

**Board of Health
Tuesday, August 2, 2016
Penn Room**

Members Attending: B. Hospidor, J. Dethoff, J. Seidel, K. Schorn
Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, R. Johnson, T. Arentz

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

A quorum was present.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Hospidor, seconded by Ms. Schorn, to approve the June 7, 2016 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Health Officer Report

Mr. Arentz presented the monthly report.

Dr. Dethoff questioned what was checked during laundry inspections. Mr. Arentz stated that inspectors check for general cleanliness and to ensure that the water is flowing in and out of the premises correctly.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if any commercial laundromats use gray water. Mr. Arentz stated that they do not.

Dr. Kimball arrived at this time.

Lead in Water

Dr. Dethoff stated that he requested a review of the lead in the water in the Reading area to prevent another situation that occurred in Flint, MI. He noted his understanding that the problem in Flint was discovered by a pediatrician who noticed a spike in the lead levels of children. He noted the need for the Board of Health to do its due diligence in Reading.

Dr. Kimball stated that in the Flint situation, there was industrial waste in the river that made it acidic causing the lead to leach from the pipes. She stated that the Reading Area Water Authority (RAWA) has been monitoring for lead for many years and that she expressed the belief that this will not occur in Reading. She stated that the pediatrician in Flint noticed lead levels in children between 5 and 15 (*Note: safe lead levels in children are 5 or below.*)

Dr. Dethoff questioned if lead levels are routinely tested in children. Dr. Kimball stated that it is recommended but not always covered by health insurance companies. She stated that the focus is no longer on paint chips but on cheap toys and jewelry.

Dr. Dethoff questioned how a family would pay for the test if it is not covered by health insurance. Dr. Kimball stated that medical assistance does cover the cost of the test. She stated that more health insurance companies have now started covering the testing.

Ms. Schorn questioned if the testing was done with a finger stick. Dr. Kimball stated that it is.

Dr. Kimball stated that a lead level of 5 or less is considered safe. She stated that when levels begin to increase the cause must be determined.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the body cleared the lead over time. Dr. Kimball stated that it does through urination. However, she stated that the damage is done before the body can expel it. She stated that the Flint situation also has spurred much political discussion. She expressed the belief that RAWA has the best water on the east coast.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if Dr. Kimball has seen any lead level spikes locally. Dr. Kimball stated that she has not.

Mr. Johnson introduced himself as the current chair of RAWA. He stated that he is also the City's Public Works Director and has a background in water and wastewater. He stated that he was the superintendent of the City's waste water treatment plant before he became the Public Works Director. He apologized for the absence of RAWA's executive director.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the situation in Flint. He stated that:

- The original water source was from Detroit.
- Flint's water demands changed after the massive plant closures.
- During the same time period an emergency manager was appointed to address Flint's financial situation.
- The emergency manager examined Flint's water source as this was a major expense.
- A new local water authority was formed but it would take many years to build a new plant.
- The emergency manager recommended that Flint stop using the water from Detroit and recommission its old plant (*Note: this plant was decommissioned and unused for 20 years*).
- Flint began using a new water source which was very contaminated.
- Several boil water advisories were issued.
- The chlorine level in the water was increased twice to battle the contaminants.
- The increased chlorine level caused the lead to leach from the pipes.

Mr. Johnson expressed the belief that the entire situation was caused in an effort to save money.

Dr. Kimball stated that there are also reports that the water had a bad smell. Mr. Johnson agreed.

Mr. Coleman arrived at this time.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the water was clean at the source. Mr. Johnson stated that officials have made this claim but that now many are facing criminal charges and have been dismissed from their positions. He stated that Flint has now gone back to its original water source and that the situation was not worth the financial savings.

Mr. Johnson stated that RAWA takes routine samples regularly to ensure that it is meeting PA DEP's regulations. He stated that testing occurs both at the source and out of random taps. He stated that

RAWA recently joined "Partnership for Safe Drinking Water" and has won several awards. He stated that RAWA continues to monitor for lead.

Mr. Johnson explained that the testing is done by a third party to keep the results transparent and to remove any conflict. He stated that the RAWA system is aging but that it is kept in good condition. He stated that the Maiden Creek and Lake Ontelaunee are proven clean water sources. He expressed the belief that there is no risk of lead exposure at this time.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there were lead pipes in the system. Mr. Johnson stated that there are but he is unsure of how many or where they are located.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if the lead pipes needed to be replaced. Mr. Johnson expressed the belief that this is not necessary. Dr. Kimball stated that the pipes were reviewed during former Mayor Haggerty's tenure due to an increase in lead levels in children. She stated that the cause was not the water or the pipe system.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if test sites are chosen at random. Mr. Johnson stated that they are.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if schools were tested. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Miller could give more detail about testing locations at the October meeting.

Dr. Kimball stated that RAWA also routinely flushes the system. Mr. Johnson agreed and stated that there is a routine schedule and the entire system is flushed every five years.

Dr. Kimball stated that this is also helpful in keeping the system healthy. She stated that flushing can cause brown water immediately after it is done and expressed the belief that this causes many people to believe that Reading's water is not good.

Mr. Johnson stated that as repairs are made to the system they must meet current regulations.

Mr. Arentz stated that Property Maintenance assists RAWA in testing site locations. Mr. Johnson agreed and explained that schools and churches are good testing sites because the water must sit in the pipes for eight hours to give accurate results.

Dr. Dethoff stated that it was great to hear that RAWA is vigilant.

Ms. Schorn questioned the year that paint no longer used lead. Dr. Kimball stated that she believes it is 1974. She stated that many older homes still have lead paint underneath several layers.

There was a discussion about children's toys and jewelry that contain lead and are problematic if the children put them in their mouth.

Mr. Johnson stated that there is a new lead situation in the City but that it is in soil and not water. He stated that Ms. Hoag is working closely on the issue. He stated that he will provide information when he has more detail.

Dr. Dethoff requested that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Miller attend the October meeting to further discuss the water testing and to discuss this new situation.

Bed Bugs

Dr. Dethoff stated that the information has been added to the website. He suggested that a disclaimer regarding calling professionals should be added. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will make this addition.

Dr. Kimball stated that professionals can also require several treatments before the bugs are eliminated.

Dr. Dethoff described a bag that can be purchased to put belongings into to heat and kill the bugs.

Berks Teens Matter

Dr. Dethoff stated that he will soon be retiring and will begin attending meetings.

Zika Virus

Dr. Dethoff stated that there is a neighborhood in Miami where mosquitoes are transmitting Zika. He stated that the CDC has issued a travel advisory to avoid the area. He stated that new research is showing that the disease can be spread through some body fluids and can be spread male to female and female to male. He stated that a test is available but that 50% of pregnancies in the US are unplanned which makes the test mute.

Dr. Kimball stated that many Reading residents routinely travel to the Caribbean and places where Zika has been found. She stated that medical assistance now covers insecticides. Dr. Dethoff agreed and stated that Reading was chosen as a monitoring site because of the many residents who routinely travel to infected areas.

Dr. Dethoff stated that testing for Zika is complicated and the results can be difficult to determine.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 4 at 4 pm in the Penn Room.

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk*