



Westport Weston
Health District

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WWHD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 8, 2017

Subject to change until approval by Board of Directors

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Otis Crawford at 7:30 pm. The following voting Board Members were present: Chairman Otis Crawford; Vice Chairman Catherine Revzon; Director Ian Lewis; and Director Wendy Stahl.

Also present were: Mark A.R. Cooper, Director of Health; John Cimarosa, Director of Finance and Special Projects; Dr. Stu Steinman, Medical Advisor.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Crawford asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 13, 2017 Minutes. Being no questions or comments, on a motion made by Director Lewis and seconded by Director Stahl, the March 13, 2017 Minutes were approved. Chairman Crawford voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes; Director Lewis voted yes; Director Stahl voted yes.

Motion was approved 4 to 0.

Correspondence

Mr. Cooper reviewed the correspondence included in each Board members' meeting package. There was general discussion on the April 12th letter addressing Commissioner Pino's letter regarding planned absences by Directors of Health. The situations where a Director of Health would truly be unavailable with today's technology, and the use of such technology were outlined and reviewed. Mr. Cooper indicated he will present to the Board, memorandum(s) of understanding for emergency coverage at the next meeting. Mr. Cooper gave a brief overview of the situation leading up to the letter dated April 12 to Mark Harper, Animal Control Officer for the Town of Weston. Residents in the immediate area of the proposed dog park are concerned about a number of issues with the perceived potential to impact environmental quality. After reviewing the proposal and doing some research on the concerns, Mr. Cooper stated that he did not see a problem with the dog park as proposed from an environmental perspective.

Emergency Preparedness Presentation

Mr. Cooper introduced Michael Vincelli, WWHD's Director of Emergency Preparedness, to present to the Board an outline and discuss what he does. Mr. Vincelli indicated that he has been working for the WWHD for seven years in a variety of functions, primarily working on emergency response preparation and planning. The funding for his position comes from the state's PHEP (public health emergency preparedness) grant. Said grant has been decreasing, where the position was once funded for 20 hours per week, is now down to 10 hours per week. Future funding from the state is uncertain. At some point the amount of work and the level of funding may not make sense for the WWHD to pursue the grant. There was general discussion on the surveillance of various diseases such as Ebola, Zika virus, bird flu, West Nile virus, Lyme disease and grant requirements of having full scale exercises and other deliverables. Mr. Vincelli outlined his emergency service functions which include attending state meetings and responding to incidents. He explained

that he is a resident of Weston and is a volunteer there, working closely with a number of emergency response groups.

There was general discussion on the WWHD emergency response activities and some recent changes in how an initial response might unfold. It had been the thinking that Mr. Cooper would go to Westport's EOC (emergency operations center) during a declared emergency and Mr. Vincelli would go to Weston's EOC. Having now tried that approach a number of times, we are now thinking that any needed public health response would be best run out of the WWHD offices where potentially needed resources are located and all necessary staff can respond to the needs of both communities. Mr. Vincelli is working on updating the official plans to reflect this change.

Chairman Crawford asked if the PHEP funds were federal or state dollars. Mr. Cooper responded that they are actually federal dollars, funneled through the state, but which are intended to fund local preparedness activities. However, the state is finding ever increasing creative ways to keep more of it.

Director of Health Report

There were no questions on the March or April Operational or Activity reports

Mr. Cooper noted the listing of current WWHD contracts and indicated he and staff have been reviewing them carefully with sharp pencils to reduce costs. Mr. Cimarosa added that some are of a standard operational nature, some can be renegotiated. There was general discussion on each of the listed contracts and the types of services being provided. It was noted that some of the contracts are for service the WWHD pays for and others, such as the insurance companies towards the bottom of the list, are contracts the WWHD has with them as providers of service to their clients. Mr. Cimarosa added that the contract the WWHD has with Anthem Blue Cross, something both sides agreed too, is being terminated as of June 6th by the WWHD because of the difficulties collecting payment for services rendered.

Director Stahl asked if there are any of the current contracts the WWHD has their eye on renegotiating in the near future. Mr. Cooper responded that most of the low hanging fruit has been picked but that the phone service is under consideration but is on hold until the Town of Westport makes a final decision on the choice of land use software because it most likely will require an upgrade of the WWHD's internet connectivity. The current phone system works fine at the moment, however, the company that makes and services it is no longer in business. There was general discussion on upgrading to and connecting to a fiber optic line. The WWHD is open to and looking for potential grants that can be used for this purpose.

Mr. Cooper summarized the operational and permit activity reports for the months of March and April. It was noted that permit activity levels decreased a bit.

Mr. Cimarosa summarized the Consolidated Income Statement report. He noted that from a revenue perspective, the WWHD is ahead of last year, but not by much. Environmental fees and permit activity was down about fifteen percent. Chairman Crawford noted that flu vaccination numbers are up from last year but that he is concerned about its sustainability because a lot of places start pushing flu vaccinations in August before the WWHD starts to offer them. It has also been his observation that there seems to be more flu cases in senior citizens later in the flu season. He asked Dr. Steinman how best to get that information out that it is better to get ones flu vaccination in October to November. Dr. Steinman responded saying that the WWHD does press releases and posts such information on the website, he is not sure much more can be done. The big box stores pushing flu vaccinations early in the season have a lot more marketing power than the WWHD. Part of the issue is that the flu virus moves from south to north, so the further south one lived, the earlier one needs to be vaccinated. For those living in Connecticut year round, getting vaccinated between Halloween and Thanksgiving provides the best protection. The data is clear that the high dose vaccine is best for senior

citizens and that the live vaccine for children does not work. There was general discussion on what the goal of the WWHD's flu vaccination program is, why the State Department of Health and CDC push for earlier vaccinations, and how the big box stores promote flu "shots". The national policy is based on factors that do not necessarily apply to Westport Weston demographics. Mr. Cimarosa provided an overview of the WWHD's efforts to develop contracts with insurance providers to be able to accept insurance company payments for flu and pneumonia vaccinations and how the results did not meet expectations of expanding the population served or revenue. There was also discussion on various ways to get the message out and better promote WWHD's flu vaccination clinics. Mr. Cooper indicated he will work with Dr. Steinman on developing an appropriate press release for local distribution.

Director Revzon asked, since tick season is approaching, what one has to do to get ticks tested. Mr. Cooper outlined the process for submittal. Basically all someone has to do is bring the tick to the WWHD office in a zip locked plastic bag with no additives such as water or alcohol. One of the nurses will examine it to determine whether it is a dog or deer tick and whether it is engorged or not. The Connecticut Agricultural Station will only test engorged deer ticks for the Lyme Disease spirochete. There was discussion on the cyclic nature of the deer tick and white footed mouse populations and how last winter provided ideal conditions for the tick population. Last year the background tick infection rate was 17 %, this year it has increased to about 27%. Doxycycline at 200mg within 72 hours of a deer tick bite is about 99.9 % effective in preventing Lyme disease. There was general discussion on ticks Lyme Disease and prevention efforts.

Financial Report

Mr. Cimarosa provided a summary of the WWHD's financials. There were no questions.

Any Other Business

Chairman Crawford noted the article in local paper regarding the results of the Weston Arsenic study. Mr. Cooper provided a summary of the study and indicated with many more sample points, Weston's incidence of elevated arsenic levels mirrors the state average of 7 to 10%. There was general discussion on arsenic, how it gets in water and potential health impacts.

Chairman Crawford asked if there were any additional matters to be brought to the Board's attention.

Being no additional business; on a motion by Director Stahl and seconded by Director Lewis to adjourn the meeting at 9 pm. Chairman Crawford voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes; Director Lewis voted yes; Director Stahl voted yes.

Motion was approved 4 to 0

Respectfully submitted



Mark A.R. Cooper Director of Health
Westport Weston Health District