

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission
Meeting (Warren Twp. Municipal Court)
October 18, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission was held on the above date at the Warren Township Municipal Court and called to order by President Mr. Greg Riley by reading the Sunshine Law Statement at 7:05 pm.

2. Roll Call

Green Brook: Dr. Jon Fourre

Warren: Mr. Greg Riley, Mr. Malcolm Plager, Ms. Angela Valerio

Watchung: Ms. Julia Gunther

Bridgewater: Ms. Christine Madrid, Mr. Wells Winegar

Others in attendance: Mr. Kevin Sumner, Health Officer, Ms. Diana Swiderski, Administrative Assistant, Shahira Morell, Registered Environmental Health Specialist

3. President's Opening Remarks

President Mr. Greg Riley welcomed the Commission members, including new Commission employee, Ms. Shahira Morell.

4. Acceptance of the minutes of the June 7, 2021, meeting

- a) J. Fourre moved to adopt the minutes of the June 7, 2021, meeting as presented, second by M. Plager. All in favor

5. Finance Reports

a) June 2021

K. Sumner explained that grant funds were used towards several of the listed disbursements: Distinctive Promotions for masks and sanitizers, vaccine supplies, and Spatial Data Logic for the Commission's new website.

W. Winegar moved to adopt the financial report for June 2021 as presented, second by C. Madrid. All in favor

b) July 2021

K. Sumner explained that a state grant funds the inspections of each of the tanning establishments located in our area at the amount of \$200 per inspection.

J. Fourre moved to adopt the financial report for July 2021 as presented, second by W. Winegar. All in favor

c) August 2021

M. Plager moved to adopt the financial report for August 2021 as presented, second by J. Fourre. All in favor

d) September 2021

W. Winegar moved to adopt the financial report for September 2021 as presented, second by J. Fourre. All in favor

6. Unfinished Business

a) REHS position – Welcome Shahira Morell

Shahira provided the Commission members with her background, education and previous experience in public health.

b) Commission 2019 Audit

G. Riley advised members that the 2019 audit was completed and no issues were found, and no recommendations were made. G. Riley further explained that Samuel Klein & Company took an overly extended amount of time to complete the audit. There were no issues with the content, but due to the lengthy time, the Commission members prefer that we look at a different accounting firm, specifically Suplee Clooney, moving forward. W. Winegar mentioned Bridgewater uses Suplee Clooney for their annual audits and they are satisfied with their work. K. Sumner will contact the firm before year's end and hire them if they agree on a fee of \$5,000 or less.

J. Fourre moved to approve the audit for 2019 as presented, second by W. Winegar. All in favor

c) Covid-19 Update

i. Current status

1. Community

Overall, there is a decline in the number of new cases due to the increase of the public getting vaccinated. However, there is a slight rise of cases in the 35-55 year old range.

2. Schools

There are currently no outbreaks within the schools in our area. Similar to reporting influenza, schools will be required to report positive Covid-19 cases into an online system. Warren, Watchung and Bridgewater schools have agreed to have an outside vendor collect weekly Covid PCR testing samples from staff who have not been vaccinated.

3. Staffing (grant supported)

One of our State Covid grants will fund a full-time Covid Generalist position. This is a requirement of the grant. Unfortunately, potential contractors have not been interested in full-time work, so K. Sumner will change the position to a full-time employee of the Commission. He would also be identifying a Vaccine Coordinator to schedule and run the clinics, also funded by the grant.

ii. Grants status

1. Strengthening Grant 2021-2022

In addition to the staffing described above, this grant supports the Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator position and the purchase of certain Covid-related supplies.

2. Vaccination Grant 2021-2022

Supplemental funding through this grant is to be used towards vaccine supplies and materials, support and the VNA.

iii. Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator Report

Eze Udensi's Vulnerable Population Assessment showed that vaccines for the homebound are not high in demand in our area, as we do not have a significant homebound population.

iv. Vaccination Efforts

K. Sumner stated that the approval for booster shots from Pfizer and Moderna are forthcoming, as are vaccinations for children ages 5-11. Once children's vaccines are approved, we are planning to hold clinics throughout the schools that will be scheduled in collaboration with Dr. Frank's office. As a safety precaution, we will have both a doctor and VNA nurses on site while children receive their vaccinations.

d) School-aged immunization status update

The data gathered from the VNA's immunization audits indicates that our schools are highly compliant. Up to 90% of the students are up to date with their vaccination status. However, A. Valerio stated that there has been a drop in vaccination rates in certain schools due to immigrant children whose families do not have insurance and

thus are not getting vaccinated. There have also been children scheduled to receive their vaccinations, but then have canceled their appointments. C. Madrid added that it could be due to the vaccine mandates and people's dislike of government interfering with their freedom to choose which medical procedures they will receive.

e) Vector-borne disease

Diseases related to mosquitos and ticks are very present in our communities. Cases of West Nile Virus have increased, as well as Dengue Fever and malaria, due to travel. Common tick-borne diseases in our area are Lyme, Ehrlichiosis and Babesiosis.

f) Gun Violence – States sharing information

Gun violence has been a discussion point of the Commission in the past, so Commission members were updated that the states of NJ, NY, CT and PA recently entered into an agreement to exchange data on gun violence.

7. New Business

a) “Remnants of Ida” Public Health response

Due to the sudden and heavy downpour of rain leading to flash flooding, some businesses in Bridgewater sustained significant damage and had to close. Thankfully, most have been able to reopen. Many deaths also occurred, more so here than in Louisiana where the hurricane landed. This may have been due to our inexperience with flash flooding and is something we will need to learn from and be prepared for in case of a future occurrence.

b) Commission Website

The feedback on our new and improved website was very good. Regarding inspections, the public is now able to view reports completed this year. M. Plager commented on the quick speed the photos of the four municipalities moved from right to left on the Homepage and would prefer they be slowed down.

c) Appointment of Bridgewater representative to Finance and Budget Committee for 2021

C. Madrid was appointed as the Bridgewater representative of the Finance and Budget Committee for 2021.

8. Public Portion

There was no member of the public present.

9. Addendum to Agenda

K. Sumner commented on the current violence towards public health workers and noted a video montage of public health meetings across the country that illustrates this.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, J. Fourre made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm, seconded by C. Madrid. Vote: All in favor.