

**BOARD OF HEALTH  
MINUTES  
May 11, 2021**

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 7:34 PM by Board of Health President, George Cimis.

The Opening Statement was read according to the Sunshine Law and was followed by Roll Call:

**PRESENT:** Mr. Cimis  
Dr. DeMaria  
Mrs. DeSilva  
Ms. Esty  
Mr. Matysiak

**ABSENT:** Mr. Harris

**PROFESSIONALS:** Mr. Maas, REHS  
Mr. Jeffrey Mason, Attorney  
Mrs. Kathryn Hagan, Recording Secretary  
Mrs. Joanne Wendolowski, HARP (8:15pm)

**REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE**

*[Heard out of order, after the Health Officer's Report]*

Mrs. Wendolowski reported that there have been 657 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Mahwah since January 2021, as well as an additional 266 probable cases. The number of cases in the school system has been trending downward since January with only 9 reported cases in April. Bergen County is now in the Moderate Risk [Yellow] category which allows for quarantining for 10 days without testing or 7 days if testing is conducted on day 5 or later.

The downward trend in the CALI scores allows for schools to decrease the six-foot distancing mandate and permits more students to attend in-person instruction. Recommendations for prom and graduation events have been issued by Governor Murphy.

Forty-one percent of New Jersey residents are currently vaccinated, and the Pfizer vaccine was recently approved for those individuals in the 12-15 year-old range.

Mrs. Wendolowski queried when the Mahwah Senior Activity Center will be reopening for indoor events. Mrs. Hagan informed the Board Members that the municipal building will reopen to the public beginning at 8:00am on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. A date for resuming indoor classes for seniors has not yet been established. The State is expected to issue guidelines on indoor community activities within the next few days.

Mrs. DeSilva queried when the Board of Health will resume in-person meetings. Mrs. Hagan is hopeful that meetings will resume in June. Directive from Administration indicates that once the Township Council resumes in-person sessions, all Boards and Commissions will follow suit.

Mr. Mason requested a breakdown of the 823 confirmed and probable cases with regards to hospitalizations and deaths. Mrs. Wendolowski replied that there have been no COVID-related fatalities in 2021 and no more than 10 to 12 hospitalizations. Much has been learned in the past year relating to the treatment of COVID, and the use of monoclonal antibodies has proven very effective, and has reduced the number of hospitalizations.

The largest increase in positive COVID cases has been in the 40-60 year old age range followed by school-aged children. On a positive note, there has been a significant decrease in cases at long-term care facilities.

The next step for healthcare will be to vaccinate the younger population. When the vaccine first became available, receiving an appointment for a vaccine proved challenging. Now that most eligible individuals who wanted a vaccine have received it, many clinics are now accepting walk-in patients. Vaccines are readily available at this time.

Mrs. DeSilva queried whether vaccine is being wasted due to a lack of demand. Mrs. Wendolowski stated that HARP has not yet needed to discard any vaccine. If they are hosting a clinic and have any available doses that must be used in a timely manner, they will solicit participants via the local police or a public service announcement.

Mr. Cimis inquired as to the goal of the vaccine (i.e. to flatten the curve so as not to overburden the healthcare system.) Mrs. Wendolowski confirmed that this has always been the primary goal along with decreasing the number of fatalities and the ability to resume some of our pre-COVID activities. It is expected that a booster vaccine will be necessary, and there is hope that an oral medication for the treatment of COVID will be available at some point.

The make-up of the COVID-19 virus gives it a greater capacity to mutate. The new strains have been more virulent causing greater morbidity than the influenza virus. We will need to continue to be diligent with protection protocols for some time moving forward.

**APPROVAL OF APRIL 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Dr. DeMaria and, unanimously agreed by all present to approve the April 2021 Meeting Minutes.

**APPROVAL OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR APRIL 2021**

Moved by Mr. Matysiak and, seconded by Mrs. DeSilva to approve the Health Activities Report for April 2021.

Mrs. DeSilva requested pertinent information regarding the 33 recall notifications on page 5 of the report. Mr. Maas replied that most of these were related to prescription medications and medical equipment (i.e. syringes). There were some hand sanitizer recalls; others were food related. Often these recalls concern products manufactured outside the United States which manage to bypass FDA approval and make it to market. The State sends the recall notices to the local health departments and indicates whether action needs to be taken at the local level.

Mrs. DeSilva queried the reason for the Conditional rating of Sushigo on April 12<sup>th</sup>. This inspection was conducted by Mrs. Homler with assistance from Mr. Maas. Violations included unclean and unsanitary conditions, unlabeled food containers, lack of sanitizing of equipment, poor housekeeping, etc. He did indicate that temperatures of the food were within acceptable range.

Mr. Matysiak queried the nature of the insect complaint on page 7. Mr. Maas received this complaint from a tenant who indicated her apartment had an infestation of ants. Upon investigation, Mr. Maas did not find any ants and will abate this complaint in the near future.

Mr. Matysiak expressed interest in the webinar viewed by Mrs. Homler and Mr. Maas entitled "COVID & Changes in Restaurant Food Safety." Mr. Maas indicated this presentation reviewed the changes in

restaurant protocols over the past year (i.e. mask wearing, distancing, maximum occupancy, holding temperatures, cross contamination, etc.) The course provided 1.5 CEU's. Mr. Maas confirmed that currently eight applications have been approved for outdoor dining. The six foot distancing requirement between tables is enforced. Upon approval from the Health Department, Building Department and Fire Prevention, the application is approved by the Zoning Department.

Mr. Matysiak queried why there is a pending violation from October. Mr. Maas indicated that upon release of her dog from quarantine after a bite incident, the defendant failed to provide a copy of the signed release paperwork. After several attempts to obtain the document, Mrs. Homler was compelled to issue a summons. The defendant has failed to appear in court on several occasions. Mr. Mason suggested that a bench warrant may have already been issued by the court after the second failure to appear. Should the defendant be pulled over for a traffic violation or be involved in an automobile accident, she could potentially be arrested and required to post bond.

Mr. Matysiak queried the protocol for clearing a dog from quarantine and how this pertained to the recent dog bite resulting in a dismemberment of the victim's thumb. Dr. DeMaria indicated the purpose of the quarantine is to view the animal for a 10-day period watching for signs and symptoms of rabies. Upon completion of the quarantine, the animal is deemed to be rabies free and released.

Mr. Mason clarified the circumstances surrounding the bite which involved the animal being removed from Mahwah before any notification of the incident was ever received.

Mrs. Hagan noted that Mrs. Behre had sent a certified letter to the principals of Eleventh Hour Rescue who currently has possession of the animal. In it she called for the extradition of the dog, Allamo, back to Mahwah for holding at Tyco's facility until a hearing is heard in Mahwah Municipal Court regarding the danger this dog poses.

Mrs. Hagan confirmed there have been several OPRA Requests from the victim and an attorney requesting copies of all correspondence and information relating to this bite. Therefore, it is imperative for Mahwah to do its due diligence while there is pending litigation.

Mr. Matysiak queried what liability falls upon the veterinarian who ultimately releases the animal from quarantine. Mr. Mason explained that the animal will be released back to its owner (i.e. Eleventh Hour Rescue) who then resumes responsibility for the animal.

Mr. Cimis requested information from Dr. DeMaria regarding the role of the veterinarian in dog bite incidents. Dr. DeMaria stated that the sole role of the vet is to sign off that the animal shows no obvious neurologic signs of rabies infection. Regarding the aggressiveness and/or behavior of the dog, a Certified Veterinarian Behaviorist may be consulted.

Mr. Matysiak questioned whether a dog would be immediately euthanized after a bite involving serious injury. Dr. DeMaria stated that euthanization may occur upon completion of the 10-day quarantine. If the animal is euthanized immediately, it must then be prepped and sent to a certified lab for possible rabies infection. Absent proof that the animal did not have a rabies infection, bite victims need to undergo rabies prophylaxis treatment.

Dr. DeMaria stated that dealing with dogs from any rescue organization presents a challenge. Most of these animals do not come with a history report, and the onus is on the rescue organization to evaluate the animal's temperament and suitability to be placed in an adoption situation. There is no protocol in place to track these animals as they move between jurisdictions and across State lines. Veterinarians cannot require an animal be put down; they can only make a recommendation. It is ultimately the responsibility of the owner to make such a decision.

Mr. Cimis requested Mr. Mason to compose a letter to the Randolph Health Department informing them of the seriousness of this incident and that the responsibility for the whereabouts of this animal now lies within their jurisdiction. Mrs. Hagan explained that Mrs. Behre has been in communication with the Randolph Health Officer who is insistent that the responsibility belongs to Mahwah since the bite occurred in this jurisdiction. It is because of this conversation that Mrs. Behre composed the letter requesting the return of the dog to Mahwah.

Mr. Mason will compose a letter to the Randolph Health Department and attach a copy of the bite report showing the extent of the injuries as well as a chronology of the steps that have been taken so far regarding this investigation.

There being no further questions or discussion, the Health Activities Report for April 2021 was unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT FOR APRIL 2021**

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Mr. Matysiak to approve the Health Officer's Report for April 2021.

There being no further questions or comments, the Health Officer's Report was unanimously approved.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, and seconded by Ms. Esty and, unanimously agreed to by all to pay the bills for April 2021.

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

None presented.

**REPORT OF ATTORNEY**

Mr. Mason reviewed a Tenant Application for a Micro Blading/Eyelash Salon. Upon reviewing the Board of Health ordinance regarding tattooing and tattoo parlors, it appears that this application contradicts the current ordinance.

Unless this activity is to be performed by a medical doctor in conjunction with medical treatment, it would not be a permitted activity and the current application should be rejected.

Mr. Maas will deny the application and inform the applicant and their representative.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None to present.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**a) Board of Health Mission Statement**

Mr. Cimis stated this is continuing to be fine-tuned and a draft to the Board Members is expected to be available for discussion at the June meeting.

**b) Board position vacancy and potential candidate**

Discussion was deferred.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public present.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm was made by Dr. DeMaria and, seconded by Mrs. DeSilva and, unanimously agreed to by all present.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2021, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hagan  
Recording Secretary