



TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES September 21, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (All Attended In Person):

T. Hills, DVM, President
W. Simmons, Vice President
R. Kapur-Pado, DO (Arrived at 7:42 a.m.)
T. Nytych, DVM
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP
W. Standinger III, Legislator

ABSENT:

T. Leary, FNP

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
A. Reigelman, Secretary
P. DeWind, Esq., County Attorney (Arrived at 7:36 a.m.)

GUESTS:

Kelly Kelley, Principal Welfare Examiner, Temporary Assistance/Employment Unit, Tioga County
Department of Social Services (Departed at 8:19 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER: at 7:34 by Dr. Hills

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST: by Ms. Vroman

PRESENTATION:

- Overview of homeless population and housing shortage in Tioga County. Highlighted some of the larger questions/ concerns that usually get asked:
 - How much of a problem is homelessness in Tioga County?
 - At this point, housing only 6 individuals, but by winter could have more. Provided statistics from 2018 to now, seeing a definite increase each year; from 41 people in 2018 to over 100 in 2022.
 - Typically, single men; some women and children.
 - Continue to look for transitional housing that can assist; utilize homeless shelter in Broome County, and local Tioga County hotels, but are in need of more options.
 - Why do people become homeless?
 - Different reasons: mental health, drugs/alcohol, burned bridges, domestic violence, etc.
 - Most do not want help.
 - What happens when the homeless come to us?
 - Screen for assistance, let them know services that can be offered and refer individuals to various programs/ establishments that can assist.
 - Have to be residents of Tioga County to be able to help.
 - Most are resistant to help, do not want to leave Tioga County (if referred to homeless shelter) and do not want programmatic help with drug/alcohol rehabilitation.
 - How do we solve the problem of homelessness?
 - It will never go away, do not foresee a fix. Definitely need more affordable housing/transitional housing options, which Tioga County Department of Social Services is trying to assist with.

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- Open discussion among Board members and Ms. Kelley regarding:
 - Organizations that can help (Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, A New Hope Center, Renovation House, A Place Called Home, etc.).
 - Homeless who live in vehicles.
 - Ms. Kelley's visit to the encampment in Owego.
 - By supporting are we enabling?
 - Collaboration with other Counties?
 - Migrant assistance.
 - Fiscal responsibility for low-cost housing in Tioga County.
 - How can the Board of Health/Public Health help with this issue?
 - Ms. Kelley asked to refer people to Tioga County Department of Social Services to be able identify/ refer to helpful services.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes: No discussion; motion to approve prior minutes made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Kapur-Pado, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Ms. Vroman noted that enforcements covered two months' worth and highlighted that two stemmed from complaints that Environmental Health followed up on.
 - Discussion of enforcements/citations process; two food courses that Tioga County establishments are required to complete.
 - Can view establishment violations on New York State website. (Ms. Vroman to send the Board the electronic link)

NEW BUSINESS:

- Quarter's one and two Audit Summary: Dr. Kapur-Pado provided the Board with concise summary of the internal chart audit review of public health programs that took place July 28, 2023.
 - Explained that chart audits have not occurred in 5 years, trying to catch up (that is why quarters one and two were completed at this time).
 - 10% of charts were audited by department heads of programs for:
 - Immunization program, STD clinic, Lead Poisoning Prevention program, Dental program, Food program, Animal bite investigations, and Early Intervention
 - Not many deficits found at this time; need to update chart audit tools to more accurately capture programs.
- Ms. Vroman added that at this audit review, all audit summaries had noted "no corrective actions," but going forward will have corrective action plans in place if problems are found.
- Next Audit Review to be in November 2023.
- Dr. Nytech inquired if the State is happy thus far. Ms. Vroman responded that nothing more has come from the State at this time.

INFORMATIONAL:

- Ms. Vroman stated that she plans to have a more consistent update approach for Board of Health meetings, broken into:
 - Public Health News:
 - Uptick in COVID cases; 100 in August, 137 in September. Have not received any directives from the State. COVID has been removed from the Communicable Disease Red Phone list (as a communicable disease that needs to be reported immediately).
 - New COVID vaccine is coming out, have put in an order for VFC program hopefully to receive by end of month or October.
 - Will continue to monitor.
 - Numbers from positive lab results go to electronic database for communicable disease. Hospitalizations and vaccine information can be found on New York State website (Ms. Vroman to send electronic link).

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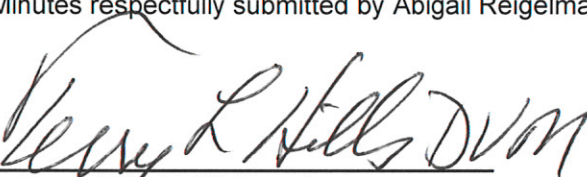
- County Attorney DeWind noted that free test kits start today.
- Ms. Vroman stated there is a disconnect between state and local government: during the governor's last briefing she stated to stay home if sick. For masks and test kits call the local health department. Tioga County Public Health and Emergency Services are not equipped to give out test kits/masks at this time.
 - Legislation is due to approve adding Varicella and RSV as communicable diseases, which will help Public Health to monitor.
- Staffing:
 - Public Health Nurse started July 31st.
 - Mid-July Public Health lost an Early Intervention Service Coordinator and recently had a Public Health Sanitarian resign. Main reason is due to pay.
 - Legislator Standinger informed the Board of the proposed raise for employee's with lower salaries, but now at a standstill.
 - Have filled the Service Coordinator position and hoping that we will be able to fill the Sanitarian position internally.
 - Filled the Public Health Fellow position last month, which is a paid position from New York State through June 2024, changed the position description to meet our needs.
 - Received application for another part-time dentist, looking into background now and working on setting up interview.
 - Currently interviewing for an Office Specialist III position, which will be administrative support for the Director of Patient Services, Deputy Director, and Dental Van.
 - Dr. Raftis inquired if Tioga County compares to surrounding counties in salaries. Legislator Standinger responded that a Personnel Salary study was completed recently, and Tioga County is lower than surrounding counties.
- Accomplishments:
 - Animal Bite Investigation online form has been created; sent QR code to law enforcement to be able to use. Hope to roll out to more community members/Emergency Rooms to be able to utilize.
 - Created first commercial (Ms. Vroman sent Board the link when it came out), was distributed to local stations.
 - Resumed outreach to new mothers (Ms. Vroman distributed copies of the New mother Baby Books), which gets sent to all new Tioga County mothers. Health Educator, Laura Bennett, calls new moms who are deemed high risk and refers to services if needed.
 - Lots of tabling at local events providing outreach/education: Sundaes at the Farm, Tioga County Fair, etc.
 - Now have signed contract with a Pharmacist Consultant. She has come into the department, reviewed policies and procedures on vaccine/medication storage and handling and did walk-through of our clinic area.
 - Working hard on Back-to-School Campaign: signage, getting information to schools, getting children, who are due to be excluded, vaccinated.
 - Submitted 2024 budget, which includes positions for Early Intervention Supervisor and Environmental Health Technician.
 - Closing out of 2023 budget; Preschool costs are increasing (transportation/program).
 - Discussion of Preschool program.
- In Progress Tasks:
 - Streamlining procedures in Environmental Health, best practice recommendations from NYSDOH site visits.
 - Provider outreach for adult immunization education/checks.
 - Working on Pandemic Plan and COVID After Action Response.

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- Can send out Pandemic Plan once completed or have Emergency Preparedness Coordinator come to speak at future meeting.
- Fellow is working on COVID After Action Response.
- Rabies Quality Improvement: will be ordering a trailer for rabies clinic supplies.
- Alpaca Farm Days event in Spencer this weekend, had Sanitarian inspect, were not in compliance with Rabies Order. Dr. Hills was informed of this matter. Worked with owner to be able to get plan in place to track people attending event and get two alpacas vaccinated for public. Sanitarian will be on site for both days of event.
 - Dr. Nyth stated that Agriculture and Markets should be notified.
 - Going forward should contact Farm Bureau to make people aware of the Rabies Order guidelines.
- Discussion of local festivals needing to be permitted for having more than 5 campers onsite.
- County is working on updating its Strategic Plan; each department has a part in it to determine goals that satisfy objectives: workforce, access, technology, community partnerships, taxpayer values.
- Will also be working on Community Health Assessment at the end of this year.
- Ms. Vroman asked the Board to reach out if they would like to hear anything more or areas to focus on. Can also stop by the department any time.
- Dr. Hills asked for update on Ms. Vroman's schooling and how she felt work is going.
 - Completed three courses, taking two classes now. Hope to be finished by next summer.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that work is going very well, couldn't do it without the support of her team.
 - Legislator Standinger noted that he completed Ms. Vroman's performance evaluation and found it satisfactory.

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 A.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.



Terry Hills, DVM; President



Abigail Reigelman; Secretary

Minutes approved October 19, 2023