

# ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

## MINUTES

October 15, 2024

**PRESENT:** Robert Free, Vice President, Food & Beverages, Bisons  
Baseball/Canalside/Outer Harbor, Chairman, BOH  
Gale Burstein, M.D., Erie County Commissioner of Health  
Dolores Funke, Secretary  
Lawrence Dupre, Erie County Legislature – New Member

**VIA WEBEX:** Katie Dyson, M.D. – New member  
Maureen Montgomery, M.D.

**GUEST:** Colette McDonald, FPC Coordinator

Robert Free opened the meeting by everyone introducing themselves.

### **BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES**

#### **REVIEW OF MINUTES May 29, 2024**

Rob motioned to approve the minutes – minutes approved.

#### **I. FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

Collette McDonald, Coordinator for Food Policy Council presented the Food Policy Updates.

- A grant by NYS Agriculture and Markets was awarded to the FPC in June 2024. This grant will be used to fund a new pilot program, “Erie County Farm to Families.” This program will support the purchase of local produce and food product boxes to be distributed to families each week to childcare facilities who service no income, low income, and asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) communities.
- The council has compiled recipes for emergency situations and are planning to publish a recipe book.
- Initial outreach has been made to 34 childcare facilities, with the option to expand to additional facilities.
- The Legislature approved to accept the grant funds and contract with Fresh Fix. The County has executed a contract with them and is awaiting the approved contract.

- Several initiatives, including the New York Food for New York Families “Farm to Families” Program, and upcoming release of the Emergency Eats Cookbook, are ways that the FPC is addressing food insecurity and emergency preparedness within our community.
- The FPC has made significant progress toward its 2024 objectives, laying a strong foundation for future initiatives. With several goals nearing completion and new projects underway, the FPC remains focused on enhancing food access, supporting local agriculture, and advocating for policy changes that promote equity and sustainability in Erie County's food system.
- In the last quarter of 2024, the FPC will continue working on projects that are in progress and identify new and ongoing tasks to focus on in 2025.

## **II. SANITARY CODE UPDATE – Dr. Burstein**

- Dr. Burstein gave a brief update on the gyms, we are working on getting the gyms to register for permits.
- The tobacco enforcement program has implemented a permitting process and is reviewing applications for approval or denial. There is concern about the sale of unregulated and illegal products, and the need for enforcement. There is a backlog of applications pending review, but we anticipate that all applications will be reviewed, and a decision made on approval by the end of November.
- Urban municipalities are not being trusted for inspections, so Environmental inspectors will do the inspections.
- Larry Dupre mentions that the Health Department does great work, and the community wants to see action taken and wants to be informed about the work being done. It is important to get that information publicized.
- Dr. Burstein will work with Kara Kane on a way to make this known to the public.

## **III. COMMISSIONER’S UPDATE**

- We received awards from the Attorney General’s office that has helped us expand our tobacco enforcement program and has also helped us to hire a new county attorney. Along with her usual work she will help with enforcement in commissioners court and environmental health with enforcing landlords.
- Our sexual health clinic is offering a new service called a doxy test for men and transgender women who have unprotected sex and have had a bacterial STI in the past 12 months. If they take a dose of Doxycycline within 72 hours it reduces their risk of acquiring STD’s.
- Our Family Planning Clinic is offering medical abortion’s. We are doing one to two a week.
- Endeavor Health has moved in at 608 William Street. There will be a ribbon cutting in the next couple of weeks.
- NYS Health Department passed a new law that expands lead enforcement in high-risk zip codes. Erie County has the highest lead levels in New York State so there will be a lead registry. All single and double homes must register and need to be inspected every 3 years. We are building the lead registry now and will be hiring more Sanitarians to do these inspections.

- There has been a national and state trend in decreasing numbers of fatal overdoses. We are hoping we are part of that band but can't say yet.
- We are continuing to be aggressive in outreach with our Harm Reduction to expand their services.
- We now have an ambulance service with our EMS. We are servicing rural areas.
- Dr. Burstein gave an update that we continue to see increases in our Opioid related overdose deaths and our total overdose deaths. Through our pharmaceutical settlement funds, we've been able to be in contact with a media company called Impact about fentanyl and cocaine, and harm reduction and getting Narcan. In the meantime they did research, key informant interviews and focus groups to get more information about the community at risk and what their knowledge, attitudes and perceptions are. They sent us pilots of their bigger media campaign, we provided them with feedback. Now their scouting out locations to do shoots of individuals for the billboards and TV ads. They also have a set of demographic profiles of people in Erie County to be in those ads.

#### **VI. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

- No old business
- The next meeting will be held February 4, 2025, at 3:00 PM
- Meeting adjourned