



TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

REVISED MEETING MINUTES September 19, 2024

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Attended In Person):

T. Hills, DVM, President
W. Simmons, Vice President
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP (Departed at 8:12 a.m.)
T. Nytch, DVM
W. Standinger III, Legislator
T. Leary, FNP
R. Kapur-Pado, DO (Arrived at 7:36 a.m.)

ABSENT:

None

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
A. Reigelman, Secretary
S. Medina Deputy Public Health Director (Departed at 8:30)
D. McCann, Director of Administrative Services (Departed at 8:52)
D. Scherrer, Environmental Health Director (Departed at 8:52)
P. DeWind Esq., County Attorney (Arrived at 7:37 a.m.)
G. Howard, Tioga County Sheriff (Arrived at 7:36 a.m., Departed at 8:12 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER: at 7:30 a.m. by Dr. Hills.

Dr. Hills motioned to change the order of the agenda to discuss the Tioga Castings property first, then proceed with the rest of the agenda items in order as listed. No discussion; motion to approve the change to the Board of Health agenda of September 19, 2024, made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Legislator Standinger, all were in favor, none opposed; motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Tioga Casting Property- Ms. Vroman provided update. Have had additional meetings with stakeholders and have drafted a Public Health Order and Notice of Violation to the property owner on record. Per regulations, have to notify New York State Commissioner of Public Health if issuing a Public Health Order. New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) also recommended notifying the associate commissioner of public health for our region (Deputy State Commissioner). Gave her a brief of the situation and upon her recommendation also drafted a written statement of the situation as well. Stated that she would escalate to the New York State Commissioner. She also inquired what Tioga County Public Health has asked of the State for this. Stated that this is just to inform New York State, possibly receive additional legal counsel in the matter. Received call back from the Regional Commissioner earlier this week who stated that New York State was in agreement with the current steps being taken but will not provide legal consultation.

Have been working closely with County Attorney DeWind on the Notice of Violation. Was served to the property owner on record this week. The property owner on record called immediately and claimed no ownership ties to the property. Notified Legislative Chair and County Attorney DeWind of the call. County Attorney DeWind can provide follow up after his conversation with the property owner on record. The Notice of Violation was distributed to the Board of Health for reference and provided summary of violations listed. Have to wait five days (after issuing the Notice of Violation) prior to issuing the Public Health Order. Order has been drafted (copy distributed to Board members). County Attorney DeWind and Dr. Hills have reviewed. Anticipation is to have both Dr.

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Hills and Ms. Vroman sign the document. It is tentatively planned to issue the order on Tuesday September 24th, bringing it as a group [all stakeholders], offer resources and a list of services. Per the Order, they will have 24 hours to leave the property. The property will then be placarded, and it will be a criminal offense to remove. Some of the individuals are anticipated to leave willingly, others will refuse. 24 hours after issuing the order Tioga County Sheriff's and Owego Police Department will assist in enforcing the Order; first-time violations of fines then could lead to misdemeanors if two or more violations. Second step is to keep individuals off of the property.

- Mr. Simmons expressed concern for appropriate entities leading enforcement efforts. Ms. Vroman/ County Attorney DeWind/ Sheriff Howard all expressed that this would be a collaborative effort and have been working together in this entire process so far.
- Dr. Nytch inquired of the status of the Village of Owego taking ownership of the property. County Attorney DeWind stated that he had a great conversation with the property owner on record. The property owner would like to see something happen, but does not feel entitled. They believe they have no legal ownership of the property, as they stated their name does not show up on any State documentation. However, County Attorney DeWind informed them otherwise. Has questionable relationship with the corporation currently. Village of Owego does have hesitations on taking ownership.
- Sheriff Howard stated that he had deputies do a walk-through of the encampment and also talked with Village Code Enforcement to discuss clean up. Saw 12 to 14 active sites, about as many inactive sites. Willing to do what we can following the lead of County Attorney DeWind. Ms. Vroman noted that after seeing the video of the walk-through, the property has gotten significantly worse in this five-month period.
 - Inquiry of history of violence in the encampment. No real complaints of violence occurring.
 - County Attorney DeWind stated that enforcement could be problematic as it is a good opportunity for it to get litigious.
- Housing is being offered through Department of Social Services. A resource guide will also be distributed along with Mental Health and substance use resources.
- Upon issuance of the order will work with media to message to come from perspective of a health concern.
- Will be offering an Administrative Hearing-felt it would be appropriate to offer due process, for owner of record and any occupants of the property to voice their opinions and be heard. It is scheduled for October 8, 2024. Board of Health is welcome to attend. We have a contracted hearing officer, waiting to hear back if he can attend.
- Ms. Vroman stated that Owego Police Department has indicated that they may have specific names of some individuals occupying the property, once received will include these names on the Public Health Order as well as "all other occupants."
- Dr. Hills entertained motion to accept the Public Health Order as written and to include stated additional names; no discussion; motion to approve the Public Health Order made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Kapur-Pado, all were in favor, none opposed; motion approved.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that a final copy of the signed order will be sent to the Board of Health for reference. She appreciates everyone's support (Board of Health, County Attorney DeWind, Sheriff Howard, and staff).
 - Additional discussion of safety while at the property as well as current messaging occurring about property on social media.
- Meeting Minutes (July and August): No discussion; motion to approve prior minutes made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Nytch, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Discussion of River Rock Diner violations.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Tioga County Public Health Audit Summary, Quarter 2 of 2024 shared by Ms. Medina. 127 records were audited this quarter, including clinic records and other programs. Preschool was a new addition this quarter. We are streamlining processes and revising forms. Overall, audits were very good/complete. A change of process for food program was noted during the audit, to make



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sure to inspect establishments later in the day, to inspect more realistically when they are open/working. 23 satisfaction surveys were received, all good feedback (use of both paper and electronic surveys). No patient complaints or sharps injuries this quarter. Quality Improvement Projects include Animal Bite Investigations (monitoring updates that have been made to the program) and Environmental Health permits (making forms electronic with the option for electronic payment for convenience).

- Discussion of electronic payment system (Municipipay) and fees of use.
- Ms. Leary additionally thanked Mr. Scherrer for his assistance with a recent bat found in their home.
- Board members thanked Ms. Medina for sharing.
- Environmental Health Fee Schedule- Ms. Vroman noted that the fee schedule was previously in the Sanitary Code but was removed in the recent amendment. Briefly discussed how revisions were developed by formula. Mr. McCann stated that the department had to have a cost basis in order to revise fee amounts. A few fees are set by New York State (tanning/Weights & Measures). Reviewed surrounding/comparable County fee schedules while revising. The last time the fee schedule was updated was in 2002. Because of efficiencies now, fees are very close to what was previously listed. Also, removed fee for Food Course to eliminate any barrier for people to take it. A full record of how changes were determined is kept within the department. Ms. Vroman stated that once Board of Health approves the fee schedule, it will have to be written into local law which requires scheduling a public hearing.
 - Discussed requirements of mass gatherings (5,000 or more people gathered for more than 24 hours); differences between locally held festivals and mass gatherings.
 - Dr. Hills entertained motion to approve the fee schedule as written; no further discussion, motion to approve the Tioga County Environmental Health Fee Schedule made by Dr. Nytch; seconded by Mr. Simmons, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that she will work with County Attorney DeWind and Legislative Office to have this approved/established in local law by the beginning of 2025. Will inform the Board of Health of the public hearing when it is scheduled.
- Slate of Officers 2025-2026- Recommendations/nominations were made by members for a slate of officers to serve for a two-year term. Dr. Hills and Mr. Simmons noted that they were still interested in serving as officers. Dr. Hills nominated Dr. Nytch for either officer position as well as Dr. Raftis for either officer position. Official vote to occur at the October Meeting.
- Membership Reappointment Recommendation (Legislator Standinger and Dr. Raftis)- All members present were in agreement to recommend Legislator Standinger and Dr. Raftis for another Board of Health term. No discussion; motion to approve this recommendation made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Nytch, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.

INFORMATIONAL:

- Board of Health Credentialing Committee approved the recredentialing application for Dr. Sarnicola for another two-year period.
- October 23, 2024, the County will be having a Working on Wellness (WOW) Day. Public Health has taken over the event. It will be 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Will have some outside vendors coming in to boost employee morale (flavored water flights, companion animals). Will be offering flu shots also (by appointment). Board members are welcome to attend.
- Staffing Update:
 - Hired new Public Health Technician, starting September 23rd.
 - Posting for a Public Health Sanitarian. Will be responsible for lead and rabies program.
 - Posted this week for a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator- realized this needs to be a full-time role. Will be Management Confidential.
 - Positions have been budgeted for and approved.
- All Public Health staff have been FIT Tested with N95 masks in case of an emergency.
- The department did tabling at Sundaes at the Farm, Catholic Charities Backpack Giveaway and Tioga County Fair.

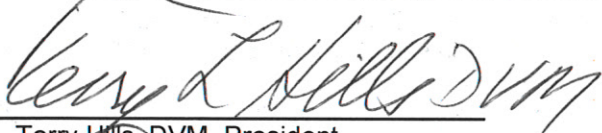


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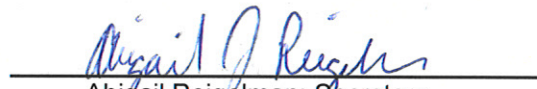
- Dental Van is in transition to a new software program (Cradlepoint); relying on Tioga County IT department in installation.
 - Members inquired if the dental unit's time spent in Richford was successful. Ms. Vroman stated that a lot of extra outreach was done in northern part of the County, but did not have a huge turnout. Members discussed the northern Tioga County community and feelings on healthcare; also discussed the Dental Van sliding fee schedule.
- Ms. Vroman gave appreciation for Ms. Reigelman's work in several policy manual updates. Board members commended her work.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.



Terry Hills, DVM, President



Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved October 17, 2024