

ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 14, 2020

PRESENT: Dennis Galluzzo, RPh.
Rob Free, Vice President, Food & Beverage, Buffalo Bisons
Baseball/Canalside/Outer Harbor
Diane Loomis, DNP, FNP
Delores Funke
Lisa Chimera, EC Legislator
Jonathan Daniels, M.D. via teleconference

EXCUSED: Maureen Montgomery, M.D.

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:

Gale Burstein, M.D.

I. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 MEETING

The meeting was called to order. The minutes of the September 10, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.

II. ECBOH MEMBERSHIP

There was discussion on the ECBOH membership. Dr. Hoddick and Dr. Dunaif stepped down from their positions. There are presently two vacancies. Dr. Burstein asked if anyone had any suggestions in mind for people that had a background in the Sanitary Code or general housing issues that perhaps related to lead poisoning. We need to have someone from the cities of Tonawanda and Lackawanna; this is stated in the EC Charter. Dennis Galluzzo was nominated for President of the BOH, Rob Free made a motion, and everyone was in favor.

III. FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Rob Free gave an update. He went on to say that the FPC was created approximately six years ago to be housed under the ECBOH. It was tasked with

bettering the food system in Buffalo and Erie County. Whether that is urban farming, getting rid of food deserts, as well as nutrition training. During the past couple of years they have found their course on what needs to get done. Last year they obtained a grant from the United Way through General Mills out of Minnesota. They were then able to hire a consultant who started last year. The FPC was doing well, it was very arduous and a lot of work had to be done by council members. At that point, the consultant decided that she didn't think that she could get the FPC where they wanted to be, and did not want to do the job anymore. This was a setback, but it made the FPC more resolute as they saw a path with progress and what could happen. They now have structure, an executive committee that meets regularly to take what has been done as 90% of it was done by them in workshops. They will move forward and continue to get a charter and a long term plan; as well as contacting other FPC's on how they have accomplished these goals. Dr. Burstein said ECDOH Environmental Health would be working with UB Law School to assist with some enforcement; she thought that possibly they could also assist the FPC. Rob said they would be reaching out to Dr. Rajah at UB who was involved with the FPC at its inception. They think that they can accomplish this on their own, but will continue to find a local consultant as they have half of the money appropriated for this left over. Dennis Galluzzo asked Mr. Free if the FPC was currently looking for someone local for the consultant position, to which Mr. Free responded that they were. Mr. Free also spoke on the urban farmers pledge, that is to be rolled out at the Massachusetts Avenue Project Farmhouse in late February and are looking for Dr. Burstein to attend. He said that he would forward this information to Dr. Burstein. He also said that at the next BOH meeting he would have something more positive to report.

IV. COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

Dr. Burstein said that there has been a lot of flu in the area. In Erie County there have been higher trends of much higher numbers than the prior three or four years. The surveillance data that we have is the tip of the iceberg, as many people who have the flu never get a test, and many have a rapid test in their MD's office that never gets reported to us. So that the numbers on our website are not the absolute numbers, we use them to follow trends. Throughout Erie County and NYS, this year's numbers are much higher. Also what is unique about this year is that we are seeing more influenza B than we have in the past. B usually peaks in the spring in March or April, at this time of year it is 90-95% influenza A. From a clinical standpoint it is not really clear this would make that much of a difference because they can both cause severe disease. CDC has not published the vaccine efficacy data; it should come out next month. Dr. Burstein said that there was a

pediatric flu related death over the weekend. Kara Kane who is our Public Health Information officer has been monitoring social media and putting out information, and said that anti-vaccination people are very verbal and loud. And are now giving the message of not using Tamiflu, saying someone died from it. Dr. Burstein said that this is impossible. Parents that have children that are at risk for getting severe illness that are on Tamiflu; these parents are questioning it. We are putting out messages on social media, and Dr. Burstein e-mailed the communities' pediatricians advising parents to follow their web sites linked to the ECDOH social media messaging as we need to be one voice. Dennis Galluzzo said that his formerly owned pharmacy has increased their number of flu shots this year.

Dr. Burstein went on to say that there were 111 confirmed opioid related overdose deaths in 2019, an additional 50 cases need to be confirmed. These statistics are significantly lower than 301 in 2016. NBC is working with a documentary production company. They are making a four part documentary on different areas of the country's experience with the opioid epidemic. Erie County is going to be on one of the segments. They are saving us for last as the area who has figured it out.

New legislation in NYS has gone into effect regarding lead levels; where we had to take full on board action for kids has dropped from 10 to 15 micrograms per deciliter per liter to 5. This has tripled our work load. The EC Legislature has approved nine new positions in the budget to handle the additional workload.

The ECDOH has also received information from the CDC to pay for a person to work in Epidemiology and surveillance to focus on maternal child hepatitis C surveillance. So women of child bearing age who are reported with hepatitis C, we will be able to investigate if they are pregnant or not. If they are still pregnant they will be followed to labor and delivery, and follow them up with their babies to Oishei Children's Hospital who has a mother/child hepatitis C clinic. Hopefully this person will also be able to investigate old cases of hepatitis C in women of child bearing age. To see if they did have children when they were infected and are still infected, and link them into care. The CDC is coming here at the end of next month for a site visit. We are trying to get partners on board such as OB/Gyn's. CDC is going to publish guidelines for prenatal hepatitis C testing this spring so that will help. As well as the pediatricians getting babies into care, and insurance companies willing to pay for the care.

V. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Dennis Galluzzo handed out information regarding industrial wind turbines and adverse health effects. Dr. Burstein said that UB recently had a panel of national experts on wind turbines to talk about their safety and effectiveness. Science strongly backs up that they are very effective and clean sources of energy. Throughout Europe they have huge wind turbine farms generating clean energy. She also said that the County Executive has a big goal to develop a clean green economy and so things like solar and wind sources of energy are priorities for him to move forward with.

Dennis Galluzzo said that technically there were pros and cons on the subject. He owns a piece of property in Rushford that will be affected by two wind turbines. He put together information that comes from the World Health organization information and the NYSDEC, and what has been put into public service. The Chautauqua County Board of Health made a recommendation/resolution instructing towns that they should be aware of the state environmental quality review act that demands that these municipalities should be conducting environmental reviews. And to also pass proper wind laws that restrict industrial wind turbines to a minimum of 1.5 miles from any property line and 35 or fewer decibels of sound frequency. This is entirely feasible to do without saying you are against wind. Mr. Galluzzo indicated that he is not against wind or green energy on efforts being made by NYS. His true concerns are that of public health, and as public health officials we need to look at the standards for public health that should be met. He tried to assemble information that was as non-biased as possible.

Dolores Funke asked Mr. Galluzzo what specifically NYSDEC is requiring in an environmental review or impact study? Mr. Galluzzo responded that the secular requirements are not under article ten, but article eight is the responsibility of the state municipalities. The NYSDEC came out with a recommendation saying that most developed road communities have a background in regard to noise of 25 decibels. NYS guidelines recommend limiting project noise, so that the project only increases sound levels 6 decibels or less. The NYSDEC has gone on record to the state that an increase of 20 decibels is classified as intolerable. There are numerous lawsuits going on in various towns. Mr. Galluzzo went on to say that as long as there are proper setbacks and proper noise levels to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people in the effected towns they should be implemented. Dr. Burstein said that we should comply with the NYSDEC regulations. There was some ensuing conversation on this matter.

There was no other new business. The next meeting of the Board of Health was scheduled for May 12, 2020 at 3:30 P.M. The meeting was then adjourned.

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