

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERSON BOARD OF HEALTH WAS  
HELD ON THURSDAY JUNE 11, 2019, AT 7.30 P.M.**

**This meeting of the Board of Health of the Borough of Emerson was held via the teleconferencing app GoToMeeting on June 11, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.**

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**ACCESS INFORMATION**

Emerson Board of Health meeting Thursday, May 14 2020 7:30 PM  
Thu, May 14, 2020 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM (EDT)

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Roll Call: Cindy Bischoff, Linda Lahey, 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.

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

The Board of Health meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes of May 14, 2020 meeting. Sue asked that the comment about NWBRHC only following up on travelers at the top of the second page should be clarified to say 'travelers going to and coming from high risk areas. She also requested clarification of what a Rice notice was. 'A Rice Notice is a notification from a public body that it is going to discuss an individual's employment in an upcoming meeting.' Linda pointed out a typographical error at the end of section on complaints in the NWBRHC March report. The word 'and' was repeated. Cindy asked about the groundhog to dog bite in the March report. The dog had to be quarantined for 45 days and she wanted to know if there was a follow up at that point. Angela told the meeting that they made sure that the animal had a rabies booster shot and then did follow up after 45 days.

Motion by Cindy Bischoff, seconded by Cory Melillo, that the minutes of the May 14, 2020 meeting be approved with the changes discussed.

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

The secretary reviewed the Animal and Financial Reports for May. There was only one dog license and the monthly payment from NWBRHC for registrar fees. These were accepted as submitted.

Vouchers submitted for May were the fee due to NJ state for the dog licensed in Emerson and monthly payments to NWBRHC.

### Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission Activity Report

Angela thanked the members of the Board of Health for the lovely retirement gift. She also said this was not goodbye.

Covid-19 still took up much of their time listening to webinars and supporting the states' contact tracing program and making sure that all the towns had all the information that they needed. They also had to call urgent care centers and tell them to make sure patients with Covid-19 like symptoms did not come into their offices.

#### *Inspections*

Because of the Covid-19 work NWBRHC were not able to do any inspections in May.

#### *Plan Reviews & Consultations*

None

#### *Temporary Food Licenses*

None issued.

#### *Complaints*

None

#### *Inquiries*

NWBRHC responded to an inquiry from the Mayor who had been advised by a resident that the town had a responsibility to screen all home health aides that are assigned to her home. REHS supervisor advised her that there was no requirement to screen all individuals.

#### *Animal Bites*

No animal bites

#### *Summonses/Abatements/Violation*

None Issued

#### *Court Appearances*

None

#### *OPRA Request*

One request for records of underground storage tanks for 24 Dorchester Rd.

#### *Vital Statistics*

There were 13 deaths reported and 3 marriage licenses issued in May. The marriage licenses were issued even though NWBRHC was closed to the public.

#### *Servsafe Food Handlers Classes*

None

### *Health Education*

The Health Educator has been very busy working on Covid-19 investigations.

### *Communicable Disease Investigations*

Seventy-three investigations were done during the month of May. No other communicable diseases came up on the communicable diseases reporting system.

There were eighteen deaths from Covid-19. These were all in long term care facilities.

The outbreaks in the long term care facilities continued with 18 cases reported in the Armenian home, 19 in Brookdale of Emerson and 18 in Emerson Health and Rehabilitation. This meant that NWBRHC were kept very busy because the LTC's were required to report new cases on a daily basis all of which had to be entered, monitored and reported to the State.

### *Blood Pressure Program*

No clinics because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

### *Correspondence*

None received or sent.

### Old Business

#### Coronavirus

LTC's are required to do point prevalence testing and sign an attestation saying they would have all staff and residents tested by May 30<sup>th</sup>. NWBRHC had to prepare and then receive the documentation. There is a discussion going on at the state level as to whether or not the LTC's need to test staff and residents on a weekly or every other week schedule. Staff who test positive but are not Emerson residents are included in the LTC cases but not as Emerson resident.

Outdoor dining will be allowed from June 15<sup>th</sup> which meant that NWBRHC had to develop and distribute requirements for establishments to provide outdoor dining in a Covid-19 safe environment. NWBRHC received the public pool guidelines from NJDOH yesterday. These are quite onerous and many organizations may not open their pools. NWBRHC forwarded the pool information to the relevant organizations. The biggest change to the guidelines is the requirement for a Covid prevention plan following the guidelines developed by NJDOH. Because the Governor releases guidelines to the press before NWBRHC receive them they receive calls that they don't have information to answer.

NJDOH is now focusing on testing and they are sending out mobile testing units to towns around the state. They are forming groups of contact tracers to follow up on contacts of individuals who have tested positive for or diagnosed with Covid-19. Currently NWBRHC receive notification through the communicable disease database on the close contacts for these people (contact for more than 10 minutes at less than 6 ft.) so they can reach out to them by phone. This means a lot of phone calls and explanations to people who have tested positive. One of the challenges is that

people are wary of calls like this as they are concerned they might be scams and won't provide the information needed. It is hard to get their trust and get them to talk about their health. NJDOH are currently doing a pilot test of contact tracers in Camden but it is likely that they will run into the same issues. They won't have the advantage of knowing the local towns. If they can overcome this it will be a help to local health authorities like NWBRHC.

NWBRHC will be doing spot checks on outdoor dining in the coming weeks but not indoor inspections until indoor dining is allowed.

Cindy commented that the county committee that she is part of is discussing how schools can reopen in September and that it will be very difficult. Angela added that enforcing the guidelines is the same. In principle they should be enforced by the police but it is falling to NWBRHC in a lot of cases. It will be a challenge going forward. In general people are taking less notice of the guidelines. Linda suggested putting the guidelines for outdoor dining and other activities on the NWBRHC website. Angela thought this was a great idea and will have them posted.

Cindy asked what else could the Board of Health could do to help in Emerson. Angela said that it would be helpful if the Emerson Board of Health could continue to remind people about the need for social distancing. They could also let the public know that they may receive a phone call from a contact tracer and that the tracer is genuine. Also, if staff in food handling establishment are not wearing gloves and a mask tell NWBRHC so they can follow up and remind them about the regulations. Cindy said that the County Committee were having similar discussions about what to do when a student or teacher has been sent for testing because they are symptomatic. Should they immediately quarantine, for how long and should the school building be closed. They are looking for detailed guidelines on this. Angela's view was that once a school had someone test positive they would close the building. It's also important to make sure they fully understand the required isolation and quarantine procedures. She also commented on what a great job all the first responders had done.

There will be more guidelines for areas like the schools coming out in the next few weeks. The most recent one is for public pools. NWBRHC will inspect them when they open.

On behalf of the Board, Cindy wished Angela the very best in the future and thanked her for all that she has done for them. She said Angela would leave 'very big shoes to fill'. Angela said that she always enjoyed working with the Board of Health and was grateful for all of the volunteer time that they put in to make everything run smoothly. She hoped that the Covid-19 pandemic would raise awareness of the importance of public health and more funding would be allocated to it. She told the Board that she was pretty sure that her replacement had been found. She is very experienced and will bring a lot to the role. Her name is Gina Behre.

#### Council liaison's verbal report for May

Councilwoman Argenzia reported that a Prayer for Peace service was held on Sunday to respond to everything that is going on.

The Mayor and Council are also reviewing the Executive Orders relevant to opening up. The school will have graduation on June 18<sup>th</sup> and an in person socially distanced one for high school students on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Mayor and Council meeting scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup> will be open to the public with appropriate social distancing and will start earlier than usual so that each of the high school graduates can come in one by one and have a proclamation for their graduation.

The Mayor and Council have been discussing an issue with regard to Emerson Woods where it abuts the Suez water property. Websites are being created which give instructions on how to get to the reservoir through Emerson woods. Damage is being caused to the area including trees being knocked down to create bridges across gullies. Cameras had been installed to identify people doing this but these were destroyed as well. A committee is being set up which will include Suez to see how this can be stopped. If it isn't stopped Emerson Woods may need to be closed. The Mayor and Council want to avoid that.

There is a piece of wooded property off Forest Avenue which the Borough owns. This will be sold off as five subdivided lots for homes and the Borough have received bids. Corey asked if there were going to do any environmental testing. Councilwoman Argenzia said there has to be a survey done of the area to check the structure of the ground and whether or not there were any wetlands that needed to be preserved and therefore would not be buildable. No builds will take place until this has been completed.

The fire house floor will be replaced.

There have been several incidents recently where PSE&G have been reported for damaging sewer lines. The Mayor and Council are setting up a process where the police are called when this happens and they check the site with the help of the DPW. This way residents will be given the correct information as to where responsibility for repairing any damage lies.

Borough Hall will be open by July 6<sup>th</sup> individuals will need to make an appointment and not just walk in. The number of people in Borough Hall other than staff will be closely monitored to ensure that social distancing can be maintained.

The phone lines in borough Hall are being replaced and there have been reports that people are unable to get through. Anyone wishing to contact Borough Hall should dial 201-262-6086 and follow the prompts.

Cork and Keg will be opening in the near future at its new location, 89 Kinderkamack Rd.

The Recreation Commission will be running a tennis program for Emerson residents of all ages, starting in the near future. They are still undecided about whether the summer camp will go ahead.

Lawsuit against redeveloper was filed today. The lawsuit relates to the redeveloper refusing to pay the agreed \$500,000 towards the refurbishment of Borough Hall because deadlines in the original agreement were not met. As part of this agreement the Borough gave the property where the old Ambulance building was to the redeveloper in exchange for the said \$500,000. The Borough is

making the case that these deadlines were unattainable and the redeveloper breached the good faith contract. The redeveloper has breached the contract in other areas as well.

Corey asked what had happened to the application to the Land Use Board concerning dispensing breast milk by a company on Ackerman. Cindy told the meeting that the application had been dismissed because they did not comply with the escrow requirements. They will need to appeal to the Mayor and Council if they want to progress the application.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### Discussion and approval of an amendment to the Borough Code Chapter 294. Fees.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow the Board of Health to extend the deadline for the submission of food licenses in extenuating circumstances. The background to this suggested change was explained by the Board of Health secretary. The COVID-19 crisis has meant many food establishments have been operating at an extremely low capacity or none at all leading to financial hardship. An extension to the deadline may have some positive impact on the businesses as they start to reopen. However, because the deadline is enshrined in the Borough code the ordinance needs amending before this can happen. At this meeting the wording for this was discussed and agreed.

The existing ordinance states:

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 1-11**

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH LICENSE FEES FOR FOOD HANDLING AND NON-FOOD HANDLING ESTABLISHMENTS AND FEES FOR VITAL STATISTICS TRANSCRIPTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON.

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of Health of the Borough of Emerson in the County of Bergen and State of New Jersey as follows:

#### **SECTION 1**

The following fees are hereby established and shall be paid by the licensee or permittee before the issuance of a license or permit. Each license shall expire on June 30 next following the day of issuance. Any existing Board of Health ordinance or part thereof in conflict herewith shall be deemed to be amended or abolished

After discussion the agreed amendment would read.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 1-20**

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH LICENSE FEES FOR FOOD HANDLING AND NON-FOOD HANDLING ESTABLISHMENTS AND FEES FOR VITAL STATISTICS TRANSCRIPTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON.

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of Health of the Borough of Emerson in the County of Bergen and State of New Jersey as follows:

## SECTION 1

The following fees are hereby established and shall be paid by the licensee or permittee before the issuance of a license or permit. Each license shall expire on June 30 next following the day of issuance. In the event of a declaration of a national or state public health emergency, the deadline may be extended to a maximum of up to 90 days. At the end of 90 days this would be reevaluated and could be extended as needed. Any existing Board of Health ordinance or part thereof in conflict herewith shall be deemed to be amended or abolished.

Motion by Sue Gibbons, seconded by Elaine Palombit, that the changes to the Borough code Chapter 294. Fees as discussed at the meeting and recorded above should be approved.

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

The introduction of this amendment will be published and then read for a second time at the next meeting. After adoption the revised amendment will be published.

The meeting agreed the date of June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7:30 pm using GoTo Meetings for the second reading.

### Tattoo parlor

At the last meeting the Board agreed to review the existing Tattoo parlor ordinance at the September meeting. Cindy informed the meeting that the Board had in fact done this previously. The Board had gone through the process of first and second reading and adoption, but the ordinance was not published and hence codified due to an administrative error. Additionally, the documents that were found only contained the title of the ordinance and there was no further text. As the Board has had a change in members since that time it was agreed that this should be discussed at the September meeting and an updated ordinance banning tattoo parlors written.

Sue reported a question asked by a resident concerning a gallon bottle of water that was purchased from Acme in Mahwah that had oil and sediment in it. Some of the water was consumed before the contamination was noticed. Angela said they should call the Board of Health in Mahwah and report it. The phone number is 201-529-5757 ext. 207.

Sue also said she would like to move forward with the tree planting near the Recreation Center and a plaque created for Kay Hodges. It had been discussed previously but doesn't seem to have been actioned. Sue will talk to the Shade Tree Commission and see what the options are. This will be discussed at the September meeting.

Motion by Cindy Bischoff, seconded by Elaine Palombit, that the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 9:02 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Morris,  
Board of Health Secretary