

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 27, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Norman Weinberger, M.D.; Ken LaLime; Janet Karpiak, M.D.

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Theresa Argondezzi, Assistant Director of Health, Community Health; Megan Faugno, Project Coordinator; Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist; Bill Mooney Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Health; Aniella Fignon, Public Health Program Associate

OTHERS: None

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. A quorum was present.

1) APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. D'Amore said that she would like to table the minutes until Ms. Quell was present because she had some edits for the minutes.

**** A MOTION WAS MADE TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 22, 2021 MEETING TO THE AUGUST MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 22, 2021 MEETING TO THE AUGUST MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2) DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore announced that Mr. Mooney had been promoted to Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Health during the last month.

Ms. D'Amore introduced Ms. Aniella Fignon, the new Public Health Program Associate, who had started the day before. Ms. D'Amore said Ms. Fignon would be working with Ms. D'Amore on policy issues and developing programs along with research into best practices.

Ms. D'Amore announced that she had been elected as President Elect for the Connecticut Association for the Directors of Health. She has served on the Board for the Association for two years.

3) COVID-19 UPDATES

- a) Trends and Analysis**
- b) Vaccination Efforts**
- c) Outreach and Education**

Ms. D'Amore said that she wished to speak about testing because the mass testing sites closed at the end of June. The Norwalk Health Department is considering an initiative on how to make testing as easy as possible and to communicate with the community members.

Mr. Lalime said that there are municipalities that are going to require vaccinations or have people test every week. Ms. D'Amore repeated that they want to make the testing as easy as possible and the State is working on testing in the schools. Discussion followed.

Mr. Weeks presented a PowerPoint report on Norwalk's status on COVID on the screen. He noted that the college students would be returning to campuses all over the state next month, and the other schools would be opening in September. He presented the statistics as of July 21st for the State, and for Norwalk neighborhoods.

Mr. Weeks displayed a bar graph that indicated as of July 3rd, the Delta variant was increasing as the Alpha strain was receding. Delta is at about 83% for the country. He noted that the vaccinating was blunting the effects of the Delta on individuals. A nationwide map indicated that New York State had recently changed to the orange status from the yellow moderate level that Connecticut and New England have. He emphasized that individuals need both doses of the vaccine to be fully vaccinated. The information is available on the Mayor's weekly COVID report.

Mr. Weeks said that there had been two positive WNV+ report (West Nile Virus), one in Milford and one in South Windsor.

Ms. Argondezzi presented an update on the vaccination outreach. She said that the Health Department had visited 11 different sites for vaccination and the administered doses exceeds 10,000. The funding for this type of work will end at the end of August. They are working hard to make sure there was no duplication of efforts. There were 12 different locations in May and 13 in June. While the pop up clinics are helpful, the community prefers having regularly scheduled clinic locations. She spoke about explaining the Community Health Center, Inc. services further. The community health workers are out in the community, talking to businesses, at Person to Person and various other locations. Often the community health workers can help with referring their clients to additional resources. They are also going door to door and leaving information for

those who are not at home. Vaccination is the primary message and work is being done on collecting the various myths and misconceptions in the community in order to address it. Issues such as masking and questions about quarantining and avoiding large indoor gatherings are being addressed.

Mr. Lalime asked if the City has taken a position on City employees being vaccinated. Ms. D'Amore said that they would be getting more information on that.

Ms. D'Amore said that she had had a conversation with Ms. Lauricella about the outreach efforts.

Mr. Lalime said that he was concerned about being in reaction mode in terms of future outbreaks. He said that they were trying to push for a statewide common policy, but there were many different opinions about indoor masking, employee required vaccinations, and variety of other aspects. He noted that the new State Health Commissioner will have to make a decision about this.

Discussion followed about New York's recent requirement that individuals be vaccinated or have weekly testing.

4) STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

Ms. D'Amore then displayed an updated organizational chart that indicated the funding sources by color. The Emergency Response Teams were now also included in the chart. She said that they were looking at 34 full time Health Department employees and 10 part time Health Department employees. There is a sanitarian position that is currently vacant, but the Department is looking to fill it soon. The Health Educator position became vacant when Ms. Argondezzi was promoted, so Ms. Argondezzi is in the process of reviewing resumes for that position.

Ms. Faugno will be transitioning to the Special Programs Manager position and focusing on vaccination outreach and coordinating with the community health workers, along with the accreditation process.

Ms. D'Amore said that they now had four full time staff members in the WIC program. Mr. Weeks will now be also supervising the contract tracers. A new Health Operations manager will be starting next month. A new part time medical biller has been added. The security guard is also included on the chart.

Mr. Lalime said that the chart was much more streamlined than it was in the past.

5) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one from the public who wished to address the Board at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services