



BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG - BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

JULY 19, 2023 AT 7:00PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

President's Statement

Under the provisions of N.J.S.A 10:4-6 et seq., notice of time and place of this meeting has been posted and sent to the official newspapers.

Roll Call

Present: Bruce Ruck-President, Robert Riedinger – Vice President, Diane Logan, Meghana Anadarangam and Kimberly Brown – Alternate #2

Absent: Charlene Virgilio, Francesca Escalera, Louise Lindenmeier and Deepika Garg – Alternate #1

Also present: Kevin Sumner, Health Officer, Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission. Paolo Marano, Council Liaison and Dámaris Quiñones-Gray, Board of Health Secretary.

Consent Agenda

Kimberly Brown moved and Bruce Ruck seconded, a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 17, 2023 meeting. All were in favor with the following exceptions:

Abstain: Robert Riedinger, Meghana Anadarangam

Absent: Charlene Virgilio, Francesca Escalera, Louise Lindenmeier and Deepika Garg

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission - Staff Reports

May 2023 – Bruce Ruck questioned Alpha-Gal Syndrome cases on the Commission Report and explained that it is a tick born disease that cause people to develop a immune reaction to meat. Kevin Sumner explained that Watchung has one case versus four cases in the entire Commission. Bruce Ruck requested that Alpha-Gal cases be monitored and information on tick born diseases be shared on website and social media. Damaris Quinones-Gray said she will post links on the Borough's social media driving traffic back to Middle-Brook's website. Robert Riedinger suggested including information at health table at the proposed health fair in October. Kevin Sumner indicated that social media, websites, etc. are what people are getting information and that most will not read pamphlets or handouts.

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission – Health Officer Report

Kevin Sumner gave a summary of new employees added to Middle-Brook and their roles. He hired a full-time Health Educator – Amelia and he hired a new Disease Investigator to replace the previous one who resigned after a year to work at a hospital for 30% increase in salary.

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission - Meetings/Updates

Bruce Ruck mentioned that there is a huge financial impact to the Commission, County & State as a result of the CDC pulling back on future funding. Kevin Sumner clarified that these were funds Congress authorized for COVID response and recovery. He further stated that as part of the agreement was to rescind any of the monies that were not allocated and it should not impact local and state funding.

Bruce Ruck re-iterated the importance of Board Members attendance at the Commission's meetings. Kevin Sumner informed that Louise Lindenmeir attending the last meeting and reminded the Board that Commission meetings are held the first Monday of the month, every other month. The next meeting will be held in **Watchung, on October 2nd**.

Animal Control Solutions Monthly Reports

May 2023 & June 2023 – No discussion was held.

OLD BUSINESS

Watchung Walks incentives – discussion was held on the results of the Watchung Walks Survey.

Lyme Disease Information – Information has been distributed on Borough website and social media

NEW BUSINESS

Watchung Walks Kick-off for Fall Season- Bruce Ruck suggested a kick-off walk at the start of the Harvest Festival. Damaris Quinones-Gray informed that the Municipal Alliance has a Family Walk at 1pm already scheduled. Kimberly Brown suggested to change the meeting place and maybe have people sign up to walk and providing contact information to get reminder. Decision was made based on the results of the survey, to keep the walk on Mondays at 7pm and meeting place at Mobus Field. Councilman Paolo Marano volunteered to mention it to the public at the next Council meeting.

CPR/AED Class – Diane Logan proposed a CPR/AED Class be held on Sunday, July 30th. She offered to contact the Rescue Squad and Instructor. Damaris Quinones-Gray will check on availability of Exempt Hall, create and distribute flyer on website, email blast and social media. The issue of charging those who register was discussed and it was decided that the residents would make payment directly to the instructor.

Health Fair – Discussion was held proposing a health fair in October in conjunction with the Harvest Festival. Kevin Sumner shared his experience with the Commission holding health fairs in the past and stated that the Affordable Care Act has changed things significantly in that the driving force to the fairs were the free screening services. Currently, most people are insured and have access to free screening through their health insurance. He also stated that social media and internet access has impacted the reading of handouts and informative health materials since information is available on the web. Discussion continued regarding how to manage the medical facilities that would be invited to participate in the proposed health fair. Damaris Quinones-Gray reminded the Board that the Harvest Festival is a “community event” that residents look forward to each year which consist of games, rides, etc. and that having a Health table would be fine, but the Harvest Festival shouldn't be turned into a “Health Fair”.

Credible Minds – Informed that he wants to initiate a program called Credible Minds which is an online system for mental health support. Kevin Sumner would like to get all the towns in the Commission to participate and to earmark the Opioid Funds the towns should be receiving. Bruce Ruck requested Kevin Sumner to provide more information at the next meeting.

PUBLIC PORTION

No public in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

Bruce Ruck moved and Kimberly Brown seconded, a motion to adjourn at 8:21pm. All in favor with the following exceptions:

Absent: Charlene Virgilio, Francesca Escaleira, Louise Lindenmeier and Deepika Garg .

The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be held on **September 20, 2023 at 7:00pm** in-person at Borough Hall, 15 Mountain Boulevard, Watchung, New Jersey.

Respectfully submitted,
Dámaris Quiñones-Gray
Secretary, Board of Health

Accepted: 10/18/23