

Minutes
Pittsfield Board of Health
Wednesday, September 9, 2020
VIA ZOOM 980 5549-9837 6:00 PM

Present: Chairperson Alan Kulberg; Board Members: Katrina Medders, Brad Gordon, Kimberly Loring

Also Present: Health Department Director Gina Armstrong.

Convening

The meeting of the Pittsfield Board of Health was held on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, via ZOOM. Chairperson Kulberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The Board reviewed the minutes of May 6, 2020 and they have been approved.

COVID-19 Update: Gina Armstrong provided the Board with a COVID-19 update as it pertains to the City of Pittsfield. Ms. Armstrong reported that there was a recent spike with five new positive cases within the last 14 days. This spike is attributed to seasonal traveling. Ms. Armstrong noted that the quick contact tracing being done has helped to keep recent numbers low. It was further noted that Pittsfield has had a total of 222 cases, while the county has had a total of 672 cases. Dr. Kulberg noted clusters have occurred within families and are not community-wide. Ms. Armstrong notes that testing is occurring at a very good rate. Board Member Gordon inquired as to the contact tracing done when a positive test is reported. Ms. Armstrong noted that the Public Health Nurse, Kayla Donnelly-Winters has been doing the contact tracing at a rapid rate, as well as managing the nurses who are trained in contact tracing by Ms. Donnelly-Winters and that all of the nurses are doing the tracing immediately. It was noted that Ms. Donnelly-Winters has the ability to increase and decrease the team of nurses to perform contact tracing as needed. Ms. Donnelly-Winters noted that they are bringing on one more nurse at this time to be prepared in the event of an increase in cases once school starts. She further mentioned that the low numbers reflect the great work being done by all of the nurses contact tracing efforts. Ms. Armstrong noted that planning ahead is a constant, collaborative motion with Dr. Kulberg and Dr. Doyle (from Dalton), as well as other Boards of Health county wide. She notes that as things change, this collaboration only strengthens the public health response through each stage. Ms. Armstrong noted that the additional nurses are being paid through funding (\$25,000.00) received through the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission as well as CARES ACT funding in the approximate amount of \$8,500.00 with an additional \$30,000.00 anticipated. Ms. Donnelly-Winters noted that she has been working with boarding schools and Berkshire Community College to ensure they are following states guidelines and to ensure that they have a plan for addressing any outbreak and contact tracing efforts, if these things become necessary. Dr. Kulberg noted that he has working on supplying Pittsfield Public Schools with substantial guidance that is being provided to him. He further notes that there is an incredible amount of detail that went into the plan by school officials and the Board of Health. Those details include managing positive cases, tracing and education. He noted that meetings are being held with local pediatricians to address these issues and well as preparing for any potential increase in cases. He noted that detailed protocol is being prepared by himself, Ms. Armstrong and Ms. Donnelly-Winters, and that this be provided to school nurses. Dr. Kulberg stated that school nurses will be supported and prepared by the Board of Health. Ms. Armstrong noted that Berkshire Health Systems, local physicians, pediatricians have been instrumental in these COVID-19 reduction/maintenance efforts as well, specifically as things change and testing will ramp up with children returning to school. Dr. Kulberg notes that although the city may not have enough rapid

tests, they will have enough tests to effectively manage illness as it presents in the schools. Board Member Gordon inquires whether consent must be given by parents to test children and he further inquired if the Board/Department will be promoting the flu vaccine. Dr. Kulberg noted that the flu vaccine is mandatory for all kindergarten through grade 12 students, as well as all students attending colleges and universities. Dr. Kulberg noted that while there may not be enough yet, the flu vaccine should come in stages. He further noted parents will be provided with a FAQ sheet. He also noted that testing will be done in the doctors' offices, not in the schools. He noted that the state has discouraged testing in schools so that the local Boards of Health are better able to trace and help as needed. He did note, however, that flu vaccines will likely be done in school. Ms. Armstrong noted that flu vaccine clinics are in the process of being mainstreamed to help prepare for the mass vaccinations that will likely be taking place once a COVID-19 vaccination is found. Ms. Armstrong discussed re-opening guidelines and how the inspectors are attending weekly calls with the states to stay up-to-date with the constant changes. She further noted that the inspectors are providing education to establishments, constituents, employees/employers, compliance and enforcement.

Mosquito Control Update: Chris Horton of Berkshire County Mosquito Control appeared and provided the Board with an update of the 2020 mosquito season. Mr. Horton noted that they are ¾ of the way through the season, that trapping and testing are still taking place, but that things are wrapping up. He noted that there have been two rounds of larval treatments that covered key areas. He noted that numbers have been low and that this is attributed to the drought. He noted that these are the lowest numbers he has ever seen, with only about two weeks of the season left. He noted that no isolations of EEE or WNV in Pittsfield or the county have been found. He did note that there were some found in the eastern part of the state when aerial spraying occurred to address this issue. He noted that they have also worked with DPW to update them on conditions of catch basins so they can clean or repair them as necessary. He noted that they have addressed some drainage issues, as well as beaver dams. Mr. Horton noted that their trial study on the two new larval products have been hampered by the drought.

BOH Environmental Tobacco Smoke Regulations: The Board opted to pass on discussing this matter until they receive legal opinions.

Health Department Updates:

- a. Gina Armstrong reviewed the inspectors reports.
- b. Gina Armstrong noted that Councilor Helen Moon has submitted two petitions to the Public Health & Safety Committee relating to the COVID-19 Response and Opioid Intervention.
- c. Gina Armstrong informed the Board that Intern Dominic Sondrini has finished his internship with the department. She further noted that Norma Solis has retired after 15 years with the Health Department.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Board Member Gordon and seconded by Board Member Loring, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Provencher, Clerk

Documents/Materials Distributed at Meeting

- Meeting Minutes of May 6, 2020
- COVID-19 Information
- Mosquito Control Related Documents