

**Board of Health
Tuesday, June 7, 2022
Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Members Attending: J. Dethoff, B. Hospidor, K. Schorn, L. Bohn, J. Schwartz

Others Attending: S. Smith, C. Reed, E. Blankenbiller

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

Ms. Smith welcomed Dr. Jessica Schwartz to the meeting and stated that she has been appointed as an alternate member. Dr. Schwartz introduced herself and provided a brief background. Dr. Dethoff welcomed Dr. Schwartz and introduced the rest of the attendees.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Hospidor, seconded by Ms. Schorn, to approve the April 5, 2022 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

HEALTH INSPECTION REPORT

Mr. Estrada provided the monthly report via email before the start of the meeting:

Inspections April & May

- Inspections – 144
- Rechecks - 21
- Food related complaint investigations – 17
- Building & Trades walk-thru – 19
- SR requests as they relate to health – 26
- Animal control inspections – 34
- Businesses permanently closed and vacant since COVID – 23
- Completely new businesses since COVID – 18
- Businesses that changed hands - 63

Mr. Reed reviewed the report.

Dr. Dethoff stated that Mr. Reed and Mr. Blankenbiller had indicated in the past that there were many new business inspections. He questioned if the rates were this high prior to COVID. Mr. Reed stated that they were not this high prior to COVID. He expressed the belief that the actual number of businesses that changed hands was closer to 100 but that many don't finish the process and open. He stated that these 63 have completed the entire licensing and permitting process.

Ms. Bohn stated that Sun Rich has reopened under new ownership.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if Sun Rich closed due to COVID. Ms. Bohn stated that the former owner went bankrupt and Sun Rich has been purchased by a company from Texas and has reopened and restarted limited operations.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the number employees at Sun Rich. Ms. Bohn stated that it had been approximately 100 employees but that they have reopened on a limited basis and have only ten employees at this time. She stated that they are only processing watermelon at this time.

COVID-19 UPDATE

EMS Deputy Chief Sninsky shared the following via email with his apologies for being unable to attend this meeting:

- COVID numbers for City Fire Dept personnel are currently zero, we did have a total of 3 off over the past month for being COVID +, none of which were serious (thankfully)
- Hospitals still advising personnel to wear masks when entering
- Our providers are equipped with multiple PPE products
- No shortage of PPE at present
- Vaccination status numbers for Fire Dept personnel remains unchanged

Dr. Dethoff questioned the availability of anti-virals to treat COVID. Dr. Schwartz stated that anti-virals can be prescribed at this time. She stated that they are consistently more available for use.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he has read that there are negative side effects. Dr. Schwartz agreed and stated that the COVID score must be high enough to warrant their use.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the anti-virals have interactions with other medications. Dr. Schwartz stated that they do, primarily statins. She stated that physicians must consult with the patient's cardiologist before prescribing anti-virals because the statins cannot be taken at the same time.

Dr. Dethoff stated that the rate of infection of those who are vaccinated and received their booster are rising. He stated that the theory is that those people are emboldened to stop taking proper precautions. He stated that he does not agree with that theory. Dr. Schwartz expressed the belief that it may be because COVID is now endemic and new variants have emerged. She stated that she is relieved that those who contract COVID and are vaccinated show much milder symptoms.

Dr. Dethoff noted his surprise that there is an increase in the flu at this time of year. Dr. Schwartz agreed that this is a late surge. She stated that there was a reduction in the number of flu vaccines this year because people didn't get both the flu and COVID vaccines.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there was a high number of ICU patients with COVID. Dr. Schwartz stated that there are some but not at the level that was seen in the past.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there are any cases of Monkeypox in Berks County. Dr. Schwartz stated that Monkeypox has not yet arrived in Berks County.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that Monkeypox is difficult to transmit. Dr. Schwartz agreed and stated that it will be found quickly and is treatable.

BERKS TEENS

Ms. Smith stated that the name change is complete and the group is now known as Berks Teens. She provided a brief background on Berks Teens.

LEAD ABATEMENT COALITION

Dr. Dethoff stated that the lake at Bernhart's Park has been lowered. He questioned when DEP would perform the inspection of the dam. Ms. Smith stated that the City has been trying to contact DEP but has had no response to date.

Dr. Dethoff provided a brief background of the lead issues in the area caused by the smelting at Exide. Ms. Smith stated that Exide has gone bankrupt and no longer operates in North America. She stated that the trust that was established for clean-ups is not enough to complete the lead remediation at Bernhart's now that the lake level has been lowered. She stated that EPA is assisting.

EVICTION MORATORIUM

No report.

COUNTY DEPT OF HEALTH

Dr. Dethoff provided a brief overview of this issue and stated that there is nothing new to report at this time.

HEALTH BOARD AMENDMENT

Ms. Smith stated that she should have time to restart this project now that some other projects are complete.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, August 2 at 4 pm via Zoom.

Dr. Dethoff noted the safety and convenience of meeting virtually and stated that more people attend meetings now. All agreed to continue meeting virtually.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk