

**Board of Health
Tuesday, December 7, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Members Attending: J. Dethoff, B. Hospidor, K. Schorn, M. Kelleher

Others Attending: S. Smith, E. Blankenbiller, J. Long, I. Litvinov

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Hospidor, seconded by Ms. Schorn, to approve the October 5, 2021 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

HEALTH OFFICE REPORT

Mr. Blankenbiller stated that there is no update. He stated that businesses continue to turnover quickly, some as often as monthly.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the businesses are turning over for similar reasons. Mr. Blankenbiller expressed the belief that most of the businesses are leased and there may be landlord / tenant issues. He stated that the turnover is mostly occurring with bodegas.

Ms. Schorn stated that the business operating at N 10th & Windsor Sts keeps meats and desserts in the same freezer. She questioned if this was allowed. Mr. Blankenbiller stated that this is allowed as long as the items are separated and the freezer is at the correct temperature.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Dr. Kelleher stated that new data has been released. She stated that Berks County is currently tied with the second highest seven day new case count. She stated that hospital admissions and ICU bed needs are rising. She stated that this is a negative trend and that reinfections are now included in the new cases if it has been at least 90 days between infections. She stated that test rates are down and that vaccine rates are okay but that Berks is struggling to increase its vaccination rate. She stated that the number of fully vaccinated children in Berks is also lagging and expressed the belief that this is increasing cases in adults.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the data includes a breakout of the number of infections by those who are fully vaccinated. Dr. Kelleher stated that the PA Dept of Health is not tracking that statistic but that hospitals will provide this information. She stated that infection of fully vaccinated people are rising at Geisinger, Lehigh Valley, Lancaster, Tower Health and Penn State St. Joseph.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if hospitals have begun reducing the number of elective procedures in response to rising hospitalizations. Dr. Kelleher stated that elective procedures are decreasing and some are diverting patients to other facilities.

Dr. Dethoff stated that the CDC website includes a very helpful graph. He stated that, interestingly, it is showing that people over age 80 who are fully vaccinated are still at high risk.

Dr. Kelleher expressed the belief that the US is behind other countries when determining who is fully vaccinated. She expressed the belief that fully vaccinated should refer to those who have had all three vaccinations.

Mr. Hospidor questioned if there will be more vaccines after the third dose. Dr. Kelleher stated that research on the Omicron variant will determine if additional vaccines are needed. She stated that this variant is currently being studied.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that COVID-19 will be endemic. He noted his hope that the new variant will be contagious but less deadly.

HEALTH CODE AMENDMENT

No report.

HEALTH BOARD AMENDMENT

No report.

BERKS TEENS MATTER

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the group has completed its name change. Ms. Smith stated that it has not.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the operation of the Health Resource Center at RHS. Ms. Smith stated that the HRC is open.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the group is meeting. Ms. Smith stated that meetings are held every other month via Zoom.

LEAD ABATEMENT COALITION

Dr. Kelleher stated that training contractors to remove lead is the current priority. She stated that referrals can be made after contractors have been trained. She stated that there are more contaminated homes than there will be funding to remediate.

Mr. Blankenbiller stated that Property Maintenance Inspectors are currently undergoing lead training.

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No report.

COUNTY DEPT OF HEALTH

Dr. Kelleher stated that grant funding has been obtained for a health position in Reading government. She stated that the County has hired a consultant to study the feasibility of a County Dept of Health.

2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

Dr. Dethoff recommended keeping the same meeting schedule. All agreed.

NEXT MEETING

Dr. Dethoff stated that he is not available on February 1. He questioned if the group wished to meet on January 25 instead. The group noted its agreement to meet on January 25.

Ms. Smith was requested to poll the entire group about their availability on January 25 and schedule the meeting accordingly.

The next meeting of the Board is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 25 at 4 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk