

Public Health Agency
323 Route 81
Killingworth, CT 06419

February 11, 2021
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Natalie Ortolini Drew, Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy Lino, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, Mike Stehney, Health Director Amy Scholz, Assistant and former Health Director Paul Hutcheon.

Members Absent: Cheryl Fine

Chair Natalie Ortolini Drew called the meeting to order via the GotoMeeting app at 7:01 pm.

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

January 13, 2021 Regular Meeting:

MOTION: Ernest Pizzuto moved and Cathy Lino seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the January 13th meeting. Voting in favor: Natalie Ortolini Drew, Betty Dennis, Cathy Lino, Ernest Pizzuto and Mike Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: Robin Duffield and Sue Nesci. The motion carried: 5:0:2.

First Selectman Update- Cathy Lino reported the following:

Investigating & Diagnosing Health Problems & Hazards-Cathy testified at a state hearing about the need for extended producer responsibility for smoke detectors, gas canisters, and tires. These products are hazardous waste and can't be taken to the town Transfer Station. They end up polluting the general waste stream because there is no requirement for manufacturers to take them back for safe disposal.

Health Director Update -Amy Scholz reported the following:

Connecting People to Needed Health Care Services-Coronavirus (COVID-19)- The number of COVID cases in the state is trending down to 3.4/100,000. Contact tracing is continuing. Sometimes Amy does the contact tracing; other times state contact tracers perform the task. COVID vaccinations for ages 65-74 technically open on February 11th but that group has already begun to flood appointment sites.

Volunteers from the Public Health Agency called those ages 75 and older with phone numbers on the voter registration list to advise them of testing options. They spoke with over 200 people. Volunteers also assisted Amy by taking call backs to the special COVID vaccination line the town set up for the Health Department. Amy noted that numbers for those 75 and older from the 2010 census are no longer accurate but they are the best estimates we have. Using those estimates, the 75+ group may represent 260-270 people in town.

Cathy and several members reported problems that those age 75 and older encountered using the computerized VAMS system to schedule appointments. Amy has been updating a list of vaccination sites, including those with phone numbers. She reported sending information on vaccinations to the Beechwood Community newsletter and churches. She mentioned that New Haven developed postcards, which we may want to consider replicating.. Natalie added that there are Crush COVID posters. Cathy cautioned that we don't want to encourage people to congregate around posters.

Member suggested distributing vaccination information at the Transfer Station, hardware store, and churches. Sue recommended a link on the town's home page to vaccine information on the Health Department's page. She added that since the Health Department is not listed on the town's home page, a quick link would make referral to helpful information easier.

Amy and Paul have been exploring options for clinics in town. The VNA is willing to do vaccinations but can't order vaccine. It's not feasible for the town to meet the requirements to be a vaccine provider. Amy has approached the local pharmacy and they are exploring becoming a vaccine provider. She reported that the limited availability of vaccine and vaccine requirements make it difficult for existing vaccination providers to offer offsite vaccination clinics. Paul remarked that access to clinic sites close to Killingworth is limited.

Sue asked about recommendations for those who have had COVID and then want to get vaccinated. Mike said that it would depend on antibody levels and people should check with their doctor.

Robin asked the status of recommendations for an upcoming group in Phase 1b--those under 65 with co-morbid conditions. Amy said that CDC has developed a list of conditions. The state Vaccine Advisory Group is reviewing the list and will make recommendations and set guidelines.

Robin, who serves as a teachers union representative, expressed concern about families taking out-of-state vacations and upon return ignoring the requirements for quarantine after a negative test. She reported one family getting a negative test out-of-state one day and then sending the student to school the next day--bypassing the quarantine requirement. She added that with several upcoming school vacations, this issue may become a larger problem.

Policies & Plans Supporting Individual/Community Health- Tick-Borne Illnesses- Natalie noted that with the approach of the spring season, tick-borne illness prevention will again become an issue. Ernie added that with more people outside because of COVID, it may become an even more important issue this year to educate people about tick avoidance and detection.

Charter Revision-Cathy reported that the Public Health Agency is on the agenda of the Charter Revision Committee meeting on next Tuesday, February 16th. Cathy will send the login for the committee meeting for those interested in attending. Natalie said she will attend the meeting. Sue summarized the major issues the group discussed at the January 13th meeting: name, who appoints members, number of members, and changing the charge to meeting the essential elements of public health, as recommended by the state Department of Public Health.

Cathy noted that at even at the eight members discussed at the January meeting, the Public Health Agency is one of the largest committees. She suggested reducing the number to five. Paul remarked that the current requirement for appointment by the Health Director avoids any issues with political pressure. Natalie said that it is important that the focus of the group be on advising the Health Director on achieving the essential elements of public health for the town. The current charter lists public health nursing services as the charge.

Cathy added that the Charter Revision Committee has a survey on the front page of the town website. She encouraged members to complete the survey.

Election of Officers

Natalie requested nominations for Chair and Secretary.

MOTION: Betty Dennis moved and Cathy lino seconded a motion to nominate Natalie Drew as Chair and Sue Nesci as Secretary. There were no additional nominations from the floor. Voting in favor: Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy lino, Ernest Pizzuto and Mike Stehney; Opposed:0; Abstentions: Natalie Drew and Sue Nesci.. The motion carried 5:0:2.

MOTION: Betty Dennis moved and Sue Nesci seconded a motion to adjourn. Voting in favor: Natalie Ortolini Drew, Betty Dennis, Robin Duffield, Cathy lino, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, and Mike Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: 0. The motion carried 7:0:0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Nesci

Sue Nesci

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Dawn P. Moorey
TOWN CLERK