

April 16, 2024

Reorganization meeting and first regular meeting of the Board of Health for the Borough of Victory Gardens held on April 16, 2024.

President of the Board, David Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country and remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily Record in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

ATTENDANCE: David Holeman, Norberto Suarez, Stuart Hale, Ismael Lorenzo.

ABSENT: James Glass, Kendyll Hedgepath, Ondria Garcia Montes.

NEW BUSINESS:

BOARD TO APPOINT A SECRETARY FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH - Ismael Lorenzo made a motion to appoint Norberto Suarez for Board Secretary. Seconded by David Holeman and approved on roll call:

David Holeman	Yes
Norberto Suarez	Yes
Stuart Hale	Yes
Ismael Lorenzo	Yes

At this time the meeting was turned over to Peter Tabbot/Health Officer -

Peter introduced himself to the new members of the Board of Health. I gave everyone a copy of our report. The first report is a cap from 2023. We had 6 retail food inspections. We had 2 complaint investigations. Our rabie clinic for 2023 was about 70 animals. More than we have had in a long time.

We did 19 flu vaccines at the clinic. We had a fair number of COVID cases but the numbers were down compared to where they were at the height. We had more COVID cases the first quarter of 2024 than we had all last year.

There were 37 reports of communicable diseases. They are listed in your report of what type they were and how many of each type. There were 43 cases of COVID which brings the total up to 80.

I've listed the training and the seminars that our staff attends throughout the year. This is just an information page for you.

In the information that Peter handed out there is a report for the first quarter of 2024. We did 1 retail food establishment inspection. We had 4 complaint investigations.

The NJ Department of Health wanted our staff to investigate a potential sale of Tianeptine. also known as gas station heroin. We visited both Randolph Liquors and Dover Farmers Market. We had to check to make sure the product was not being sold. Upon our inspection, we found no product was observed.

Dave asked Peter what exactly is gas station heroin? That is just a name that some people give to the product. It's a medication that did not get full approval from the FDA. It has some intoxicating effects. It has become popular for the underground market. Especially for people underage. What about this stuff called Kratom? Peter said he never heard of it but he will look into it. At a lot of the head shops, they sell this stuff. People say they take it for pain but if you look on line it is addictive. In certain instances, people have died throughout the Country. Some states have banned it.

Peter said the State Health usually notifies us if anything seems to be up and coming with drugs, or if there is something new out there for us to watch. They let us know if there are any deaths or serious injury because of it. Peter said he will look into it.

Peter said that we had 52 cases of COVID for the first quarter of 2024. You can see the other communicable diseases listed in your report. Most of the cases for COVID came out from the holidays that carried over to the new year.

The last 2 pages of the report lets you know what meetings and trainings we have gone through. Over the past few years local health departments have received COVID grants. We have received a considerable amount of money over these past several years. It will all be going away in the very near future. We have one more year of partial funding. We were able to bring a few new people on our staff. Brittany Bernstein we have been able to bring on full time. One of the things that we have been able to buy with these grants is an AFD for Victory Gardens. It is a full AFD unit. It tells you all the pertinent information you may need.

A quick staffing update. As I said Brittany is now permanent with us. We have a full time nurse that is moving on to become a school nurse. We are advertising for a full time nurse and a part time nurse. There will not be a gap in services but we are looking to hire. We need someone with a BSN and an RN credential.

The Clerk asked Peter if he had anymore COVID test kits? we can use them if you can spare any. Peter said he will have some dropped off to us. Peter said some of the other items he included in the packets he handed out are: Preparedness event at the garden Chapel. Veterans wellness fair that will be held at GCM. We have one for financial management. Program on diabetes. NJ Family Care - health insurance. Information on NORWESCAP. Information on Emergency Rooms compared to a regular doctor visit. Information on different types of flu. Meningitis prevention.

Dave asked Peter what the leading sickness is now? I think it is RSV. It is a severe respiratory virus. We are in allergy season and some people make mistake allergies for RSV. The elderly and those with chronic diseases RSV can be pretty severe. Respiratory illness seems to be the leading thing right now. Where do we stand with COVID? The CDC removed any isolation for COVID. No more quarantines. COVID is improving but we get some higher cases from winter when more people are together for holidays and when houses are closed up. I don't think we are going to see any of the spikes we saw years ago. You won't see many hospitalizations, maybe none at all. The same for the deaths that we saw in the beginning. It's a stable level right now. What about Fentanyl? Is it still rising? My knowledge is limited. It is everywhere. It's being mixed in with other drugs. It is not getting better. There are a lot of overdoses and with the fentanyl it isn't getting any better. Peter said he will try to get more information. People dying from this. Very scary.

Ismael asked if there has been any studies yet on long term use of cannabidiol? It's too new yet. No data is out yet. I would like to see data in about 10 years from now. Is there any kind of vaccination for allergies? You have to go to an allergist for that. There is no vaccine. I was looking in the paper the other day and they were talking about a new test for Alzheimers. Do you know anything about that? It is supposed to be a blood test and it detects maybe 90% accurate. Peter does not know anything about it. I will look into it.

The Clerk asked Peter about the COVID shots nad do people still need to get the boosters? Is this a booster, like the flu shot, that we would have to get every year? I am an advocate of the vaccines. I believe in it. I think everyone should get it. People should keep up with the boosters. Not everyone agrees but that is what I think.

Motion to open the meeting to the public by Ismael Lorenzo, seconded by Norberto Suarez. Approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Norberto Suarez, seconded by Stuart Hale and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Stuart Hale, seconded by Ismael Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:

Norberto Suarez
Board Secretary

Minutes typed by: Deb Evans