

Public Health Agency
323 Route 81
Killingworth, CT 06419

October 13, 2021
MINUTES

Members Present: Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy lino, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, Mike Stehney, Health Director Amy Scholz and guests Cheryl Fine and Nancy Gorski

Members Absent: Chair Natalie Ortolini Drew

Cathy lino asked Ernest Pizzuto, as a long-serving member of the agency, to serve as Acting Vice Chair in the Chair's absence. Ernie called the meeting to order via the GotoMeeting app at 7:09pm.

Minutes- The committee reviewed and approved minutes from the following meeting:

September 8, 2021 Regular Meeting:

Mike had one correction to the minutes of September 8th:

-Mike noted that Middlesex *County* has the highest vaccination rates.

MOTION: Mike Stehney moved and Betty Dennis seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the September 8th meeting, as amended. Voting in favor: Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy lino, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, and Mike Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions 0. The motion carried 6:0:0.

First Selectman Update- Cathy welcomed Nancy Gorski, a candidate for First Selectman, and reported the following:

Assure Competent Public Health Workforce- Health Director Amy Schulz has notified Cathy that she is planning to submit her resignation. Cathy remarked that she was sad to be losing her. Cathy noted that Amy came and got slammed with two major public health issues, COVID and PFAS. Amy added that she has no date yet for her resignation but the workload the past few months and some personal reasons are behind her decision.

Cathy said that it is time to consider how our town delivers public health services. The town has had the same structure for years: one person serving as health director doing everything, She added that we will continue to see emerging public health issues, such as COVID and PFAS.

Health Director Update- Amy reported the following:

Developing Policies & Plans Supporting Individual/Community Health-COVID- Cases:

Case rate	6.7 per 100,00
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Amy remarked that our case rate has come down a bit. She said that an FDA advisory panel is expected to make recommendations for a booster shot at six months for those who received the Moderna shot and will look at the issue of a booster shot for those receiving the one-shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Mike asked about vaccinated status of reported cases. Amy reported that she had seen some breakthrough cases in people who were vaccinated (30%) but the majority of cases (70%) were among the unvaccinated. Robin reported that there have been breakthrough cases in teachers who live out of town.

Vaccination- The age breakdown for currently vaccinated is as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Approximate % Town Population Fully Vaccinated</u>
65+	100
45-64	64
25-44	75
18-24	87
12-17	55

Robin asked about masking for indoor school sports. Amy said she hasn't seen any guidance on the issue. Sue asked about guidance for community events, such as upcoming holiday fairs. Amy said she will review groups plans and advise on current guidance.

Investigating Health Problems/Hazards in the Community-PFAS in Well Water- Nancy Gorski asked if the state was doing anything further for residents of Wolf Hollow whose wells did not test above recommended levels. Nancy added that the state is retesting on Wolf Hollow. Amy reported that all the treatment systems have been installed and testing shows they are working.

Amy said that the state is starting on the issue of the source(s) for PFAS. They are testing an additional 20 residents to see where the plume is going. Ernie asked is they were using ground water modeling or testing in the plume. He remarked that it is hard to model on ground water wells. Cathy said that early on DEEP said they planned to do modeling. Amy noted that all the wells are bedrock.

Smoking in Parks-As a follow-up to discussion at the last meeting about smoking policies in town parks, Sue contacted the Tobacco Control Program at the state Department of Public Health (DPH). The committee reviewed different sign options from DPH and the California Department of Public Health. They recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department adopt the California sign, which included all the forms of smoking-cigarettes, vaping, and marijuana smoking. Sue explained that California DPH will either provide the artwork for local printing of signs or refer to their printer for the purchase of signs. Robin, whose husband Jim chairs Parks and Recreation, raised concern about the cost of signs, since Parks and Recreation budget is already allocated. Cathy said that cost for signs could be taken out of the Highway Department's sign budget line item.

Parks and Recreation also asked about policy recommendations. Cathy offered to ask the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) to survey members and get copies of their policies.

Assure Competent Public Health Workforce- Health Director's Workload - Amy explained that it has been challenging the past months to be pulled in so many directions, especially with large and pressing issues, such as COVID and PFAS. She noted that she has had to lean on the state Public Health Department for contact tracing. It has been difficult not to have a field person to do the ongoing inspections, especially for septic. She considered adding a field position. Amy recommended that the Public Health Agency again consider joining a health district in order to be able to thoroughly provide the 10 essential public health services.

Cathy asked Amy to put together a list of tasks and hours next to the tasks. She said right now the goal is to get help for Amy. Ernie asked about contracting with Westbrook. Cathy said the landscape in Westbrook has changed. Amy said she would contact her group to see if there is any interest in a part-time sanitarian position. Cathy added that long-term, we need to look at joining a health district. The town can't keep bumping along with frequent changes in personnel and inadequate addressing to regular plus newer public health needs and issues. Mike remarked that if wanted to keep the small town feel of a local health department, we need to have the resources to support it. This includes additional costs.

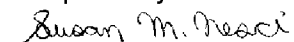
Sue noted that the Public Health Agency just went thru this exercise in 2019-2020. The Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) is the only health district that is contiguous to Killingworth. No other health district (Eastern based out of East Haven or Chatham out of East Hampton) was contiguous. She also noted that the three health districts we looked at all would have increased costs to the town for health services. Health districts may provide services, such as public health nursing, that the town doesn't need. Cathy asked Sue to provide background information from her files on the options the group looked at in 2019-2020.

Sue questioned how Chester and Haddam, which both joined CRAHD within the past few years, regarded the switch. Cathy reported that both town were happy with the services they receive. Robin said joining CRAHD would be good for the school system. She noted that since CRAHD covers Haddam, which is the same school district as Killingworth, it would make contact tracing students and families easier. School officials wouldn't have to contact two different health departments for advice and assistance. She added it would also be beneficial for both towns in be in the same health department for services, such as flu clinics. Cathy explained that the process for approval to join a health district. First, PHA would make a formal recommendation to the Board of Selectman. Then, if approved, it would go to the town for a vote.

MOTION: Ernest Pizzuto moved and Mike Stehney seconded a motion to adjourn. Voting in favor: Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy lino, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, and Mike Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: 0. The motion carried 6:0:0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



Sue Nesci
Secretary