



# PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2021

Zoom Meeting \* Princeton, NJ 08540

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## **Board Members – Present**

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH

Meredith Hodach–Avalos, MD

Darrell Penn, ALT II

Mona Shah, PhD

Kathleen Stillo, MBA, ALT I

Rick Strauss, MD

Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

JoAnn Hill, RN

Rick Weiss, MS

Linda Schwimmer

Minutes submitted by:

Debra Mercantini, Interim Board Secretary

## **Staff**

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

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Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:36 pm. She recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“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.

## **Minutes:**

Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos amended the agenda, moving the minutes until the end of the meeting

## **Monthly Report:**

Mr. Jeffrey Grosser updated the Board on the upcoming Covid vaccine clinics. He noted that their push to get the Spanish/Latino uninsured population vaccinated has been successful due to the help being provided by the Human Services Office, the Vulnerable Population Coordinator, Public Health Nurses and Princeton’s bilingual registered environmental health specialist, Nancy Ugalde. Pop-up clinics have provided vaccines for quite a few people and it is anticipated that these pop-up clinics will continue with some having doctors on-site. Princeton University has offered to help with the vaccination of the 12+ year old population with its Pfizer vaccines – they have 13 upcoming vaccine clinics. Princeton Nassau Pediatrics and Capital Health will also be providing vaccines to the 12+ year old population. Mr. Grosser also discussed a complaint that came into the Health Office about a rodent infestation; the inspectors are working with the Business owner to rectify the problem.

## **Old Business**

There was no discussion held.

## **New Business**

Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos noted that the Covid numbers are encouraging – cases have been down – vaccinations have increased, but she warned that there may be some resistance to getting children vaccinated. The Board of Health should begin to think about what has been learned during the pandemic. Ms. Linda Schwimmer said thinking about everything Princeton’s Health Department has been through over the past year, the Board should look at the role of the Princeton Health Department and how Covid has changed that role. There was a real alignment and collaboration with the Human Services Office, Council, Schools, Princeton University, Senior Resource Center, Recreation Department and Church based organizations. The Board should think about how it can take those relationships and continue to advance public health. Federal money will be coming to the municipality and perhaps some of the money can be spent on public health; what would be the scope and the need for



these funds in public health. There was also a discussion about “medical home” and the need for that in the community. Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos noted that the connection between Health and Human Services is integral in community health. It was decided that the Planning Committee would meet with Mr. Grosser and the Human Services Office to discuss these issues. Council President Leticia Fraga noted that a merge between the Health Department and Human Services Office could be expanded for the services that are provided.

### **Liaison Report**

Council President Leticia noted that Council recently adopted a Resolution #21-162 supporting the Medicare Act of 2021. Once she receives a final version from the Clerk she will circulate it to everyone.

### **Reports from Committees**

#### **Structural Racism Committee:**

Mr. Darrell Penn noted that this Committee is working on the wording for a Resolution and hopes to bring in to the Board by the end of next month.

### **Reports from other Boards/Commissions/Task Forces**

Dr. George DiFerdinando reported on the Princeton Environmental Commission (PEC) meeting where the main topic was on artificial turf. He stated that he explained to the PEC that the Board of Health does not have an expert on artificial turf therefore could not weigh in on the topic without hiring someone.

Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos stated that she attended the Human Services Commission meeting in which there was a discussion was about a community center. Council President Leticia Fraga stated that Council had a Resolution on the last agenda to form a “Community Center Feasibility Task Force” but the Resolution was tabled. Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos noted the Outreach Coordinator should do a needs assessment on the homeless population in Princeton.

Ms. Kathy Stillo stated that she attended the PADA meeting where the cannabis legislation was discussed. She noted that no state regulations have been finalized yet and the group is looking at other towns who have done a cannabis role out already. Council President Leticia Fraga noted that the Cannabis Task Force recently had a legal briefing regarding the legislation and “opt in and opt out” guidelines and how the municipality needs to be well informed before it “opts in” because once it “opts in” the municipality can’t “opt out” for five years.

### **Minutes:**

**April 13, 2021** – a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with the changes that were discussed and was affirmatively carried by all those present.

**December 8, 2020** – a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and was affirmatively carried by all those present.

**January 12, 2021** – a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with the changes that were discussed and was affirmatively carried by all those present.



**Adjournment**

The motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm was moved by Ms. Schwimmer seconded by Dr. Strauss and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

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*Debra Mercantini*  
Interim Recording Secretary