



PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2022

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH

JoAnn Hill, RN

Katherine Taylor, JD, PhD (Alt. 2)

Kathleen Stillo, MBA, (Alt. 1)

Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

Linda Schwimmer, JD

Mona Shah, PhD

Rick Strauss, MD

Rick Weiss, MS

Board Members - Absent

Meredith Hodach–Avalos, MD

Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

Chair, Dr. George DiFerdinando, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. He 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 has been duly advertised and is being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”* Roll Call was completed.

Public Comment/Guest Speaker

No comments were made.

Minutes

Chair DiFerdinando addressed the minutes from the May 10, 2022 BOH Regular Meeting. Hearing no proposed changes, Ms. Kathleen Stilo motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Katherine Taylor. Chair DiFerdinando approved the minutes as presented and without opposition.

Monthly Report

Princeton Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser gave a report on the current status of COVID-19 in Princeton, explaining that through May, there continued to be an increase in COVID-19 cases from larger events such as prom and school trips. More recently, COVID-19 cases have started to decrease in the Princeton community. Since school related cluster outbreaks fueled some of this increase, it is anticipated that cases will continue to decrease as we get later into June. Staff have continued their work with the schools and state epidemiologists to mitigate school clusters while students remain in school. There was a recent cluster outbreak linked back to the Princeton High School chorus trip to Disney World. Moving forward, COVID-19 data will be updated on the municipal webpage (no longer being provided on the weekly municipal newsletter).

Mr. Grosser added that a lot of work is also be done with the Rental Housing office in Princeton, regarding the interpretation of New Jersey’s new lead law, P.L.2021, c.182. The law goes into effect on July 22, 2022 and requires dwellings to be inspected for lead-based paint hazards upon tenant turnover or every two years. This is a big step for New Jersey’s prevention against childhood lead poisoning, which previously required home lead inspections or investigation by local authorities to require an elevated blood level in a child. This is a step towards primary prevention. Further details are still being worked on regarding how the rental housing inspections are going to go and how they will be performed.

We are in the last month of our 2021-2022 Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Grant, under the New Jersey State Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This year’s grant totaled \$291,042 which covered the Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinator (VPOC), COVID-19 Generalist



(CVG) and some outreach supplies. We have been finalizing those expenses for this year to report out at the end of this month, and while doing that we are also applying for year three of the grant which goes into effect July 1, 2022. This grant will cover the same positions, and totals \$274,735.

The VPOC has been working on the Health Care Roadmap to assist with getting healthcare services in the Princeton area, specifically for low and moderate-income residents. Addressing suggestions from Board of Health members, the VPOC is expanding the mental and behavioral health and family planning and STI testing sections, and is also working on an FAQs portion along with the process map to more easily navigate the long document. The roadmap will be posted on the municipal website, and when shared with community partners, we are trying to distribute quick response (QR) codes to make it easier to refer to the document.

The VPOC and CVG have been working closely with Affordable Housing, as they are managing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and working with Human Services who are assisting with some of the distribution of services. A few programs include personal protective equipment (PPE), and basic necessities for low and moderate-income residents. These kits can be picked up from Human Services by calling 609-688-2055. Self-attestation of income is required.

Also as part of the CDBG funding, vision and dental services are being provided, along with financial support, and daycare support (from the YMCA). Princeton residents will now have access to these services throughout the course of the CDBG funding. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga thanked Mr. Grosser for sharing the wonderful news about these services and asked about announcing this to the community. He explained that word is being spread at outreach events, and Thursday's newsletter will also contain a lot of information.

The VPOC and CVG have also been assisting the public health nurses with the vaccine outreach efforts. Over the past month, the vaccine team has performed community clinic at Hinds Plaza, the Princeton Farmers' Market, and the Princeton High School for their Latinx family outreach event.

Due to staffing shortages in Montgomery Township, Princeton Animal Control Officer (ACO) Jim Ferry will be assisting with additional coverage until this is resolved. This includes Pennington and Hopewell Borough. Princeton and Montgomery have provided mutual aid/shared services for Animal Control for over 10 years. He has been assisting with investigations for the highly pathogenic avian influenza. Information on this has been sent out to poultry owners in Princeton regarding the USDA and the NJDA on what is happening with this outbreak. The first case was found last month in Monmouth County, in a non-commercial backyard poultry flock. The New Jersey Local Information Network Communications System advised the need to distribute information to local poultry owners. Individuals in Princeton who have backyard poultry are licensed, information was issued to them and distributed through the municipal newsletter.

The Princeton Health Department underwent its routine NJ Department of Health COVID-19 clinic audit. The audit assessed vaccine storage, administration, and COVID-19 data. The audit went well with minimal changes necessary.

From Princeton's Environmental Health Bureau, licensures were provided for the Princeton Farmers' Market at the new Dinky Lot location. The market began during the end of May and was already a vaccination site for health department staff. We are fine-tuning operations with regards to compliance



checks with the new straw, plastic bag and Styrofoam container ban. PHD has been assisting Princeton's new community compliance officer with some of those checks.

Reports from Committees

Councilwoman Fraga explained there is a need for eldercare in the community, which was identified by a Princeton Human Services Commission (PHSC) community taskforce, and she briefly discussed having a community center that could be one-stop, with care and recreational activities for children, youth, adults and the elderly. Eldercare seems to be lacking for many households and residents may benefit from this kind of setting. Ms. Linda Schwimmer asked her about the survey and to explain in more detail. She explained the PHSC Needs Assessment Survey was done this time by surveying the service providers and organizations in the community to identify what is already being provided, and by whom. The taskforce also asked what is lacking and what could enhance the services that they could provide. So far, they are holding off on planning a presentation to mayor and council on the results of the survey until the PHSC director returns in July. Additionally, PHSC and the PHD, are also planning a summit for some time next year.

Ms. Schwimmer reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met and discussed updating the smoking and vaping ordinances. She briefly explained there is a problem with this in that there are multiple state statutes which conflict, and this is not a Princeton-specific issue, but a State-issue. All municipalities are looking to update their indoor and outdoor smoking and vaping laws and how it connects with now legalized cannabis usage. The committee requested for Health Officer Grosser to speak with the municipal counsel and other statewide municipal connections (such as the League of Municipalities) to obtain some legal opinions and guidance before this committee begins working on this issue. Mr. Grosser thanked the committee for their hard work. He mentioned the FAQs section of the League of Municipalities website regarding the Smoke Free Air Act and cannabis, and that there are some discrepancies with how our local ordinance would be written if it is to be updated. He is still in discussion on this topic but will update the board once he has more information.

Ms. Schwimmer continued that the committee also discussed the roadmap/strategic plan and how having more information about needs helped them identify a list of groups that they need more information from. Some of which include mental health and the need for mental health services, and there is an issue in the community with lack of reproductive health services (such as contraception and other related services). Other than telehealth, the only available known services are at Planned Parenthood of Trenton and New Brunswick. Information from the Zufall Health Center is pending.

Reports from other Boards and Commissions

Chair DiFerdinando shared that Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance (PADA) did not meet this month yet, so there is no update.

Mr. Rick Weiss discussed a Princeton Mobility Survey Report, he gave a summary of the report on bike and pedestrian safety in the community. Our town is deemed very walkable and bikeable, 1 in 3 respondents ride a bike at least once a week. Respondents say they would bike more if it were safer to do so. 39% of Princeton High School students say they arrive by car every school day, and they clearly see the benefits of walking or biking as an alternative, but many think their route to school is unsafe. Mr. Weiss expounded on this and added that the town needs to do a better job improving bike safety and walkability in town. Chair DiFerdinando thanked him and commented on this issue.



New Business

No discussion was held.

Old Business

Chair DiFerdinando asked Mr. Grosser for an update on the Dept. of Health and Corner House working on a prevention program, regarding cannabis educational outreach in the community. He explained that the PHD needs a Health Educator, and he suggest putting forth an official proposal for this position, as it is something that the Public Health Practice Standards requires. He is in the process of drafting a request. Ms. Stilo asked about more details on hiring a full-time health educator regarding cannabis and asked to see the job description. Mr. Grosser explained it is not just for cannabis education, and further discussed the need for this position.

Chair DiFerdinando updated that someone from the community reached out to him with a lot of details on what was going on in the school district, and wanted to know if the BOH/Dept. of Health is working with the district, in regards to hiring a different counseling service to do in-school support. Another issue that came up recently is that a law was passed several years ago around the hemp industry. It created a loophole around Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol (Delta-8 THC) which is allowed to be sold, and is not regulated the same way that Delta-9 THC is sold. There are now reports of similar issues with vulnerable populations, and poison control center connections being done.

Chair DiFerdinando shared that Steve Miller, a long-time BOH and Princeton Environmental Commission member, passed away recently. He acknowledged his passing and shared memories of him. Other board members expressed their gratitude and shared memories of him. Ms. Schwimmer asked if a resolution can be done recognizing his public service, to which Chair DiFerdinando responded that he will draft something for the next meeting.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. was moved by Ms. Scwhimmer, seconded by Ms. JoAnn Hill, and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paula Alexeev
Recording Secretary
Princeton Board of Health