

**BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
June 8, 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 7:35 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
Mrs. DeSilva
Ms. Esty
Mr. Harris
Mr. Matysiak

ABSENT: Dr. DeMaria

PROFESSIONALS: Mrs. Gina Behre, Health Officer
Mrs. Diane Homler, Principle REHS
Mr. Maas, REHS
Mr. Jeffrey Mason, Attorney
Mrs. Kathryn Hagan, Recording Secretary
Mrs. Joanne Wendolowski, HARP

REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

Mrs. Wendolowski was pleased to report that only one COVID investigation was conducted during the month of June. For the year 2021, Mahwah has had 677 confirmed cases, 265 probable cases and zero deaths reported. There has been one school-related outbreak related to a sports team which was resolved within a 28-day window. Approximately 60 consultations took place between HARP and the school system to provide updated guidance information.

HARP attended the reopening of Mahwah's Senior Center on June 7th to provide blood pressure screenings and aromatherapy information. Cooperatively with Mahwah's Senior Center, HARP plans to host an 8-week program entitled "Matter of Balance." This program addresses topics such as fall prevention, balance and flexibility to assist individuals in regaining mobility and resuming participation in a regular exercise routine.

Also, in collaboration with the Senior Center, HARP will be offering a nutrition program to include some basic cooking classics for seniors.

Mrs. Wendolowski informed the Board that HARP would like to host a class open to the public entitled "Hands Only CPR." For every second that chest compressions are delayed, the survival rate for the victim decreases by 10 percent. Each individual that participates in the program will receive a Certificate of Completion from the American Heart Association as well as a training kit to include an instructional video (available in English or Spanish) and a CPR module. If there are other organizations in town that might have an interest in offering this type of training, HARP will be happy to schedule a clinic separately. Participants must be at least 13 years of age. Mrs. Wendolowski will forward a flyer with information about this program to Mrs. Campbell.

Mr. Cimis queried why there is still a moderate COVID risk-level statewide as of the end of May. Mrs. Wendolowski replied that the information provided by the State is categorized by region. The northwest portion of the state includes Bergen, Passaic and Essex counties. While Bergen County may have a lower positivity score, the other areas may still be experiencing higher numbers. All three counties must show lower numbers for the Northwest region to register a lower risk level.

Mr. Cimis is concerned that there may be a lack of businesses and public bathing facilities operating if the CALI report is used as a barometer for reopening. Mrs. Behre expressed that the 2021 guidance from the State was delayed; and when the local Health Departments initially received it, restrictions were more stringent. The State quickly adjusted the requirements placed on public bathing facilities, and stipulations became less restrictive. Public swimming facilities may reopen; the decision not to open a pool at a private community is solely the prerogative of the Association's governing body.

Mr. Cimis would like to see a directive issued from a public health authority informing businesses that it is safe to reopen and to continue to resume a sense of normality.

Both Mrs. Wendolowski and Mrs. Behre felt that the message to resume to "normal" is slowly trickling down; however, after a year of following strict quarantine directives, the public is still hesitant to adopt a business-as-usual attitude.

Mr. Mason wished confirmation as to how many of the 677 confirmed cases were hospitalized. Mrs. Wendolowski indicated that the

current system for tracking cases does not allow for distinguishing hospitalizations, and the 677 number is based on those with a confirmed PCR test. The 265 probable cases were individuals who had a positive antigen test. It is expected that if these individuals were also symptomatic, it likely they were actual COVID cases.

When time allows, Mr. Mason would like HARP to try to gather the hospitalization statistics to provide the Board with a clearer picture as to the effects of COVID over the past year. Mrs. Wendolowski will assign a member of the HARP team to analyze the data and report back to the Board at a later time. She did indicate that hospitalizations dropped dramatically in January with the use of antibody testing and monoclonal antibody treatment.

Mr. Matysiak stated that changes are coming slowly as the community adapts to resumption of normal activities. He noted that Betsy Ross School is cautiously lifting the mask mandates. Currently, students may have lunch one day per week without a mask, occasional classes are taking place outdoors without masks, and bus drivers are no longer required to wear masks while transporting students.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, seconded by Mr. Matysiak and, unanimously agreed by all present to approve the May 2021 Meeting Minutes.

APPROVAL OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR MAY 2021

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

Mrs. DeSilva queried the site plan review conducted by Mr. Maas on May 25th. Mr. Maas stated that the review was of an irregular shaped property with an existing home and a large detached garage. The homeowners would like to convert the garage to a new home and tear down the existing home. Mr. Maas confirmed that no septic systems or wells are present on the property, and the application was approved.

Mr. Cimis queried the nature of the communicable disease investigations conducted during the month of May. Mrs. Homler indicated that each of these were COVID consultations with either business owners or employees wishing to know the updated COVID requirements for conducting business in the community.

Mr. Cimis queried the nature of the organism causing a bacteriologically unsatisfactory water report. Mr. Maas indicated that testing of pool water is conducted for total coliform which must be absent (below 1 organism per 100ml) and heterotrophic plate count which must be below 200 organisms per ml to receive a satisfactory report. The exact organism is unknown.

Mr. Cimis requested further details on the dog bite investigations on page 4. Mrs. Homler stated that none of the bites were of a serious nature. One animal nipped its owner and another nipped a fire fighter as he was gaining entry into a home. Both dogs have been released from quarantine. The third bite occurred to a resident bitten by a raccoon in a garbage can. The victim has received post exposure treatment. The bite referral to another jurisdiction was to a Mahwah resident bitten by a dog residing in Rockland County. The Rockland County Health Department is monitoring that animal's quarantine status and will report back to Mahwah upon release of the animal from quarantine. The quarantine release was a case involving a Mahwah boy bitten by a Florida dog, and the release notice was forwarded to us by the authorities in Florida.

Mr. Cimis queried the significance of the product recall reviews. Mr. Maas stated these recalls included some mislabeling of food, undeclared allergens, and medical device recalls. The State did not require any additional action from the local health departments.

Mr. Cimis queried whether the communicable disease complaints pertained to COVID. Mr. Maas and Mrs. Homler replied affirmatively.

Mr. Cimis inquired as to the nature of the information provided in the "Legalization of Cannabis" seminar offered by the Mahwah Municipal Alliance on May 17th. Mrs. Homler stated that the data relating to potency of the current marijuana supply vs. marijuana of twenty years ago was addressed. Random testing has indicated that THC levels have risen and CBD levels have decreased. Information was provided regarding the effects of legalization in other States along with effects on the adolescent brain and adolescent behavior.

Mrs. Homler stated that the Township Council will be holding a special meeting on June 9th to discuss the legalization of cannabis and how Mahwah will address this issue moving forward.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Behre, Mr. Maas reviewed the pool opening information on page 2 of the report. During the month of May, the Health Department approved 7 recreational bathing facilities to open for Memorial Day weekend.

These included the following:

- Mahwah Municipal Pool (3)
- Apple Ridge (1)
- Indian Field (1)
- Homewood Suites (1)
- Ramapo Ridge (2)
- Ramapo Gardens (1)
- Brookside Lake (1)

Mr. Matysiak queried the status of two summonses issued to Alexis Amoratis, dating back to January. On several occasions the defendant has failed to appear in court. Mrs. Homler stated there is another court appearance scheduled, and she will update the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Cimis queried the status of the summons issued to Michael Cabibo, whose dog severely bit and injured an individual. Mrs. Homler stated that this summons was issued for harboring an unlicensed animal. Mr. Cabibo pled guilty and paid the fine and court costs.

Mr. Cimis requested an update on any possible pending litigation involving Mahwah with regard to this serious incident. Mrs. Behre directed Ms. Tyler to reach out to the rescue organization (who is currently in possession of the animal), but Ms. Tyler has been unable to make contact. She is seeking further guidance from the State to determine what authority Mahwah has in gaining control over custody of this animal.

Mr. Mason is unsure what complaints may have been filed by the victim in court and what, if any, summonses were issued by the Mahwah Police. At this time, the dog is harbored at the rescue facility in Randolph, NJ, and Mahwah has no jurisdiction, nor the ability to demand return of the dog without legal documentation to support such return.

Mr. Matysiak believes Mahwah's responsibility is to make sure that the Randolph Health Department is fully aware of the serious nature of this bite, and that Randolph's Health Department and Animal Control Officer should declare the animal potentially dangerous. Mr. Mason agreed the Board has acted with due diligence up to this point, and liability moving forward now lies with Randolph.

Mr. Cimis is concerned as to what caused the breakdown in communication between the hospital and the local health department.

The victim went first to Valley Hospital ER and was transported by ambulance to HUMC. Neither facility notified the Health Department of this bite so that an investigation could be conducted in a timely manner.

Mr. Matysiak clarified that when a victim comes through the hospital emergency room, their information is immediately entered into the electronic medical records system (EMR). If the cause of the injury is a dog bite, a report is automatically generated and sent to the local health department for follow up. He believes there should be follow up with the Directors at both ER facilities to determine what caused the delay and to make sure staff records a dual diagnosis when the injury is caused by a dog bite.

Mr. Mason queried whether rescue organizations inform foster families of the obligation to license any animals that are being kept for more 10 days. Mrs. Homler stated that she does not believe this is occurring. She will forward the information from the State which she found indicating that there is no State requirement for fosters to license any animals in their possession.

Mrs. Behre will forward information from the State Health Department outlining protocols that must be adhered to by rescue organizations in order to become licensed.

Mr. Mason suggested meeting with Mrs. Behre and Mrs. Homler to further discuss the responsibilities of rescue organizations and will report back to the Board at next meeting.

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

APPROVAL OF HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT FOR MAY 2021

Moved by Mr. Matysiak and, seconded by Mr. Harris to approve the Health Officer's Report for May 2021.

Mrs. Behre reported that NWRHC has partnered with New Bridge Medical Center to locate and administer vaccines to homebound residents.

Mr. Cimis asked that Mr. Maas send him updates regarding the State Bathing Code and to forward him the information Mahwah sent to our public bathing facilities. Mr. Maas will follow up with Mrs. Homler and Mrs. Campbell to provide that information.

Mr. Matysiak queried what is involved in abandoning a septic. Mr. Maas replied a permit is required to abandon a septic system. He first reviews a written plan provided by the contractor and then visits the site to witness the work being completed. Mrs. Behre stated that her consultation with Mr. Maas was to review these procedures so that she could have a better understanding as to what is involved.

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Moved by Mrs. DeSilva and, and seconded by Mr. Harris and, unanimously agreed to by all to pay the bills for May 2021.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None presented.

REPORT OF ATTORNEY

Mr. Mason reviewed the tenant application for the microblading facility. Such a facility is not permitted by Mahwah Ordinance. Mr. Maas advised the applicant and the Building Department that the Health Department would reconsider this application if amended to state that a medical doctor would perform the microblading. At this time, a revised tenant application has not been received.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Hagan presented a letter to the Board from Mrs. Homler stating that she will be retiring beginning August 1, 2021. Mrs. Homler thanked the Board for all their hard work and support over her 30-year career with the Township of Mahwah. The Board members applauded Mrs. Homler for her diligence and dedication to the residents of Mahwah.

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Board of Health Mission Statement

Four potential options were presented, and Option A was selected by a majority vote from members DeSilva, Harris and Matysiak. The Mission Statement will read as follows:

"To protect the health of our community by developing effective Public Health Policies that prevent disease and promote healthy choices and lifestyles by offering a range of public health education programs and services, and by effectively and consistently enforcing the New Jersey Public Health Practice Standards".

b) Board position vacancy and potential candidate

Mrs. Hagan detailed the background of the candidate, Christy Varrato, a Registered Nurse, and suggested that Mr. Cimis reach out to Mrs. Campbell who can assist him in coordinating a meeting space and time for the interview.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public present.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 pm was made by Dr. DeMaria and, seconded by Ms. Esty and, unanimously agreed to by all present.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2021, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hagan
Recording Secretary