

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 23, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Norman Weinberger, M.D.; Ken Lalime, RPH; Theresa Quell, PhD, RN; Janet Karpiak, M.D.

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Theresa Argondezzi, Health Education; Megan Faugno, Project Coordinator

OTHERS:

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

**** DR. WEINBERGER MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2021 MEETING.**

**** MS. QUELL SECONDED.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 1, under **STAFF**: please add "Megan Faugno, Project Coordinator."

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2021 MEETING AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore said that Ms. Argondezzi is now the Assistant Director of Health for Community Health.

Many applications for the Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Health, have been submitted. Ms. D'Amore gave a brief update on status of the various vacant positions including the contact tracers and public health nurses.

• COVID-19 UPDATES

Ms. D'Amore said that there were approximately 6,500 doses administered. The City has announced Norwalk has vaccinated about 79.8% of the 75+ age group as compared to the State, which has a 77.2% vaccination rate for the same age group. Norwalk has vaccinated 81.31% of the 65 to 74 age range compared to the State at 71.7%. The total Norwalk population that has received their first dose is 21.68% compared to the State at 26.1%. which is not surprising regarding the younger ages as of March 15th.

The City has partnered with the IMF to host vaccine clinics at two churches, Grace Baptist and Bethel AME, to create safe and welcoming locations for people to receive vaccines. Norwalk Community Health Center partnered with the Health Department to get the teachers and day care workers vaccinated. The Health Department is considering using the Bow Tie Theater as an additional vaccination location in South Norwalk.

One area that is being developed is for the individuals who are either home bound or bed bound.

Brien McMahon High School was the location of a major health clinic on March 20th and Norwalk Community Health Center also held a major vaccination clinic.

The partnership with the Senior Center and Senior Services Coordinating Council is continuing for referrals for appointments. Many seniors cannot navigate the VAMS system or do not have the technology to access it.

Ms. Argondezzi said that the Family & Children's Agency had partnered with them regarding contact tracing. They have also shifted into education and outreach along with assisting at the clinics and providing translation services for Spanish and Creole.

Ms. D'Amore said that Ms. Argondezzi and Ms. Faugno have gone above and beyond in providing assistance to the public who are having difficulties with VAMS or need guidance in making appointments.

Dr. Weinberger asked what process they would be using to reach out to the home bound. Ms. D'Amore said that they were creating a survey to identify the homebound residents and the Senior Center has a list of those who are homebound.

Dr. Quell complimented the staff on how smoothly the process worked at a recent vaccine clinic.

Dr. Weinberger gave a shout out to the staff, also.

Mr. Lalime asked if there was any information on the funding from the State. Ms. D'Amore said that they had not received any specific information. Discussion followed about continuing the process.

Ms. D'Amore said that the State will be releasing a report on the COVID variants that have been identified in Connecticut. This is why it is important to follow the mask protocols, social distancing and receive a vaccine. During the past two weeks, there has been an increase in the number of cases in Norwalk. Right now, it is about 35 cases per 100,000 for a seven day period.

Mr. Lalime asked if there were any reports about the flu. He pointed out that with all the public health protocols, it has reduced the number of flu cases. Ms. D'Amore said that the State had released a flu surveillance and the figures were very low.

Dr. Karpiak said that the parents had made several comments about how the flu cases have been greatly reduced and suggested that the public health measures would be good to institute during the flu season.

Mr. Lalime asked if the Board members were getting the feeling that people's depression was lifting. Ms. Argondezzi said that between the number of vaccines and the spring coming, people's moods seem to be better. She added that they have to caution people to keep the protocols going. Dr. Weinberger said that with the children, they were seeing a lot of vision problems, obesity and depression. Dr. Karpiak said that there were more mental health issues because the children are unsure about in person schooling since they have not seen their friends or fellow students for a year.

Mr. Lalime said that the younger children are now used to wearing the masks and making it part of their life. He added that there are parts of the public health infrastructure needs to continue beyond COVID.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services