



PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2021

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH
Meredith Hodach–Avalos, MD
Darrell Penn, ALT II
Linda Schwimmer, JD
Mona Shah, PhD
Kathleen Stillo, MBA, ALT I
Rick Strauss, MD
Leticia Fraga, Council
Liaison

Board Members – Absent

JoAnn Hill, RN
Rick Weiss, MS

Students

Lavina Mital & Brendan Chia

Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS
Gwendolyn Krol, Vulnerable
Population Coordinator

Minutes submitted by:
Julie Moy, Board Secretary

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30 pm. She recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Acct: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health have been duly advertised and are being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”*

Roll Call was completed.

New Staff Introduction

Mr. Grosser introduced Gwendolyn Krol, Vulnerable Population Coordinator. Ms. Krol provided her background and explained current duties to date and how she will be servicing the community. Findings and data should be shared when completed. Mr. Grosser stated that Ms. Krol also part of the county VPOC team. Standard questionnaire will be created to gather information to better understand the needs of the community in response to the pandemic. Councilwoman Fraga, who is also the liaison to the Human Service Commission, is familiar with the needs assessment completed a few years ago; challenges of the pandemic needs were not foreseen. She made the recommendation to Ms. Krol that she should contact community leaders. Councilwoman Fraga asked Ms. Krol if she was fluent in Spanish; yes, Ms. Krol studied abroad. She is working with Princeton University’s Research Center; they are assisting her put the assessment online program that offers information in several languages. Chair Hodach–Avalos stated that in the past, the Board was interested in getting information on the vulnerable population to meet their needs. She asked Ms. Krol who will she be working with regarding the vaccine outreach; Ms. Krol explained the training she is planning to participate in; she is currently in contact with partners in the community and once established, she will meet and gather additional information. Dr. Shah asked if the Princeton Medical Center and local community health centers will be receiving vaccines. Chair Hodach–Avalos responded that Penn Medicine Princeton is a vaccine site and has an independent registration site; they are currently back logged. Penn Medicine is working on setting up a community outreach program. Mr. Grosser stated that families will be directed to Capital Health when the Witherspoon site opens. Per Ms. Schwimmer, the DOH is talking with Rite Aid and CVS. DOH will ask CVS to set aside vaccines for the vulnerable population. FEMA will run sites in parts of the state; they will be set up in Trenton.

Approval of Minutes

October 20, 2020 and November 17, 2020

The motion to approve meeting minutes dated *October 20, 2020* and *November 17, 2020* was first moved by Dr. Strauss seconded by Mr. Penn, all in favor by voice vote.



Ms. Stillo proposed to table December 8, 2020; she wants to review recording for accurate revision. Chair Hodach–Avalos suggested that the Recording Secretary review and revise minutes and re-submit. Discussion regarding meeting recordings was started; Councilwoman Fraga discussed this issue with the Governance Subcommittee. Per legal counsel, it was stated that any recording would be public record if it exists. If a member of the BCC requests a copy of an existing recording, they should be granted a copy. Per Ms. Stillo, the recording is also available to the public under the Obrick request. Prior to zoom meetings, recordings are not made. Not all Commissions and Committees have recording devices for the Recording Secretary and are not recorded. Per Councilwoman Fraga, there is no written policy, however recording and written documents are public records. Chair Hodach–Avalos once again asked if the Recording Secretary can be informed of missing information to review. In response, Ms. Stillo requested the recording to review so her edits can be accurate. Ms. Moy asked Ms. Stillo for what she is looking for; she the requested recording to review. Per Councilwoman Fraga, BCCs are not required to record or provide recordings, however if one exist, then it is to be available public; it is not required to be posted on the website. Ms. Stillo suggested this information should be included in By-Laws for clarification. Councilwoman Fraga is willing to take it to the Governance Subcommittee and have Legal Counsel weight in. Mr. Grosser suggested that they record by Zoom and post on the website and once the meetings are in-person, the recording copy from the Recording Secretary can be posted. Per Mr. Grosser, it has not been the policy of the Board of Health to record the meetings. Dr. Strauss commented, that he thought the recordings were for the Recording Secretary’s transcription purposes only; why do we need these meetings recorded? Per Ms. Schwimmer, we do not have policy to record meeting, but once the Recording Secretary records, it becomes public record, then the question becomes, how long the recording has to be retained. The decision has to be made, that if the meetings are going to be recorded, then we need to be retained in compliance with the state laws. If this Board choses to record all the meetings, it will not mean all BCCs will be required to record their meetings. Ms. Schwimmer suggested that Councilwoman Fraga discuss with the Governance Subcommittee and Legal. The Board will not vote on the recording issue at this time.

Ms. Stillo requested the recording for the December 8, 2020 and January 12, 2021 Reorganizational Meetings; these two meeting were tabled at this time. Ms. Stillo will review and make comments to the minutes at the next meeting.

Regular Meeting Minutes dated Jan. 12, 2021

The motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated Jan. 12, 2021 – Regular Meeting was first moved by Dr. Strauss seconded by Ms. Schwimmer, all in favor by voice vote.

Mr. Penn also requested copies of the recordings.

Health Officer Report – Jeff Grosser

Mr. Grosser reported on the vaccine roll out. NJDOH and the Governor’s office have informed Mercer County that local municipalities will no longer receive first dose vaccines allocations due to shortage. Second doses allocated to those already received the first dose, will not be affected. On February 10, we will be running the 500 person clinic through the Senior Resource Center; he explained who will be receiving the vaccine. Second 2nd dose clinic will take place next Wednesday; Mr. Grosser explained who will be receiving the second dose vaccine. Mr. Grosser explained that the community clinics have been re-allocated to regional clinics located at Mercer Community College and the Cure Arena. Princeton residents will be directed to the Cure Arena. We were allocated 75 shots at that site, which will be run by Capital Health. Mr. Grosser explained that the Dept. of Health will assist Capital Health



by inputting data in the Vaccine Scheduling System (VSS). Mr. Grosser asked the state when vaccines are available, will local clinics receive vaccines again; yes. It is unknown when this will occur. Local Mercer County clinics have provided 4,000+ vaccines to date. Mr. Grosser expressed his concerns for the wait list; our wait list had over 20,000+ in January. The Dept. of Health is working off their wait list and is allowed to pull Princeton residents for the 75 vaccines; he explained how they are culling the names from the wait list. The Dept. of Health has been utilizing the Mayor and Councils' newsletter to get information out into the community which includes other methods to try to get vaccine. Mr. Grosser reported on the number of current cases. Princeton University students have been quarantined after travel and exposure; students testing positive are being isolated.

Dr. DiFerdinando reported on COVID subcommittee's activities; school system has been reaching out to Chair Hodach–Avalos, Mr. Grosser and himself on specific issues. School is looking for Board's input on plans to expand; received request today. There was discussion on potential new transmissible strain. Chair Hodach–Avalos stated that thought numbers are going down, there still are a lot of cases around the county; important to continue following public health guidance to prevent transmission. Mr. Grosser reported that FEMA will be deployed to Trenton over the next few weeks to assist with vaccine roll out. There was discussion on how we can get communications out to those who may not have resources. Councilwoman Fraga reported on some groups available to assist; Human Services, Princeton Mutual Aid (PMA) and University students have all offered to assist with wait list registration.

Mr. Grosser reported on the demographics; there are discrepancies in disproportion of the Latino/Hispanic COVID cases versus the national senses. A number of our cases were seen in the Fall; numbers were even. Ms. Krol and epidemiologist with the help of Human Services will review documents. Chair asked if there is similar break down of how vaccine has been distributed in town; Mr. Grosser reported that they are working gathering the information and putting in their data base. A lot of the information from National Data is incomplete; the State Health Department is trying to get the data to the clinics.

Mr. Penn asked if vaccine is affective against the B117 strain; Dr. DiFerdinando responded that the current two pharmacies does not have a scientist answer to his question. He explained some of the findings being studied. Astrazeneca, Moderna and Pfizer's vaccines does not work well against the African variant.

Old Business

Chair Hodach–Avalos brought up the past discussion on Board education. Resources have been updated and available: the Boards and Commissions Document guidelines have been updated. The NJ local Boards of Health has a handbook available for members that include the 10 essential public health functions and 5 functions of local BOH. Councilwoman Fraga reported that she receives notices for educational webinars; depending on areas of interest she will share. Ms. Stillo stated that the NJ Boards of Health has annual or biannual meetings and would be interested in attending. Per Dr. DiFerdinando, he is on their Executive Committee; they meet monthly and occasionally have members from local BOH attending; currently meeting by Zoom.

New Business

Mr. Grosser reported that the Dept. of Health will be relocating to the other side of Monument Hall; this allows us to secure vaccine fridge and provide office for Public Health Nurse.

Community Health Center – Capital Health

The Community Health Center is anticipated to open in March. The Well Baby Clinic will be expanded and held in new location; will offer preventative services and immunizations during office hours. Goal is include adult clinic and medical facilities for uninsured residents. Councilwoman Fraga was informed that their Health Center will accept Family Care insurance. With the new health facility, it delivers increase service hours, walkability which eliminates transportation issues. We will be utilizing their



physicians and clinic space. Mr. Grosser explained Medical Director Dr. Helrick's responsibilities as consultant, who is from Princeton Nassau Pediatrics.

Subcommittee Report

Structural Racism Subcommittee – Chair Darrell Penn

Mr. Penn reported that the subcommittee has not had opportunity to meet yet. He did receive resources from Councilwoman Fraga and Ms. Schwimmer to review.

Planning Subcommittee – Chair Hodach–Avalos

Chair Hodach–Avalos reported that the subcommittee, Ms. Hill, Ms. Schwimmer Ms. Stillo and herself met; they worked on document identifying the goals for the BOH 2021 to support the mission of the Dept. of Health and how we and assist Mr. Grosser and staff. She stated that they worked on goals and created bucket lists with core categories: measureable, actionable, timely and realistic. Chair Hodach–Avalos explained how the bucket list was created and defined the categories and how they can potentially assist the Dept. of Health. Currently Mr. Grosser is working on the public health accreditation annual report which is due March. Chair Hodach–Avalos continued explaining what the subcommittee has discussed. She discussed some of the projects working with other groups; Human Services and Environmental Commissions. Chair Hodach–Avalos went over the projects going under pre–planning. Councilwoman Fraga stated the Council has passed a resolution to form the Cannabis Task Force and are seeking volunteers.

Councilwoman Fraga stated that if BCCs need funding, she needs to know so she can take to the Council. Mr. Grosser explained his goals list already provided to the Councilwoman; may need to be cleaned up some. Mr. Grosser explained the funding source for the vaccine clinic and the upcoming health site on Witherspoon. He also explained there will be increase of expenditures; expansion of department and expansion of services. Chair Hodach–Avalos empathized how important it is to have a strong Dept. of Health. Per Mr. Grosser, the Vulnerable Population Coordinator is a two year granted position; once grant expires, what will happen to the work load already generated; position is granted until 2022. Mr. Penn stated that one of pieces missing is funding sources; not sure if we need to advocate for funding for activities for the Dept. of Health. Councilwoman Fraga explained the pilot program for Permit Parking Task Force, which will require funding for the technology. Mr. Penn stated that there looks like there are 2 areas of support are needed: Budget for BCC activities and for the Dept. of Health.

Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance (PADA)

Ms. Stillo is the liaison for PADA and BOH. Ms. Stillo reported on their meeting that was reported out of the University. The University reported on the number of returning students and how they are handling the return and new leadership. They discussed the Cannabis Task Force; per Councilwoman Fraga, the Municipality is currently developing this task force. She believes they are doing work around mental health; she believes, prior to COVID, we discussed doing some work in this area.

Environmental Commission Meeting

Chair Hodach–Avalos reported that Environmental Commission discussed the plastic bag band passed in NJ. They will provide education for restaurants on how to use proper containers; she will suggest they contact Bob English from the Health Dept. for guidance.



5 G Information

There was request from Council or Planning Board for presentation on the 5G rollout from the BOH. We addressed this issue in 2019 as a result of a letter to either Mayor or Council as a result of a concerned citizen. We addressed by memo; Chair Hodach–Avalos will look for memo. She is seeking clarification on what the Council is looking for from BOH. Councilwoman Fraga stated that there will be a presentation from the providers. Council has also received concerns from the residents on what the health impact would be. Council is looking for a representative from BOH and recommendations of any health concerns related to 5G. Chair Hodach–Avalos does not have the memo and asked if any member would like to participate. She clarified that the concerns are health impacts of 5G network roll outs and technology. Chair Hodach–Avalos will follow up with the information. Councilwoman Fraga will confirm which Council meeting this request is being made for.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm was first moved by Dr. Strauss seconded by Ms. Stillo, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:

Julie Moy

Recording Secretary