

Public Health Agency
323 Route 81
Killingworth, CT 06419

April 12, 2023
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Natalie Ortolini Drew, Nancy Gorski, Alice Lucas, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, Michael Stehney and Staff from the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD): Scott Martinson, Director of Health, Sherry Carlson, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, and Ryan Grenon, Registered Sanitarian

Members Absent: Robin Duffield

Chair Natalie Drew called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Minutes:

Correction: Alice Lucas noted that residents of Beechwood Community have water during a power outage but not heat or lights.

January 11, 2023 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Ernest Pizzuto made and Mike Stehney seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the January 11th regular meeting with one correction. Voting in favor: Natalie Ortolini Drew, Nancy Gorski, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, and Michael Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: 0. The motion carried: 6:0:0.

First Selectman Update- Nancy Gorski reported the following:

Investigate Health Problems/Hazards Affecting the Community- PFAS- Monitoring of PFAS levels is continuing at several sites. Homes with filtration systems on wells are undergoing additional testing. Results are expected in May. Two homes on Wolf Hollow have an issue with sodium in their wells. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has noted that homes on the south side of Wolf Hollow had high sodium levels in the soil, which has drained into the wells. An engineering firm, GCA, is addressing the PFAS and salt removal using a reverse osmosis system with a holding tank for the sodium. Sodium in the water has been an issue at the town hall campus since 1984. At the town campus, every time the Fire Department or Public Works wash a truck, they put PFAS in the soil from the water. Plans to pave the driveway to Public Works are on hold because of PFAS in the soil. Engineers are working on a design system for the town campus and elementary school.

Mike asked what was the source for the sodium on the town campus. Nancy explained that salt from a shed used to store road salt leached into the ground water on town campus and then spread to wells on Wolf Hollow.

Septic Issues at Beechwood- There is a proposal to change the requirement to pump septic systems from five years to three years at Beechwood.

Running Brook Farms- DEEP has looked at the issue of air pollution from outdoor wood-burning furnaces used to heat the greenhouses at the nursery. Ryan Grenon added that smoke is an issue. Nancy added that there are other issues with Inland Wetlands. She noted that Running Brook has a wood recycling permit from DEEP. They do not have a town permit, which makes it a Planning & Zoning Committee issue.

Health District Report: Staff from the Connecticut River Area Health District reported the following:

Investigate Health Problems/Hazards Affecting the Community- Running Brook Farms- Scott Martinson reported that Running Brook Farms is facing a \$30,000 fine from DEEP. The health district is hoping they will comply with DEEP and local rules.

PFAS- Ryan Grenon said that there is a meeting with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on Friday. A final report on the issue is expected soon. The report will be on the website as soon as it is finalized. Mike asked what the final report will cover. Nancy explained that a draft of the final report shows high levels of PFAS in samples. The town has requested funds for remediation from the state revolving fund. She added that there is a lot of competition for funds and we don't know yet if the town made the final cut. She reported that the town is meeting with an engineer to look at using a membrane to contain the plume. She cautioned that the science is not yet there on how to eradicate PFAS. Nancy added that she hopes to hold an information session on PFAS and COVID in late February.

COVID- Scott reported that Killingworth has had five to six COVID cases per month for the last three months. There were three laboratory confirmed cases in the past month. Sherry added that she participated in a CDC call on strategies for booster dose vaccinations in the fall. CDC is reviewing efficacy data. Natalie added that there is a new variant that is highly transmissible. Scott remarked that the health district is waiting on the state for further directions but at this point, people can do pretty much what they want.

RSV- Sherry Carlson noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is in the final stages of testing a new vaccine for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Bird Flu- Natalie asked about bird flu being transmitted to other animals. Scott said that it is an agricultural issue with the first human cases reported in China and New Mexico.

Tick-Borne Diseases- Natalie also asked about tick-borne illnesses. She reported that there are two more types of ticks that can carry disease. Scott noted that the health district has a webpage devoted to ticks and related diseases. He reported that in 2022 Killingworth had 18 cases of Lyme disease. Nancy asked about babesiosis, a rare but serious blood infection spread by ticks. Scott replied that there are one to two cases reported in the district per year but not spikes in cases.

Radon- Scott reported that the health district furnished radon test kits. A Killingworth resident had 70 times the highest safe level. The health district called and gave information on how to mitigate the radon levels.

Natural Fertilizer- Sue asked about the source of smell from a fertilizer spread on a field on Parker Hill Extension in February. She reported that the smell from what was probably manure lasted for five to seven days and extended as far west as the Route 81/148 junction and north up to New Image. She called the health district and was told it was natural fertilizer. Nancy said the DEEP investigated. She explained that chicken manure was spread on the fields. Normally the snow pack dissipates the smell, but because we have had a dry winter, the smell was noticeable. She added that town hall got about 100 calls on the smell.

Nancy added that manure with wood chips has also been applied to the old Griswold property on Route 81. The owners are trying to restore the property as a working farm.

DEVELOPING POLICIES/PLANS SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY HEALTH

Opioids- Nancy said that towns are receiving funding for opioid prevention. There is a remote meeting scheduled for April 21st for stakeholders in town. The town is working with Journey Home Recovery, an agency in town that deals with the issue. She asked that groups who want to be involved in the meeting contact her. Mike asked if there were any statistics on the scope of the opioid problem in Killingworth. Scott said the health district's site has a webpage with overdose statistics.

Fall Prevention- Nancy reported that ambulance company is reporting a lot of calls for falls, particularly among elderly residents. She wondered if PHA should look at a fall prevention program aimed particularly at seniors. Alice Lucas responded that the St. Lawrence Church Healing Ministry was working with physical therapists in the group to put on a public seminar on fall prevention. A date hasn't been set yet. The program will be in the church or the church hall. Nancy asked to be kept apprised of the date and further information.

MOTION: Mike Stehney moved and Ernest Pizzuto seconded a motion to adjourn. Voting in favor: Natalie Ortoli Drew, Nancy Gorski, Alice Lucas, Sue Nesci, Ernest Pizzuto, and Michael Stehney; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: 0. The motion carried: 6:0:0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm. The next quarterly meeting will be July 12.

Susan M. Nesci
Sue Nesci
Secretary