

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission  
Meeting (Green Brook Twp. Municipal Building)  
December 6, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission was held on the above date at the Green Brook Township Municipal Building and called to order by President Mr. Greg Riley by reading the Sunshine Law Statement at 7:11 pm.

2. Roll Call

Green Brook: Mr. Bob Longo

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

Watchung: Ms. Julia Gunther, Ms. Fran Ellis

Bridgewater: Ms. Christine Madrid, Mr. Wells Winegar

Others in attendance: Mr. Kevin Sumner, Health Officer, Ms. Diana Swiderski, Administrative Assistant

3. President's Opening Remarks

President Mr. Greg Riley welcomed the Commission members. He announced Dr. Jon Fourre's resignation from the Green Brook Township Board of Health. In addition, he expressed his regret that Dr. Fourre would no longer serve on the Commission and stated that the Commission had the benefit of his expertise for many years.

4. Acceptance of the minutes of the October 18, 2021, meeting

- a) M. Plager moved to adopt the minutes of the October 18, 2021, meeting as presented, second by W. Winegar. All in favor

5. Finance Reports

a) October 2021

C. Madrid moved to adopt the financial report for October 2021 as presented, second by A. Valerio. All in favor

b) November 2021

M. Plager moved to adopt the financial report for November 2021 as presented, second by W. Winegar. All in favor

## 6. Unfinished Business

### a) Covid-19 Update

#### i. Current status

##### 1. Community

The number of cases have increased, due to people being indoors and gathering together during the Thanksgiving holiday. As of last week, Covid activity levels have risen from moderate to high, as reported by the State Health Department, and the quarantine time period has extended from 7 back to 14 days. Cases will likely continue to rise with the upcoming holiday celebrations and into the new year.

The former Lord & Taylor store in Bridgewater Mall will act as one of NJ state's vaccine clinic mega-sites this month, as directed by the State Health Department.

##### 2. Schools

There has been a significant rise of Covid cases among students in our area, affecting both the unvaccinated and vaccinated. However, most cases are originating outside the school environment and transmission in the schools still seems low.

##### 3. Staffing (grant supported)

The Commission continues to search for qualified candidates to fill the grant-funded COVID Generalist position.

#### ii. Grants status

##### 1. Strengthening Grant 2021-2022

K. Sumner advised that the quarterly reports are due in January and that we are progressing with the grant deliverables. The one challenge has been finding a qualified candidate for the COVID Generalist position. This grant supports this position as well as the Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator position. In addition, materials, supplies and support such as IT, are paid by the grant.

##### 2. Vaccination Grant 2021-2022

K. Sumner advised that the quarterly reports are due in January and that we are progressing with the grant deliverables. The bulk of this grant, as the name implies, covers the costs of delivering vaccines to the community. This includes paying for nursing services at the clinics as well as provide homebound vaccines, supplies to support the clinic and coordination efforts.

iii. Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator Report

70-80% of the population in the towns we serve are vaccinated. Those that continue to be hit the hardest are aged 65 and older.

iv. Vaccination Efforts

The Commission, in collaboration with Dr. Frank's office, successfully ran seven pediatric vaccination clinics located within Green Brook, Warren, Watchung and Bridgewater schools during the month of November. Second doses of the pediatric vaccine will be available in the same schools within the month of December. The clinics are also offering booster shots for adults.

Due to public demand, there are plans to create vaccine clinics available to adults and children to be held every two weeks in the Green Brook Municipal Building.

b) Vector-borne disease

Tick-related diseases are still present in our communities, such as Lyme Disease and Babesiosis.

c) Religious Exemption - Vaccination

G. Riley shared an article that stated research was conducted on the world's major religions and their views on vaccinations and religious exemptions. With the exception of a sect of the Christian Science faith, neither religion had concerns with the use of vaccines. Certain groups of people who are against vaccines take moral issue with the ingredients used to create them, such as stem cells taken from aborted babies. When addressed, Catholic leaders were not opposed since the stem cells that are presently used were not taken from aborted fetuses and were replicated from cells taken over 40 years ago.

7. New Business

a) Influenza activity

We are starting to see an increase in influenza cases.

b) 2022 Budget

The Finance Committee met and reviewed the finances and proposed 2022 budget. The Committee recommends a 2% salary increase for Commission employees, which results in a 2% increase in costs to the towns of the Commission.

C. Madrid moved to approve the Commission's 2022 budget as presented, second by M. Plager. All in favor

8. Public Portion

There was no member of the public present.

9. Addendum to Agenda

K. Sumner added that an effort has been made to encourage and facilitate the accreditation of smaller Health Departments. The current accreditation standards are very challenging for most smaller departments to meet. A PILOT program called Pathways has been created that will test activities. The Commission was asked to be one of the pilot sites for this program and has agreed, since Kevin co-chaired the group that worked to develop the new program.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, W. Winegar made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8 pm, seconded by M. Plager. Vote: All in favor.