

**Board of Health
Tuesday, February 4, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Penn Room**

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

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

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 Mr. Moya, to approve the December 3, 2024 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 if he remains the chair in 2025.

Ms. Smith suggested deferring the reorganization until the next meeting so that additional members can participate. All agreed.

REPORTS

- Health Inspections

Ms. Smith stated that Ms. Herbert is ill today and Mr. Reed had a conflict. She stated that Mr. Reed provided the following update via email:

- 63 Inspections
- 21 Inspections required rechecks
- 3 Animal complaints

Dr. Dethoff questioned the animal complaints. Ms. Smith stated that she does not have details.

Dr. Dethoff stated that there have been loose dogs in the northeast section of Reading that have killed a small dog.

- Lead Abatement Program

Mr. Melendez stated that he shared a flyer for a program being run by the PA Dept of Health for blood lead testing for children ages 1 – 4. He stated that the Dept of Health hopes to test 1,000 children and stated that the event will be held at the Public Works building. He stated that future events will be held at the Reading Public Library and recreation centers.

Dr. Dethoff questioned how the event was being advertised. Mr. Melendez stated that the flyer was shared on social media and he requested that Board members share the flyer with their networks. Ms. Smith stated that the flyer was also shared on the City Council Facebook page.

Dr. Dethoff suggested that the event be shared with the Reading Eagle. Mr. Melendez stated that he will contact WFMZ but that he does not have contacts at the Reading Eagle.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the blood will be drawn or if it is a finger stick. Mr. Melendez stated that it will be a finger stick and that if elevated levels are shown, the family will be referred to their family doctor for further testing.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if Mr. Melendez had an update on the RAWA lead pipe survey. Mr. Melendez stated that he does not have information on this program.

Mr. Melendez reported that 48 units have had lead removed and that the Healthy Homes program will begin shortly.

- EMS

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that 28 – 30 doses of Narcan were administered in January. He reported that EMS received 19,000 calls in 2024. He stated that he has begun to track early hospital discharges to ensure that people have the services that they need. He stated that to date nine (9) referrals to social services were made. He stated that this is part of the Department's due diligence.

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that EMS has moved to a new billing company which is working more smoothly. He requested that if there are any issues or complaints about the prior company that they be referred to Ms. Villasenor in the Fire Chief's office.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the need for Narcan is seasonal and if it increases during warmer months. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that there is a slight decrease during colder months but that use is still frequent.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if drug combinations in dangerous levels have been found in Reading. He questioned how EMS staff knows if this is an issue when they arrive on scene. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that they occasionally have situations where Narcan does not work. He stated that there has been a rise in synthetic drug use. He stated that, unfortunately, staff does not find out until after the person is hospitalized or dies.

Dr. Dethoff expressed the belief that these people would be screened at the hospital but that many will not agree to be admitted.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there has been a rise in COVID infections. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that there has been a rise in COVID, the flu, and RSV.

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that he has been inventorying the fire stations and there are enough medical supplies for 6 – 8 months in case of another pandemic.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he contracted COVID after the holidays and was surprised that the CDC removed COVID specific recommendations. He stated that he has seen reports that 50% of people no longer test for COVID when they have symptoms.

OLD BUSINESS

- County Health Department

No report.

- CA Supreme Court Ruling – Fluoride in Drinking Water

Dr. Dethoff stated that this topic comes forward every few years. He stated that there are new studies which show slight concerns. He stated that past studies showing a person's IQ dropping due to fluoride were done in other countries where the natural fluoride levels are much higher than in the US. He expressed the belief that it depends on the amount of fluoride that is ingested.

Dr. Dethoff stated that the CA Supreme Court has ordered US EPA to do further studies and suggested that the Board not provide an updated opinion on the use of fluoride in Reading's drinking water until after the new studies are completed. He expressed the belief that the addition of fluoride to US water supplies has been a tremendous benefit but noted the need to measure negatives as well.

Dr. Dethoff stated that Florida is currently considering removing fluoride from its drinking water. He noted that well water will also need to be studied. He stated that he learned about fluoride issues in medical school as some parts of the world have very high natural concentrations of fluoride in their drinking water. He expressed the belief that the US has a very controlled amount.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Moya stated that his home is on Laurel St very close to Market Alley. He stated that there was a large accumulation of ice in the alley. He stated that he reported the ice to the City but there was no response. He stated that the alley is also near a school.

Ms. Smith explained that the City is not responsible for alleys and that the ice should be cleared by property owners whose property abuts the alley. She stated that she will research the status of this alley and report her findings to Mr. Moya.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 4 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk