



TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES February 15, 2024

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (All Attended In Person):

T. Hills, DVM, President
T. Leary, FNP
T. Nytech, DVM
W. Standinger III, Legislator
R. Kapur-Pado, DO (Arrived at 7:36 a.m.)

ABSENT:

W. Simmons, Vice President
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
A. Reigelman, Secretary
P. DeWind Esq., County Attorney (Arrived at 7:32 a.m.)

GUESTS: Susan Medina, Deputy Director of Public Health (Departed at 7:55 a.m.)

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

PRESENTATION: N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes: No discussion; motion to approve prior minutes made by Dr. Nytech; seconded by Ms. Leary, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Dr. Nytech inquired about the fine associated with Soprano's Family Deli. Ms. Vroman explained that this was the second enforcement on this establishment in a 12-month period, which is why fine is higher than usually seen. Tioga Environmental Health Division only recently started inspecting Soprano's within the last 2 years. Previously they were inspected by Agriculture & Markets.
 - Dr. Hills requested clarification on difference between establishments inspected by Tioga Environmental Health and Agriculture & Markets. Ms. Vroman explained that Environmental Health inspects restaurants, mobile food units, etc. and Agriculture & Markets inspects establishments selling deli items, prepackaged items, desserts, frozen prepared meals.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Quarter Four Audit Summary of 2023: Ms. Medina provided the Board with brief summary of the internal chart audit review of public health programs that took place January 26, 2024.
 - 130 record audits independently audited; auditors do not audit their own charts.
 - Main recommendations to come out of the audit were to update charts/audit tools to better capture the programs and process/workflow.
 - Doing a lot with the Environmental Health program to ensure forms are filled out in full and correctly.
 - Planning to audit a few more programs and we have requested example audit tools from other counties and New York State to see if we can improve.
 - Feel it is going really well, and we have our own internal Quality Team who will be working on quality projects/concerns. For example, utilizing Electronic Record Programs in programs where we primarily have paper forms which will help to

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- omit human error (i.e. Rabies Bite Investigations). Ms. Vroman added that we may change to an electronic system sooner rather than later in this program specifically.
- Board members, Ms. Vroman, Ms. Medina and County Attorney DeWind discussed Tioga County IT security (if moving to electronic forms and archive retention of paper records).
 - Updated Satisfaction Surveys and sent to all chart records audited. Really trying to get community feedback. Also, must have a formal complaint process which will be a standing agenda item in our record audit meetings. We have not received any complaints so far.
 - Discussion of other methods of distributing the Satisfaction Surveys (posted QR codes and sending home in packets after visits) and percentage of surveys received back so far.
 - Dr. Nytech inquired about budget for programs if interested in making technological updates.
 - Ms. Medina stated that updates must be planned for to be able to include in next County Budget. Ms. Vroman added that with the 5-year Public Health Incentive Grant there is funding for technology updates/training needs for employees.
 - Brief discussion of process for getting needed resources approved (brought to Health & Human Services Committee and approved by Committee and Legislature).
 - The Board congratulated Ms. Medina on being nominated Employee of the Quarter.
 - Strategic Plan: Ms. Vroman discussed the background of the Strategic Plan-developed as part of the County Strategic Plan (discussion began in spring of 2023 to revise the previous plan). Then began working with outside facilitators who assisted in identifying key areas important for county department heads: Taxpayer Value, Accessibility, Workforce & Community Partnerships. Internally decided our own goals under these identified key areas (distributed handout with full listing and quarter milestones):
 - Taxpayer Value-Communicate taxpayer value through Public Health Messaging
 - Accessibility- Develop assessment to determine Public Health services needed in the community and what should be accessible online.
 - Accessibility-Increase accessibility by leveraging technology to provide greater access to public health services/programs online. (i.e. ability to access dental x-rays on the Cloud and have Environmental Health permits accessible online and to be able to pay online, as well as accept credit card payments).
 - Workforce- Develop an employee training needs assessment to serve as a baseline for training needs (mandatory trainings and additional trainings needed for the scope of the job).
 - Workforce- Employee Recognition Committee to develop an employee engagement satisfaction survey.
 - Community Partnerships- Identify public health partners and establish collaborations to promote healthy living.
 - Dr. Nytech inquired if Public Health billboards are money well spent, is feedback received?
 - Ms. Vroman stated that billboard advertising funding comes primarily from the State. It is not an astronomical amount. Feel it is worth it, do receive some feedback. Dr. Hills added that the billboards do put Public Health in the public eye.
 - Ms. Vroman explained how the Strategic plan will be implemented- Management team members have each chosen a goal to lead and all staff members have been assigned a goal area to work in. At next All Staff meeting, will be breaking into groups and begin working on goals. Staff will have all resources needed for accomplishing (resources for surveys and flyers, etc.)

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- Ms. Vroman stated that her goals for 2024 encompass the goals of the Strategic plan:
 - Retain current workforce.
 - Assessment of additional services needed. Received new Public Health trailer. which can help with trying to provide services on Tioga County's borders.
 - Providing greater access to services (credit card payments).
 - Continue to expand Quality Assurance-Quality Improvement program.
 - Legislator Standinger commended Ms. Vroman for being proactive and forward thinking.
 - Dr. Hills inquired if Public Health is in a better place with staff now.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that another Early Intervention Service Coordinator resigned, will be going to a company providing service coordination that will allow her to work remote full time. Also had new Office Specialist III not complete probationary period. Workforce retention is on the County's radar also.
 - Dr. Nytch asked how the new Medical Consultants were doing. Ms. Vroman stated that both are doing great and have already been very involved (completing orientations, have seen patient/reviewing record audits from Q4 2023 Quality Assurance Record Audit Meeting).

INFORMATIONAL: Ms. Vroman shared updates.

- Public health News:
 - Chapter amendments for Article 28 legislation were signed last month but changes will not be effective until mid-2025, Ms. Medina is on a workgroup to assist with these changes. Article 36 legislation is effective immediately. Public Health will not have to complete a weekly mandatory survey any longer because of this, and it will allow Nursing home visits without strict regulations.
- Accomplished Tasks:
 - In January had combined Candor rabies clinic with Public Health Emergency Preparedness set-up drill, which was very successful. Almost all Public Health staff were involved. Vaccinated over 80 pets.
 - The COVID After Action Report is complete, Ms. Wait is working on a presentation.
 - Had visit from the new Regional Representative for Environmental Health and had visit from Regional team for lead program. Both were educational visits and went well.
 - Received new Public Health trailer, plan to get a decorative wrap put on it.
 - Ms. Vroman sits on committee for Broome-Tioga Child Fatality Review Team and recently co-signed a letter with Broome County Public Health Director (that she distributed for Board review) which will be mailed to the Railroad to consider installing barriers by railroad tracks and provide education in schools to help prevent fatal accidents (as had occurred in Tioga and Broome Counties in recent years).
 - Will let the Board know if response is received.
 - 2023 Communicable Disease Report to providers is at the printers.
 - Discussion of trends seen in 2023: chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhea have all increased in Tioga County.
 - Received funding from NYSACHO for Climate Change grant to address tickborne illnesses. Will focus on education for men (seeing high number in middle aged men) and for distributing tick-kits.
- In Progress Tasks:
 - Early Intervention is in the process of transitioning to a new electronic platform, which involves many staff members and Early Intervention providers. Feedback from the State is that the transition is not going well. Very burdensome to staff.
 - Dr. Nytch inquired if the Lead program is incorporated into the Early Intervention (EI) program. Ms. Vroman explained that lead is not directly tied to the EI program but can see children with EBLLs. Ms. Vroman provided a general



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- overview of the Lead program. Children tested for lead has increased and have also increased outreach to providers to test more frequently.
- ATUPA stipulation from November regarding the sale of a flavored vape in a chain retailer Vaporking. Vaporking co-owner sent letter requesting more information. Had group call with County Attorney DeWind, Ms. Vroman, Mr. Kopalek, and the co-owner. The Co-owner was frustrated with NYS tobacco laws and wants Public Health to look the other way. Wants to proceed with an Administrative Hearing but have to find another hearing officer as current hearing officer has a conflict of interest. Currently in search.
 - Board discussed. Ms. Vroman and County Attorney DeWind provided background on regulations. Ms. Vroman stated that she would keep the Board informed.
 - Recently an individual trying to bring a service animal into a local food establishment. The establishment owner stated that they could not enter, citing our Sanitary Code. However, ADA law supersedes the Sanitary Code. Business owners are allowed to ask certain questions as they pertain to service animals. Public Health educated the business owners on the ADA laws. The business owner and the individual cleared the situation on their own. County Attorney DeWind added that this situation was an animal that was being trained as a service animal.
 - Board members and staff discussed.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

For the next meeting, Management Team is scheduled to attend. Does the Board want the full Management team or just certain team members to discuss specific topics?

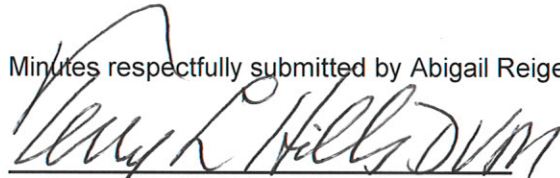
- Board discussed and concluded to have full Management Team attend and provide a brief update.

Dr. Nytch inquired if the establishment owner who received the hearing decision last month responded back.


- Ms. Vroman stated that the individual has not paid the fine as of yet and Mr. Scherrer has spoken with the Boards of the events they frequently attend to inform them that they are not permitted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 A.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.



Terry Hills, DVM, President



Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved March 21, 2024