

Health Commission Minutes 06/11/2020

This was a Zoom teleconference meeting.

Present: Patricia Parry, Margaret Cobb, Barbara Decker, Thomas Getreuer

Absent: Ros Robertson

The meeting was called to order at 9:04AM

Correspondence: There was none

Director of Health Report: Contact tracing is not yet underway due to a multitude of software issue, lack of training and a lack of process to move forward. Modeling data predicts a second wave of COVID cases in August –September but the recent protests may throw that off considerably. The Westhill testing site has closed due to a lack of clients. First responder testing continues. A Yale sero-survey is in process for Stamford to further define infection rates and to geographically isolate pockets of infection of COVID. Michael Pollard has been tasked with doing a marketing campaign to push for more mask use and more social distancing by more people. Pat Parry asked who is paying for the program. Dr. Calder does not know.

There is a general failure in communication with the State agencies regarding COVID response as well as a chronic lack of funding.

While all of this is going on we have one new presumptive TB case that came from outside of Stamford so this is not local spread. There are 9-10 cases in Stamford which is actually high for TB.

STD Grant: We will keep the Grant for this fiscal year but will give it up next year as the STD program can be better handled outside of the Department of Health

BP Screening: We have a part time RN on board helping to do the BP Screening program. A Block Grant from the State for BP screening was never activated due to the COVID situation.

Inspections: Most of the inspectors are back at work as the City decides how to safely reopen City buildings. Public schools task force will decide how to open the schools. (The nursing offices are too small by design to handle suspected COVID cases. The dental hygienists cannot work on patients in the current setup in the schools)

Hurricane season: Hurricane preparedness is affected by the COVID need for space between people in shelters. We will need 10 shelters for 50 people in each if we are to keep the necessary distance between people who would need them in the event of a hurricane hitting the City hard. Previously, we had designated only one shelter for this use.

Cooling Centers: All are closed due to COVID except for the gov't center which is not really open to the public at this time.

Larvicide use: Currently treating a much larger area for Eastern Equine Encephalitis which is an entirely different mosquito that lives in a wider area than catch basins alone.

PPE: There are adequate supplies at this time. An MRC volunteer distributes them weekly from the gov't center. 8100 reporting thermometers have been given to the Board of Ed to distribute to students. These can automatically report the data if the parent downloads the app. Reports go to the State Dept. of Health. Clergy can obtain IR thermometers from the State at no charge.

Open positions: The Health Department is currently recruiting for all 3 open positions.

Racial Injustice: Violence and racial injustice are a Public Health issue. The Health Commission is being asked to consider an effort to support an initiative to address these issues.

UCONN residence: Has been closed due to lack of demand. The State has taken over the need for sheltering the homeless and residents of the homeless shelters.

Testing: There is not enough COVID testing for a variety of reasons not the least of which is the administrative headaches, billing, and personnel issues. A 2 million dollar budget would need to be in place just to hire the school nurses over the summer and that money is not available.

CARES and FEMA can reimburse the Health Dept. for some expenses, then the State will kick in as final source. The City Emergency Preparedness Plan does not cover any of this. Job descriptions and union issues would have to be revamped in order for a public health emergency declaration to require Health Department employees to show up for work

Director of Public Safety, Health, and Welfare Report: No Report

Old Business: A letter was sent to AG Tong for an opinion as to whether Stamford might be able to add to the State recommendations for vaccinations. No reply has been received yet. Pat Parry has agreed to compile suggestions as to what specifically would we like to amend and present it to the Commission.

New Business: Dr. Margaret Cobb is leaving the Health Commission today. We all thank her for her many years of wisdom and sage advice. She will be missed by all!

Adjournment: 10:15AM

Respectfully submitted by

Thomas Getreuer, DDS, MAGD

Chair, Stamford Health Commission