must get tested for antibodies and wondered why this would be done. Angela read out the guidance from state, "Whilst there are numerous tests out there designed to test for antibodies to Covid-19 there are significant issues associated with them. There is still a lot about Covid-19 serology that is unknown at this time and the NJDOH recommends that serological tests should not be used to diagnose acute or prior Covid-19 infection, nor should they be used to determine immune status to Covid-19. They may produce false negative or false positive results the consequences of which include providing patients with incorrect guidance on preventative interventions like physical distancing or protective equipment."

After the first batch of antibody tests were run at Newbridge members of staff were being told that they had tested positive. The concern is that there is so little known about the virus that judgements should not be made using results from antibody tests. Elaine commented that her husband, who works at Montefiore, had Covid-19 and was asked to take the antibody test. When he got the result, which was positive there were several disclaimers stating that; it was not known what a positive result meant, do not assume that you are safe, do not assume you do not need to follow all the recommended precautions and protections. Basically, they don't know what this means.

One of the questions that keeps coming up is opening pools and rec camps. The state has not yet provided updated guidance on this. Sue commented that the Board of Education summer camp has already been cancelled.

Angela announced to the meeting that she will be retiring on June 30th. She will be involved in the recruitment of her replacement. Everyone congratulated her, wished her well and said how much she will be missed. Angela thanked the board and said how much she enjoyed this part of her job and appreciated just how much of a commitment had to be made by the board who are all volunteers with busy lives.

Old Business

Recodification of Borough code

Cindy explained to the meeting that she would go through each the sections which had been recommended for amendment by the Borough Clerk page by page, suggest changes and then discuss. Her suggestions are based on a review of the existing code. Once all the changes are agreed the board will vote on approval of the changes. The page numbers are taken from the document provided by the Borough Clerk.

Page 18 Question 39-001 (Chapter 39 Health, Board of)

Revise the second to last sentence of section 39-2 as follows: All members of said Board hereafter appointed shall be *recommended by the Board of Health members to the Council for appointment* and shall hold office for terms of three years, except in the case of vacancies.

Page 242 Question 291-002 (Chapter 291, Article II, section 291-5)

This section should not be revised.

Page 241 Question 290-056

The meeting agreed this was a Zoning department and not Board of Health responsibility.

Page 243 Question 291-003 (Chapter 291, Article III)

This section should not be revised.

Page 243 Question 294-001 (Chapter 294)

This section should not be revised.

Page 244 Question 298-001 (Chapter 298, section 298-3)

This section should not be revised now but in September Chapter 28 will be reviewed with the intention of revising the ordinance to prohibit tattoo parlors in the Borough.

Page 244 Question 298-002 (Chapter 298, section 298-7)

This section should not be revised.

Page 80 Question 140-001 (Chapter 140, section 140-1)

This section should not be revised.

Page 80 Question 140-002 (Chapter 140, section 140-3)

This section should not be revised.

Page 3 Question 140-3 (Chapter 140, section 140-5)

Revise as suggested 'Change fee from \$1 to \$4 per day

Page 4 Question 140-004 (Chapter 140, section 140-5)

Revise as suggested. 'Change time dog is held in pound before any action is taken from 3 (72 hours) to 7 days.

Additionally, amend Borough code to include the following from N.J.S.A. 4:19-15.16:

A shelter, pound or kennel operating as a shelter or pound receiving an animal from a certified animal control officer pursuant to subsection a. of this section, or from any other individual, group or organization, shall hold the animal for at least seven days before offering it for adoption, or euthanizing, relocating, or sterilizing the animal except if:

- (1) The animal is surrendered voluntarily by its owner to the shelter, pound or kennel operating as a shelter or pound, in which case the provisions of subsection e. of this section shall apply; or
- (2) The animal is suspected of being rabid, in which case the subsection j. of this section shall apply

Page 5 Question 140-5 (Chapter 140, section 140-9)

This section should not be revised.

Page 5 Question 140-006 (Chapter 140, section 140-9)
This section should not be revised.

Page 6 Question 140-007 (Chapter 140, section 140-9)
Revise 140-9A (3) as suggested to read “The annual fee for a kennel shall be as prescribed by the Board of Health in 294-1 of this Code.

Page 6 Question 140-008 (Chapter 140, section 140-9)
This section should not be revised.

Page 7 Question 140-009 (Chapter 140, section 140-15)
Revise 140-15 as suggested to read; “Except as otherwise provided in 140-3, any person violating any of the provisions of this article shall, upon conviction thereof, be liable to a fine not to exceed \$500 or to confinement in the county jail for a term not exceeding 90 days, or both, in the discretion of the court before which said complaint shall be heard and conviction obtained.”

Page 7 Question 140-010 (Chapter 140, section 140-15)
This section should not be revised.

Page 8 Question 140-011 (Chapter 140, Article II)
This section should not be revised.

Page 8 Question 140-012 (Chapter 140, Article II)
Section 140-22 Vicious dogs should be deleted.

Page 9 Question 140-013 (Chapter 140, Article II)
This section should not be revised.

Page 9 Question 140-014 (Chapter 140, Article III)
This section should not be revised.

Page 10 Question 140-015 (Chapter 140, Article IV)
This section should not be revised.

Page 10 Question 140-016 (Chapter 140, Article V)
This section should not be revised.

Page 11 Question 140-017 (Chapter 140, Article V)
Section 190-8D should be deleted as it is covered by Article V, Noise, of Chapter 140

Motion by Cindy Bischoff, seconded by Sue Gibbons, that the changes to the Borough code as discussed at the meeting should be approved.

Roll Call: CB-yes SG-yes CM - yes EP-yes

Council liaison's verbal report for March and April

Councilwoman Argenzia reported that the last two meetings were held in Borough Hall with social distancing. At the last meeting the crossing guards were RICE noticed so they could be laid off which would allow them to go on unemployment. This had to be done because New Jersey State law states that an employer cannot pay an employee for no service.

No updates on the downtown redevelopment.

Residents have been holding birthday parades which are allowed if they stay in the car. Some individuals are ignoring this and getting out of the car or leaning out of the sun roof. There was a discussion about how this could be stopped.

Resident sent an email with a picture to the Mayor and Council regarding residents sitting outside one of the nursing homes not wearing masks. The residents, who were not mobile were about 12 feet apart so they weren't technically breaking any laws. Councilwoman Argenzia had hoped to discuss this with Angela Musella but she had left the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nothing to discuss

Motion by Cindy Bischoff, seconded by Corey Melillo, that the that the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 9:58 pm.

Roll Call: CB-yes SG-yes CM - yes EP-yes

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Morris,
Board of Health Secretary