

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING FOR THE NEWTOWN DISTRICT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2017, 3:00 P.M. NEWTOWN
MUNICIPAL CENTER, LAND USE CONFERENCE ROOM, 3 PRIMROSE STREET,
NEWTOWN, CT 06470

PRESENT: Dr. Robert Grossman, Chairman; Board Members: Dr. William Begg; Joan Crick, Herb Rosenthal, Curtis Read, Bernie Meehan; and staff Dr. Draper – Medical Advisor and Donna M. Culbert - Director of Health

I. Public Participation: No public participation.

II. Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meetings - A motion was made by Dr. Grossman to accept the minutes from the BOH meeting on December 9, 2016. Seconded by Bernie Meehan. Motion approved.

III. Reports of Officers and Director of Health

1. Update on District Activities – Ms. Culbert reviewed the Update on District Activities with the Board members. Update Report attached.

Environmental Activity

Soil Testing, Septic Repairs, Well Permits

Ms. Culbert informed the Board members that for FY 2016 soil testing and septic repairs remained about the same with an uptick in well permits due to the 2016 drought conditions.

Cedarhurst Water System

Ms. Culbert explained that the Cedarhurst Water System is a seasonal water system in the Lakeview Terrace area. Representatives from the Cedarhurst Water System were in contact with the CT Dept of Public Health to request ceasing operations, but to- date continues to operate through a contracted operator. Ms. Culbert stated that approximately 15-20 homes utilize the Cedarhurst Water System now and that the Association likely does not want Aquarion Water Company to take over because of affiliated costs. Ms. Culbert relayed that the situation is status quo right now.

Joshua Heights – Bridgewater

Ms. Culbert stated that the Joshua Heights – Bridgewater proposal remains on-going. Ms. Culbert informed the BOH members that the developer, John Carr, has received some approval from DEEP for its waste water system but that there is still work to be done regarding the water supply. Mr. Read shared with the members that the Joshua Heights proposal is requesting development of a 100 unit – 282 bedrooms development. Ms. Culbert’s review of the presented project for approval would generate 43,000 gallons per day of waste water.

Mr. Read explained that the DEEP stated that the waste water treatment is what they call an SBR (sequential batch reactor treatment plant) and will discharge into sand filters into a very rocky area, hollow soils, 3” to bedrock on top of the watershed.

Mr. Read testified that the soils were inappropriate, but the DEEP dismissed his theory. It is Mr. Read’s feeling that the DEEP has taken the position of rubberstamping affordable housing proposals and not looking at these developments in a more environmental friendly sense.

Mr. Read shared that Mr. Carr is presenting this as an application that was approved in 2003, however, the present submission is brand new and different and the 2003 application has expired. Ms. Culbert noted that the site itself is not doing wastewater renovation through the SBR as presented and that DPH does consider this a new project. Mr. Read and Ms. Culbert agreed that this project remains on-going.

Substance Abuse and Opioids

Ms. Culbert shared with the BOH members that she is Co-Chair of the Newtown Prevention Council. She explained that the NPC efforts remain ongoing with a special focus on Narcan and/or Narloxon training for people that overdose,

Bernie Meehan informed the Board members that he had been at a recent seminar/training where he met Peter Volkman, Police Chief, in Chatham, NY. Chief Volkman shared with Mr. Meehan that they saw a pattern where EMS and/or the ER saved addicts from overdoses through the use of Narcan and then discharged them back into the community only to relapse and use gain. Chief Volkman stated that in an effort to somewhat manage this crisis, if an addict presents to the PD asking for help, they will not release them into the community until a rehab bed is found for them. Mr. Volkman stated that these efforts have served over 100 people to date.

Dr. Begg noted that he is part of many committees that share the same goal of substance/opioid abuse treatment and prevention. Dr. Begg stated that the opioid abuse topic remains a high priority and that the ER will not discharge a patient until some kind of exit strategy is in place. Dr. Begg added that there has been a three- fold increase in overdose deaths with the introduction of synthetic heroin.

Mr. Rosenthal asked Dr. Begg if he thought that it made users more careless because they know that there is a drug out there that will help save them. Dr. Begg replied that it doesn’t solve the problem, just maybe prolongs it. Dr. Begg added that Narcan is helpful, but just buying time.

Mr. Meehan shared his own experiences on the job and stated that the substance abuse/opioid problem is exacerbated by Carfentanyl, an opioid substance that is much more powerful than heroin. Mr. Meehan added that EMS are concerned about aerosol inhalation and being affected by it.

Mr. Meehan and Dr. Begg shared that State responders as well as emergency room personnel have upped the dosages for Narcan because of the severity of the drug Carfentanyl. Dr. Draper asked how it was administered. Mr. Meehan responded intranasal. Dr. Begg added that it may also be given by IV.

Discussion among Board member about the prevalence of the opioid situation. Dr. Begg noted that many people become addicted through the use of narcotics for a medical issue with a prescription as well as using recreationally.

Mr. Rosenthal asked if administering Narcan was a temptation for users to go back and abuse opioids. Dr. Begg replied that when Narcan is administered, the individual is put into narcotic withdrawal and is tempted to go back to using as a result. Dr. Begg noted that the withdrawal can be so severe that they can put themselves and staff at risk.

Ms. Culbert shared with BOH members that she is on an ad-hoc committee with the CT Association of Directors of Health (CADH) to see how they can make a difference. Dr. Rostenberg, with Dr. Draper's assistance, recently spoke with CADH. Dr. Rostenberg is on the Housatonic Valley Council Against Substance Abuse (HVCASA) regional prevention council, which helps support all of the local prevention councils in our area. Dr. Rostenberg wanted to speak with area Health Directors and share scientific data that looks at what works and what doesn't work.

Ms. Culbert has attended two City of Waterbury opioid task force meetings. This task force is looking for partners for a Memorandum of Understanding to help share current street data. Ms. Culbert has presented this request to the Newtown Police Chief and EMS chief for their input. It would require their buy-in cooperation to make this effort work.

Mr. Read asked what was being done in the schools as far as substance abuse education is concerned. Ms. Culbert stated that it continues to be given to age-appropriate students and she was unsure if there has been any updating. Mr. Read suggested that the opioid problem and Narcan information would be a good topic for high-school students. Ms. Culbert noted that there are opportunities for both students at school related presentations and evening forums for parents for education purposes.

Ms., Culbert stated that a drug and alcohol survey was recently given to students in grades 7-12 in Newtown. Evaluators are pulling this data together now.

It was suggested that a school rep to come to the next BOH meeting. Board members were in agreement.

Health Needs Assessment

Ms. Culbert informed the BOH members that she is on the subcommittee for chronic disease prevention through the Regional Y in Brookfield. Ms. Culbert explained that her efforts have focused on cardiovascular disease prevention and diabetes.

Know Your Numbers screenings in different places are taking place and a Diabetes prevention coach through the Regional Y is being utilized. Dr. Begg asked who would be able to utilize these programs. Ms. Culbert responded residents of the Danbury Hospital and New Milford Hospital catchment areas.

Health Promotions

Health promotion efforts at the Newtown Municipal Center are done on a monthly basis. Maureen, with the assistance of District staff, presents different topics and displays each month.

Lyme Disease and Tickborne Disease Prevention

Ms. Culbert stated that the Newtown Board of Selectman approved a contract with a marketing firm to help spread the message about Lyme Disease and Tickborne Disease prevention. Ms. Culbert noted that rather than being all about the science of tickborne disease, the marketing campaign will focus on how to get residents to change their behavior. Ms. Culbert stated that focus groups have taken place and that she is waiting for feedback to develop a marketing plan.

Ms. Culbert noted that a higher number of ticks have been collected this year through the Health District. The CT AG Station now tests for Lyme Disease, Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis.

Dr. Begg shared that the Danbury Hospital Biobank (formerly known as the Lyme Disease Registry) is looking for more candidates. Dr. Begg explained that the reason why is that there are new opportunities for testing and that a new urine test is being implemented. He shared that two different researches are being worked on at this time.

Mental Health

Ms. Culbert explained that she continues to work with Mental Health and healthcare providers in our area, focusing on community recovery. Ms. Culbert stated that a Leadership group has recently formed, initiated by the Newtown –Sandy Hook Community Foundation and chaired by Jennifer Barahona. The group's goals are community collaboration and shared messaging.

Old Business

Ct. Dept of Public Health proposed Public Health Integration concept (proposed bill did not pass). Ms. Culbert explained that the proposed bill did not have any support at any public hearing or town hall meeting and that it ultimately did not pass. It did, however, require a great deal of effort from local public health representatives, including Ms. Culbert

New Business

Appointment of Director of Health – Mr. Meehan made a motion to appoint Donna Culbert to the position of Director of Health. Joan Crick seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Review of FY 2016-2017 Budget and Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2016

Ms. Culbert shared the Financial Statements with Independent Auditor's Report and letter of recommendations, as prepared by Nanavaty, Nanavaty and Davenport, LLP with the Board members. The letter includes recommendations to improve the system of internal control and operating efficiencies. Mr. Rosenthal stated that the auditor's suggestions are good financial practice recommendations although not necessarily requirements and that Ms. Culbert should prepare a letter of response. Mr. Rosenthal made a motion to accept the Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2016. Curtis Read seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Dr. Grossman asked if there was any further business. Hearing none, Mr. Meehan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Joan Crick seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Submitted by

Maureen Schaedler, Administrative Assistant
Donna Culbert, Director of Health