

BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

April 11, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Health of the Township of Mahwah was held via Zoom video conference. The meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM by Board of Health President, Adam Matysiak.

The Opening Statement was read according to the Sunshine Law.

PRESENT: Dr. Choi
Dr. DeMaria
Mrs. DeSilva
Ms. Esty
Mr. Harris
Mr. Matysiak
Mrs. Varrato

PROFESSIONALS: Mrs. Musella, NJDOH Health Officer Consultant
Mrs. Ruccione, Principal REHS
Mr. Mason, Board of Health Attorney
Mrs. Hagan, Recording Secretary

REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

No Report available at the time of this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 2023

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Mr. Harris and, unanimously agreed by all present to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 2023.

APPROVAL OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR MARCH 2023

Moved by Dr. DeMaria and, seconded by Mrs. Varrato to approve the Health Activities Report of March 2023.

Mrs. DeSilva queried the euthanizing of a dog involved in a bite. Mrs. Ruccione noted that this dog had been declared potentially dangerous by Tyco. This dog was involved in altercations as far back as 2017. Most recently the animal has been biting other dogs. On this occasion the owner was walking the dog on a leash when it lunged at another dog, causing severe injuries.

Mrs. Ruccione noted that a second dog was also euthanized this month at the owner's discretion. The pet bit its owner unprovoked. The family made the decision to euthanize this animal because there are young children residing in the home.

Mr. Matysiak queried the nature of a meeting with Administration to which Mrs. Ruccione replied that she had conducted an annual inspection of the commercial kitchen at the Mahwah Senior Center and deemed it unsatisfactory due to several housekeeping issues. She noted that the kitchen is utilized often by both the seniors and other groups within the Township. She advised the Business Administrator that a commercial cleaning company should be contracted to conduct a thorough cleaning either annually or semi-annually in addition to regular cleaning by the Senior Center staff.

Mr. Matyisak queried the results of the inter-departmental discussion with Property Inspector Doug Burns regarding the handling of hoarding complaints. The Health Department has investigated six hoarding complaints as of the time of this meeting and recommends that the Township implement a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and put together a task force to investigate and rectify these issues prudently and expeditiously. A follow-up meeting with the Business Administrator is scheduled for April.

It was noted that hoarding issues have become common in recent years, and there are currently 75 communities nationwide that have developed a Hoarding Task Force to include police, fire, EMS, health departments, construction officials, social services etc. Mrs. DeSilva suggested reaching out to neighboring communities to see if there is any interest in developing a regional task force. Mr. Mason noted that the County has several resources available which should be explored. While this is true, Mrs. DeSilva still feels that there should be something in-house to assist our community members in a community-minded way.

Mrs. Bolan confirmed that meeting with the Administration to develop a task force is the necessary first step. If the need for a staff social worker is deemed necessary, the Administration would present the idea to the Township Council for approval.

Dr. DeMaria made the point that often times hoarding conditions involve a pet which adds another dimension to providing assistance. Animal Control can remove any animal from a home that is deemed unsafe and unhealthy. Oftentimes, removal of a pet is the impetus for an individual to accept assistance with clean-up.

Mr. Matysiak queried the construction project at the Mahwah Municipal Pool to which Mrs. Ruccione replied that various construction projects are beginning at the Mahwah Pool to include

resurfacing the pool interior, new decking around the pool, a new sand filter and all pipes and drain lines coming from the filter tank are being replaced.

Mrs. DeSilva requested an update on the status of the new septic system at Bolla Market. Mrs. Ruccione spoke with the Project Engineer who stated that a meter must be put in place to monitor the water usage for the next three months. Mrs. Ruccione requested proof that the septic tank is currently in satisfactory condition as well as proof that the tanks are being regularly pumped and maintained.

Mrs. Ruccione stated that Township records are unclear as to whether a property has been hooked up to the sewer system. Sewer connections may be in place, but that does not indicate that the property is currently hooked up. Mr. Mason stated that a record should exist indicating whether a connection fee was ever collected from the property owner. A paper trail should also exist as to whether a septic abandonment permit was issued.

Mrs. Ruccione stated that whenever she receives a site plan from the Zoning Department, she does the research to confirm whether or not there is currently or has been a septic system on the property. When a property is under renovation or new construction is being built, that is when she would require that sewer hook-up occur.

There being no further questions or comments, the Health Activities Report for March 2023, was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORTS FOR MARCH 2023

Moved by Dr. DeMaria and, seconded by Ms. Esty and, unanimously agreed by all present to accept the Health Officer's Report for March 2023.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva, and seconded by Mrs. Varatto, and unanimously agreed by all present to pay the bills for March 2023.

REPORT OF ATTORNEY

Mr. Mason circulated materials to the Board Members regarding the duties of the Board of Health with the intent to acclimate new Board Member as to their jurisdiction. He explained that there are ten essential health services a local Board of Health should provide,

including an Emergency Preparedness Plan. In the past, the Board cooperated with the Office of Emergency Management to conduct an emergency drill with all emergency services departments to indicate the duties of each.

The Board of Health exists to establish policy with regard to the public health needs of the community in conjunction with the Health Officer and Department staff. He encouraged all the members to look through the package to better understand their authority as an autonomous Board. Mrs. Musella will also forward the link to the online certification course for Board of Health members.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence to present.

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Review proposed updates to the Board of Health Code

Mrs. Musella and Mrs. Ruccione are in the process of updating current Board of Health fees and will present a draft to the Board in the near future.

b) Discussion on return to In-Person Meetings

After a short discussion, it was unanimously decided to resume in-person meetings beginning May 2023.

GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC

No public present.

There being no further discussion, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm was made by Mrs. DeSilva, seconded by Mrs. Varatto and unanimously agreed to by all present.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023, and will be conducted in the Senior Center beginning at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hagan
Recording Secretary