



Westport Weston
Health District

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WWHD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 13, 2017

Subject to change until approval by Board of Directors

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Otis Crawford at 7:32 pm. The following voting Board Members were present: Chairman Otis Crawford; Vice Chairman Catherine Revzon; Director Wendy Stahl, Director Ian Lewis and Director Linda Lewis Bruce.

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 September 11, 2017 Minutes. Director Bruce noted that on page 2 where it says “long term rate of decay is known” should say “unknown”. Mr. Cooper agreed to correct it. Chairman Crawford noted the Activity Report from last month had been corrected.

Being no questions or comments, on a motion made by Director Bruce and seconded by Vice Chairman Revzon, the September 11, 2017 Minutes were approved. Chairman Crawford voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes; Director Stahl voted yes, Director Lewis voted yes and Director Bruce voted yes.

Motion was approved 5 to 0.

Correspondence

Mr. Cooper noted there was light correspondence for the month. Included in each Director's meeting package for informational purposes the letter from the State Department of Health regarding submittal of specimens at the state laboratory. Chairman Crawford asked about the emails from Sarah Harris. Director Wendy requested the email conversation be put into a bigger context. Mr. Cooper summarized the Town of Westport's ongoing efforts to computerize and automate the land use permitting process, for all departments, including the WWHD. The goal is to have the process more user friendly and efficient of municipal resources. The most recent efforts were a result of town's land use audit by Blum Shapiro. There was general discussion on the current land use process and its computerization.

Director Stahl noted that there is a lot of movement in operations to find better ways to do things less linear and labor intensive, which many town processes seem to be. A fair amount of the general public tends to think there must be a better way and she believes the effort will be worth it. The current land review process is somewhat cumbersome.

Mr. Cooper agreed that there are usually always ways to improve things and indicated the effort has his full support, but cautioned that in his opinion sanitarian expertise and regulatory discretion cannot be computerized.

There was general discussion on process evaluation, program developer and system implementation. Mr. Cimarosa summarized the discussions and direction of the meetings he has been attending. He gave several examples of the type of situations WWHD staff deal with and how quickly things can get complicated.

What is being heard from the people impacted by this is that the project may be going down some pathways that may not result in the town the desired result, and what everyone seems to agree on, which is a well deployed user friendly for citizens and staff efficient system.

Chairman Crawford expressed concern about how Weston, and perhaps future towns, might play into this. The WWHD data bases for all member towns need to be unified, not separate systems for each town. Transitions from linear person centric based systems are usually difficult. The project is moving towards releasing an RFP for system development, the results of which may determine future project directions.

There was general discussion on the press release regarding WWHD's Flu Clinics. This is the ideal time to be vaccinated and obtain the maximum protection at the peak of New England's flu season. Chair Crawford asked the price of the high dose vaccine and whether Medicare pays the full WWHD price of \$70. Mr. Cimarosa responded in the affirmative. There was a general discussion on the various flu formulation in use this year; trivalent high dose and quadrivalent standard dose.

Mr. Cooper summarized the series of emails regarding Westport and Weston's insurance concerns and information requests. There was general discussion on CIRMA, the state's insurance program for municipalities, and the WWHD's efforts to find appropriate coverage at an affordable cost. A meeting has been set up for early December to discuss and resolve.

Presentation on Vaccine Update

Mr. Cooper noted that this item was placed on the agenda at the request of Dr. Steinman. Dr. Steinman indicated that new shingles vaccine has been released that he thinks is great. He summarized the different ways of making vaccines. The new two dose shingles vaccine is not a live vaccine, it is 99.7% effective at preventing post herpetic neuralgia, which is way one gets vaccinated and it can be co-administered with the flu vaccine. People can start getting it at age 50, rather than 65 as the old vaccine. The old vaccine was live and about 66% effective and only effective for about three years. The WWHD is switching over to its use. The recommendation is for those who obtained the old vaccine to get the new vaccine. Mr. Cimarosa is looking into whether insurance will cover its administration. There was general discussion on flu vaccines and efficacy.

Cholera is still not boostable, there is not data for antibodies after three months so unless someone is proposing to go cholera infected country, it is not being recommended. New data on Japanese encephalitis indicates that after an initial inoculation, there is a booster in one month, another in fifteen months there is some extended time period before immunity starts to wane. How long one is protected has yet been clearly determined.

Director Stahl asked about Hepatitis D vaccine being promoted on the west coast associated with a foodborne illness outbreak. Dr. Steinman responded that there is no vaccine for Hepatitis D, which is referred to as the Delta Antigen, which can only cause infection if co-infected with Hepatitis B. If one is vaccinated for Hepatitis B, one is protected against Hepatitis D.

Mr. Cooper asked Dr. Steinman if the WWHD is required to take part in the States electronic prescription program and if so, are we getting ready to comply. Dr. Steinman indicated that one have access to electronic medical records to do electronic prescriptions. He added that this is a big state push with penalties for practices that don't comply. Mr. indicated he was at a meeting of state health officials recently where the state health department indicated they may be making such records available to local health jurisdictions. There was general discussion on the types of vaccinations the WWHD prescribes, electronic records, and what kind of system might work best for the WWHD.

Dr. Steinman indicated that there is a new cholera vaccine available. He explained that some vaccines (like MMR) where one gets three shots during infancy, get a booster at about age fifteen and you are protected for life. Other vaccinations (like typhoid) that don't boost but one can get a vaccination every two years for protection because there is no sequential increase in immunity. Then there a some vaccinations (like Hepatitis B) that gives a animistic response where even though one has no antibodies, if there is an exposure, one gets an antibody response. Other vaccinations do not boost well and with sequential vaccinations, the antibody response decreases.

The new Cholera vaccine after ten days, 90% of recipients are immune. Three months later, 80% are immune. As a relatively new vaccine, the longer term rate of decay is known. There is also some concern about whether it can be boosted. The question becomes for those traveling to someplace with Cholera, who does one vaccinate. The WWHD's Travel Clinic policy is to only vaccinate those travelers having direct contact or at high risk for getting Cholera. Tourist travelers who do not interact with infected people are at very low risk for exposure to Cholera, less than about 1% and it is not known at this time whether the vaccine will have ongoing utility or not, and the routine travelers diarrhea medication prescribed covers Cholera as well.

There was a general discuss on the cost of travel vaccinations and insurance coverage.

Director of Health Report

Mr. Cooper summarized the operational reports provided in each Directors meeting package. He corrected the start of the next calendar year's running totals error from last meeting. In his monthly plan submittal report, it appears the two environmental staff sanitarians receive, process, and inspect about 100 submittal each month.

Mr. Cooper explained he has taken a different tack in refilling the food inspector position. With the State of Connecticut adopting the FDA Food Code, there will be significant work needed to implement a new inspection system. New requirements start to take effect on January 1, 2018 with enforcement expected by July 1, 2018. There are very few FDA certified food inspectors in Connecticut. Connecticut certified inspectors are scrambling across the state to meet FDA certification requirements. Mr. Cooper has found the cost of hiring an inspector already FDA certified to be too high. Since the last meeting, he has been contacted by young women finishing her senior year of collage who is interested in a public health career and in need of an internship project. He has interviewed her for an internship focusing on food protection, she is interested in working with the WWHD to transition to the new code. As part of the internship, the WWHD would sponsor her to enable her to qualify for FDA food code training and if she is successful in obtaining said certification, she has expressed an interest in working with the WWHD's food protection program. Mr. Cooper felt this is a win-win situation for all concerned. Board members agreed this seemed like a good approach.

Financial Report

Mr. Cimarosa summarized the financial report from the previous month. District revenues are down significantly from the same time last year. He indicated this is because the WWHD has not yet received Westport's quarterly payment. Chairman Crawford asked where the funds are held. Mr. Cimarosa indicated the funds are with the State of Connecticut's STIFF and WWHD Bank accounts. The majority of the reserve funds are designated for emergency response expenditures.

Any Other Business

Chairman Crawford asked if there were any additional matters to be brought to the Board's attention. Director Stahl asked about the recent Blog Report regarding rodents in Westport and wants to know how the WWHD was responding. Mr. Cooper explained that the problem Blogged about was not new. It has been an ongoing issue that he has been working with the Down Town Merchants Association with to resolve since last year. Part of the issue is that Parker Harding Plaza is about to undergo some renovation of the parking lot and dumpster area, this has been in the works for a while with funding, from the town, being the final issue. The dumpster areas are going to be moved and better secured. In the mean time, the property manager is taking appropriate steps and implementing effective rodent control measures, thus, as seen in the Blog photograph, there are dead rodents. Mr. Cooper sees no need to issue a legal order to the owners to implement rodent control measures. They are doing so voluntarily. Mr. Cooper noted that his approach to such problems has always been to try to work cooperatively with owners prior to taking the legal option. If persistence, education and guidance does not produce the desired results, he has no qualms about issuing Orders.

There is another, very similar situation in the center of town, again, where the property owner is voluntarily implementing appropriate rodent control measures. Some of these rodent colonies had reached very large populations. He thinks they are now under control and that the property owners have now implemented long term control strategies. He believes by working with the owners, better relationships have been able to be developed which will have potential benefits should future issues present themselves.

Director Stahl was wondering whether there could be something more the WWHD could or should be doing such as having someone respond to Blog postings. Mr. Cooper indicated he did not think it would be helpful, would only draw more attention to the issue, and potentially compromise his working relationships with cooperative owners. Responding to the recent blog photo was discussed with the property owner. It was decided that if anyone was going to respond, the property owner would do so. Ultimately, they decided not to in this case. There was general discussion on how much resource should be used to respond to such postings.

Chairman Crawford again asked if there was any other business.

Director Lewis asked if there was any interest in raising community awareness about tick borne diseases. Mr. Cooper noted that the WWHD has a fairly active Lyme disease prevention and other tick borne disease program. Efforts are usually focused in the spring and late fall when ticks are most active and citizens bring a lot of ticks to the WWHD office for identification and testing. There was general discussion on the Lyme disease and the increasing number of co-infections that ticks can spread. Mr.

Cimarosa noted that the WWHD worked with the CDC in the development of tick and Lyme disease prevention that is being used across the United States. This past spring, the WWHD had Kirby Strafford of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Connecticut's Lyme disease expert, give a presentation at the Westport Library for the public.

Mr. Cooper asked Vice Chairman Revzon if she was still interested in getting together with Monica Wheeler and Director Lewis to discuss WWHD's efforts to increase community awareness of WWHD mission. He indicated that Mrs. Wheeler is talking about retirement this would be the time to get together to discuss Lyme disease and general community awareness efforts. Both indicated they will reach out to Mrs. Wheeler.

Chairman Crawford again asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. Being no additional business; on a motion by Director Stahl and seconded by Vice Chairman Revzon to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm. Chairman Crawford voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes; Director Stahl voted yes; Director Lewis voted yes and Director Bruce voted yes.

Motion was approved 5 to 0

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A.R. Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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