

**Board of Health
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Penn Room**

Members Attending: J. Moya – in person; K. Schorn, J. Dethoff, B. Hospidor, J. Henning - virtually

Others Attending: S. Smith – in person; M. Sninsky, F. Lachat, S. Herbert, BCTV - virtually

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Ms. Schorn, seconded by Mr. Hospidor, to approve the February 4, 2025 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

REORGANIZATION

Dr. Dethoff stated that he would like to work with the next vice chair so that he can step away from being chair by the end of 2025.

Reorganization was deferred to the next meeting.

REPORTS

- Health Inspections

Ms. Herbert provided the following update:

- 96 Inspections
- 25 Inspections required rechecks
- 10 Complaints via the PA Department of Health
- 4 Businesses temporarily closed
- 6 Animal complaints

Dr. Dethoff questioned how the City receives complaints from the Department of Health. Ms. Herbert stated that if a resident calls the Department of Health, the complaint is referred to Property Maintenance for investigation and follow-up.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the conditions required for a business to be closed. Ms. Herbert stated that if the food texture and color are wrong, there are cleanliness issues, rodents, insects, etc. the business will be closed. She also noted the need for those who sell prepackaged foods to be sure that there is nothing on shelves that has expired. She stated that all four businesses made the necessary corrections and have reopened.

- Lead Abatement Program

Ms. Smith stated that Mr. Melendez was not available to attend today's meeting but that he provided the following information via email:

- 40 completed units for our federal grant
- 3 completed units for our apra -state grant
- 10 completed units from our state grant, which has ended and all of our benchmarks made

All units in federal grant get a radon test and if elevated get a mitigation system installed. To date, we have had 5 systems installed

Through our collaboration with the Department of Health, we have had two free testing clinics for children to get their blood lead levels tested. Between the two events, approximately 7 children have been tested, and several have made a successful transition into our lead program from collaborative efforts.

Dr. Dethoff noted his hope for additional blood lead testing events that would bring a higher turnout.

- EMS

Deputy Chief Sninsky provided the following information via email:

- Narcan incidents remain steady, there were approximately 20-30 incidents a month, slight decrease in the extreme colder months.
- Flu and COVID cases have been decreasing in the last month. Usually, we see higher prevalence of URI illnesses in patients from December to Early March.
- We are using a different approach for hiring paramedics. Paramedics are difficult to hire, there have been nationwide issues with recruiting and getting individuals to become paramedics. The City has opted to have an EMT to Paramedic program. This means that anyone who is a state certified EMT can go through the Civil Service Process and get paid to go through paramedic school at Reading Hospital in exchange for agreeing to work for the City of Reading for 5 years. This program was launched at the end of March for recruiting and seems to be the talk of the county. At the next Health Board meeting I will have an update on where we stand in the process. The deadline to apply is April 30th, 2025.

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the occurrence of respiratory illnesses decline as the weather becomes warmer. He stated that the Narcan incidents remain consistent but that he anticipates additional incidents as the weather gets warmer.

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the City has begun a new EMT training program to assist with recruiting and to increase the number of paramedics on staff. He stated that those interested in enrolling in the program must do so before the end of April to begin the next training in May. He stated that those who enroll in the program must remain a part of Reading's Fire service for at least five years. He stated that enrollees will be paid while they are in training. He stated that this is similar to those who attend the Police or Fire Academy.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the length of the training. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the training takes approximately one year after which the attendee can take the paramedic certification test.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if enrollees could attend the training while working. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the program at the Reading Hospital is a Monday through Friday with a full time class

schedule. He stated that other programs vary. He stated that enrollees will be City employees and will be paid to attend classes. He stated that attendees will also begin learning the policies and procedures of the Reading Fire Department.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if all Reading firefighters are cross trained as EMTs. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that most firefighters are cross trained as EMTs. He stated that EMTs can provide care for less serious injuries / illnesses. He stated that paramedics can provide a higher level of care. He stated that firefighters who are cross trained to provide coverage for EMT illness or vacation and assist daily as needed.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the starting salary of a paramedic. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that Reading's starting salary is \$50,000 annually. He stated that salaries in other areas vary and that they are very competitive. He stated that Reading will not compete in bidding wars for paramedics as these salaries cannot be sustained. He expressed the belief that paramedics can earn a good living but that there is shift work which makes it difficult to attract employees.

Mr. Henning questioned where the new program has been advertised. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that he has shared the poster so that Board members can help advertise. He stated that the City has advertised via their social media accounts and that posters have been hung at specific areas where EMTs will see them. He noted the need to express interest in the program by the end of April because the training program begins in May.

Mr. Henning suggested hanging posters at RACC and other related campuses. He suggested contacting personnel recruitment professionals to increase interest. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that posters have been provided to the Career and Technology Centers. He reminded all that a person must already be a certified EMT to qualify for this program.

OLD BUSINESS

- County Health Department

No report.

- Fluoride in Drinking Water

Dr. Dethoff stated that Utah is also considering removing fluoride from its drinking water. He noted the need for additional research by EPA prior to this Board's discussions.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Measles

Ms. Schorn requested an update on local measles outbreaks. Dr. Dethoff stated that he has no information and the other doctors are not in attendance.

READING FIRE DEPARTMENT

WANTS TO SEND YOU TO PARAMEDIC SCHOOL!

Get Paid to go to Paramedic School

- Must be an EMT at time of application
- \$22.63/hour in school with raise upon certification
- 42-hour work week split between school & department-specific training
- 5-Year commitment upon certification

Benefits Day 1

- Defined Pension Plan
- Supplemental Retirement Plan
- Health, Vision, Dental, Prescription

Uniform allowance provided

Applications Due April 30, 2025

Testing May 2025

Apply at www.readingpa.gov

For all questions, e-mail
firecivilservice@readingpa.gov

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 4 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room.

The meeting adjourned at 4:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk