

**Board of Health  
Tuesday, June 4, 2024  
Hybrid Meeting / Penn Room**

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

**Others Attending:** S. Smith – in person; C. Reed, M. Sninsky, J. Melendez - 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. Moya, to approve the April 2, 2024 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.**

**REPORTS**

- Health Inspections

Mr. Reed stated that 91 inspections have occurred since the Board's last meeting – 19 of which required reinspection. He stated that he has followed up on nine animal complaints. He stated that his current focus is on businesses that are illegally grilling on sidewalks and selling the food. He stated that this has become a huge issue and the City has received many complaints. He stated that a media release will be issued noting that enforcement will begin.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the issue is the flames or the sale of the food. Mr. Reed stated that it is both – there can be no open flames within ten feet of a property and the food cannot be sold.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if a homeowner who has a small space can grill. Mr. Reed stated that this is technically a violation of the Fire Code. He stated that the current problem is with bodegas grilling on their sidewalks and selling the food.

Mr. Hospidor connected to the meeting at this time.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if a special permit is required to grill and sell the food. Mr. Reed stated that the City allows sidewalk cafes but all food must be prepared indoors. He stated that the enforcement of this issue was relaxed during COVID but has become problematic and enforcement will restart.

- Lead Abatement Program

Mr. Melendez provided the following report:

- Lead has been abated from a total of 19 homes
- 14 homes are in the abatement process
- 4 additional homes have been remediated for Radon

Dr. Dethoff questioned the timeframe of the 19 lead abatements. Mr. Melendez stated that this is the cumulative total of the program to date under the federal program. He stated that under the state program, nine homes have been completed.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the end date of the federal grant program. Mr. Melendez stated that the federal grant deadline is April of 2025 but that the City intends to reapply.

- EMS

Dr. Dethoff stated that the April statistics have been provided via email.

Mr. Sninsky stated that there was a logistical delay with the ride alongs but they will occur this summer. He stated that May's statistics will be provided when they are available. He stated that he is anticipating additional drug use, and resulting 911 calls, during the warm weather. He stated that most ambulance calls are in the Reading area but calls to the Western Berks area are increasing. He noted that there have been several calls for dog bites.

Mr. Melendez disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Mr. Reed questioned if the animal bites were reported to the Police Department. Mr. Sninsky stated that there have been two calls for dog bites in the last month. He stated that if the animal is impounded, the incident is reported to the Police.

There was a brief discussion about the passing of an EMS physician. Condolences were expressed.

Dr. Dethoff stated that the April report shows that 10% of transports are not emergencies. He questioned if this means that the transport did not include lights and sirens. Mr. Sninsky stated that it would depend on the severity of the issue or whether the condition was no longer life threatening. He stated that without lights and sirens the transport is done more safely.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if people's driving habits cause more accidents when ambulances are driving with lights and sirens. Mr. Sninsky stated that they do.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if potential patients are routinely tested for COVID. Mr. Sninsky stated that they are not but that tests are available as needed.

- Health Literacy Program

Ms. Smith stated that the data sharing event was held this morning. She stated that she did attend and will request handouts for Board members. She stated that she will invite Dr. Brookins and Ms. Kammerer to the August meeting for a wrap up.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Ambulance Ride Alongs

Please see above.

- County Health Department

Dr. Dethoff reviewed the report's summary of recommendations. He stated that the County Commissioners are discussing this and it seems to be moving forward. He stated that this Board's role is currently unknown.

Dr. Wang stated that a good case has been made to establish a County Health Department.

Dr. Dethoff stated that the PA Department of Health office in Reading consists of two employees who cover both Berks and Schuylkill Counties. He expressed the belief that if this moves forward the County may be eligible for state funding.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Healthcare Companies

Mr. Moya questioned if private healthcare providers need to have CPR training. He also questioned who regulates these companies. He noted the need to address this to save lives.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he is surprised if the providers are not CPR trained and expressed the belief that they should be trained in all basic lifesaving procedures. He questioned if this was a government agency or private business. Mr. Moya stated that this is a private company. He stated that this particular company hires only Spanish speaking staff. He stated that his former mother in law was a client and her provider did not know how to perform CPR and she lost her life.

All present expressed their condolences to Mr. Moya.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he is happy to follow up on the issue.

Mr. Henning questioned if this was a home health care aid covered by Medicare. He expressed the belief that all employees should be trained and have medical experience. He stated that there are no local regulations on these companies.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that all home healthcare providers should have basic medical training.

Mr. Moya praised the ambulance service which arrived within three minutes but it was already too late.

Mr. Sninsky, using the chat feature, stated that he is working with civic groups to schedule CPR and Stop the Bleed training.

Dr. Dethoff thanked Mr. Moya for bringing this issue to the Board's attention.

- Street Sweeper Program

Mr. Henning stated that many times the sweepers run without water and create air pollution. He stated that he has received several complaints about this issue. He stated that he has spoken with Ms. Ayers-Fisher and the City is aware of the problem. He stated that Ms. Ayers-Fisher indicated that the sweepers cannot use water during the cold months. He described the dust clouds that they

create which include auto fluid drippings, lead particles, and small litter. He stated that Councilor Baez is also interested in exploring guidance for the use of the sweepers.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if Ms. Ayers-Fisher explained why the water is not always used. Mr. Henning stated that she indicated that it could be a driver error or that the sweeper tank has run out. He stated that Public Works is actively addressing this. He suggested that only areas in dire need be swept weekly. He stated that Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that PA DEP requires sweeping to keep these materials out of the catch basins and the Schuylkill River. *(Note: Reading has separate storm water and waste water collection systems and items that go into the catch basins go directly into the River.)* He stated that the sweepers are not designed to pick up litter. He suggested that the sweepers not run during winter months. He requested that the Board discuss the issue and make recommendations to Public Works.

Dr. Dethoff suggested inviting Ms. Ayers-Fisher to the August meeting and suggested that a joint meeting with the EAC may also need to be scheduled. Ms. Smith explained that she is also the staff liaison to the EAC and can schedule a joint meeting.

Dr. Dethoff noted that he has found many metal bristles in the gutters in his neighborhood from the sweepers.

Mr. Henning expressed the belief that the sweepers are a necessary evil since this is being done at DEP's request. He noted the need to look for the least negative impacts of the program.

Mr. Reed noted his understanding of the issue but also noted that as a resident this program is important to keeping City streets clean. He described the amount of litter in the streets in his neighborhood. He agreed with seeking a middle ground.

Mr. Henning again noted that the sweepers do not pick up litter. He suggested that funding be shifted from the sweeper program to the Clean City program so that litter can be cleaned up properly.

Mr. Reed stated that he lives near Southern Middle School. He stated that the students constantly litter the neighborhood and that residents do not use proper methods of trash set out.

Ms. Smith stated that she lives near Pandora Park and there is always litter on her street as well. She stated that in addition to the children littering, litter is often left behind by baseball players using the field and those who use the splashpad.

Dr. Dethoff noted the City's annual Dumpster Day. He expressed the belief that this is a terrific program and suggested that it be done more frequently.

Dr. Wang disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that additional Dumpster Days would reduce the amount of illegal dumping.

Mr. Hospidor questioned if there was other equipment that could be purchased similar to what the City uses to pick up leaves that could pick up litter.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 4 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room.

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Shelly Smith*, CMC  
Deputy City Clerk