

FLORHAM PARK BOARD OF HEALTH

February 10, 2021

Minutes

Present: Peter Kleban, Stanley Wisnewski, Marianne Nucci, Sabrina Edmunds, Raymond Holmes, Tana LaPlaca, Kathleen Greene and Jo-Anna Finegan

Also present: Kristen Santoro (Council Liaison), Gina McConeghy (Registered Environmental Health Specialist – REHS), Jean Vrablik (Public Health Nurse) and Maryann Lang (Board of Health Secretary)

Absent: Thomas Michalowski

This meeting was conducted virtually, through “Zoom”. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Ms. Lang took attendance, and stated that the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act had been met.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Nucci made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting. Ms. LaPlaca seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Approval of Reports:

Ms. Nucci asked for clarification of “non routine investigation, no Chapter 24 inspection”, reported in January Pequannock Township monthly report. Ms. McConeghy responded that this was a food establishment complaint that did not require an entire inspection.

Ms. Greene pointed out a typographical error in the number reported for total cases of COVID 19 on page two of the January Pequannock Township report. The number listed is 145, it should be 135. Ms. Vrablik responded that she will double check the figures, and make the correction.

Mr. Kleban asked if it would be possible for the Board of Health to vaccinate seniors in town. Ms. Vrablik responded that they have applied to be a provider of vaccinations, but have been denied by the New Jersey Department of Health. This may be due to the fact that there is not enough of the vaccine to go around.

Ms. Santoro asked if we will be able to vaccinate residents that are home bound. Ms. Vrablik responded that this is not an option at the present time, due to the fragility of the vaccine. If the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is approved, that may become an option. Until then, another way to protect the vulnerable person, is to have those around them be vaccinated.

Ms. Greene stated that the FDA review, for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, is scheduled for February 26, 2021. She said it may be viewed on C-Span. If approved, the vaccine may be available in March.

Ms. Santoro asked for confirmation that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, isn’t an mRNA vaccine, like the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. Ms. Greene confirmed that it is not. Ms. Vrablik stated that if it is approved, storage and handling is much easier with this vaccine and it is a one dose shot. Approval will provide more options for vaccination of the public.

Ms. Vrablik stated that the Health Department is trying to identify, and assist, vulnerable residents obtain a vaccination appointment. Individuals that have family members that can assist them with registration, and vaccination scheduling, will have to go through regular channels.

Approval of Reports (continued):

Ms. Finegan commented on the State phone number set up to assist people with vaccine registration and scheduling. She has heard that people who have called for assistance with appointments, are being told they can't be scheduled by phone. Ms. Santoro said her neighbor had a different experience, and was able to get an appointment through the phone line.

Mr. Wisnewski shared his experience with signing up for a vaccination appointment. He stated he had to keep accessing/refreshing sites many times, before an appointment became available. He was halfway through inputting information, and the appointment changed to "not available". He recommended maybe trying to take one of the appointments further down the list, so that you have time to input your information.

Ms. Santoro said she heard of someone in Berkeley Heights, using a "bot" to assist people with obtaining a vaccination appointment. She said maybe we can do this for Florham Park.

Ms. Nucci asked how successful the contact tracing, through ComCare System, has been. Ms. Vrablik responded that the Health Department has been very successful contacting people who have been exposed to the virus. They have been able to contact 75-80% of affected individuals within 24-48 hours. She stated not everyone will agree to speak to them. She went on to say that there was a period when they were overwhelmed with conducting contact tracing. They now have extra staff to assist.

Mr. Wisnewski asked for clarification on the COVID 19 figure, 362, for Florham Park, reported in the December 2020 year-to-date report. Is this tested and positive, and do we know how many were hospitalized? Ms. Vrablik responded that these were positive cases. When conducting contact tracing, a high percentage of people are at home. The State would have data on how many of these were hospitalized. Also the State would have additional data, such as how many patients were on ventilators.

Mr. Wisnewski asked if the number of positive cases has peaked or plateaued? Ms. Vrablik responded that she felt the cases have declined, compared to after the holiday peak. She felt we are in a plateau. Ms. Finegan asked what age groups are predominately affected. Ms. Vrablik responded that she is still seeing whole households becoming infected. Not as many very old people. Mostly in the thirty to fifty year old range.

Ms. Finegan made a motion to approve the reports which included: Vital Statistics monthly report for November and December 2020; and January 2021; Pequannock Township monthly report for November and December of 2020; and January 2021; Pequannock Township December 2020 and January 2021 year-to-date report; Health Officer COVID-19 report; Pequannock Township inspection activity report, for Florham Park, for November and December 2020; and January 2021 (none). Dr. Holmes seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Communications:

None

Report from Health Department Staff:**Ms. McConeghy:**

Ms. McConeghy stated that she has been assisting with contact tracing. Other than what had been discussed during the approval of reports, she had nothing more to add.

Ms. Vrablik:

Ms. Vrablik stated that the only other information she had to share with the Board, is that the nursing staff has been in regular contact with day care centers and schools. In addition, they are in constant communication with the long term care facilities in town. There have not been positive cases among long term care residents in quite some time. Staff is tested on a regular basis.

Report from Health Department Staff (continued):

Ms. Santoro commented that the Florham Park schools are doing very well. She asked whether it was due to plans put in place by the Health Department, or the diligence of town as a whole. Ms. Vrablik responded that the town, in general, has been diligent. She stated that Superintendent Caponegro is “everywhere, every day”. He is in constant communication with the Health Department. She thinks his involvement has a lot to do with the schools doing well handling the virus. She also stated that Phil Infantolino, and his crew, are doing a good job keeping the schools sanitized. She stated when a student tests positive, not a lot of close contacts come up.

New Business:

None

Unfinished Business:

Ms. Finegan, Board Secretary

Ms. Lang confirmed that the Ordinance does not differentiate between regular members, and alternate members, in holding this position.

Ratification of Licenses:

The Board ratified licenses issued in November (none) and December 2020; and January 2021.

Public Hearing - Privilege of the Floor:

Mr. Kleban opened the meeting to the public at 7:33 pm. With no public present virtually, Mr. Kleban closed the meeting to the public at 7:33 pm.

Adjournment:

Ms. Finegan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34pm. Dr. Holmes seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryann Lang
Board of Health Secretary