

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF HEALTH

Minutes

Monday, August 2, 2021 5:00 p.m.

Electronic Meeting Platform, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Division of Local Government as a result of the Covid-19 State of Emergency

To be read: This is an electronic meeting of the August 2, 2021 meeting of the Hopewell Township Board of Health

The August 2, 2021 meeting of the Hopewell Township Board of Health was called to order by Mayor Julie Blake at 5:07 p.m.

Notice of this meeting has been posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News, Trenton Times and the Trentonian and Hopewell Express (the official newspapers) on January 5, 2021, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

Secretary called the roll:

Present: Mayor Blake, Ms. McLaughlin, Mr. Kuchinski, Mr. Ruger, Ms. Peters-Manning

Also Present: Dawn Marling, Health Officer
Ms. Scott, Intern from TCNJ

Pledge Allegiance and Salute to the Flag

The first order of business was review and approval of minutes from the May 3, 2021 meeting. Ms. McLaughlin moved to approve minutes; Ms. Peters-Manning seconded.

Ms. Blake reported that the Township is working with the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute, focusing on a series of actions with the Mayor's Wellness Campaign Pledge to determine a matrix within the next 18 months to build the infrastructure of the Health Department and work with the Municipal Alliance to get in position in 2022-2023 to be declared a "healthy town". Ms. Marling noted that Outreach Coordinator Horacio Hernandez is certified and trained with a mental health screening first aid course.

Ms. Marling reported on the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity grant. The Township received a large grant increase from the State, totaling \$291,042 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. This grant money is an integral part of getting the Township through the next phase of the pandemic. Monies will be used for improvements to the municipal building, continued salaries for our contact tracers, salary for the outreach coordinator, a percentage of the health officer's salary, a percentage of the public health nurse salary, clerical support, and clinical purchases. A portion of grant funding is also being used for a professional services contract with Montgomery Township Health Department, to secure programmatic oversight by a Certified Health Education Specialist.

Ms. Marling provided updates on activities of the Health Department in 2021 to-date. Amidst ongoing COVID-19 cases and vaccination clinics, the department is also working toward a resumption of regular health department services and inspections, following

significant structural changes and staff turnover from 2019-present. During 2020, the health inspector visited restaurants which remained open and assured safe operation in line with COVID guidelines however many inspection demands paused during the shutdowns of 2020. Inspection volume resumed during 2021 and the department is keeping pace to inspect all licensed establishments by the end of the year. Temporary events and new activities, such as festivals and food truck operations, have created some additional inspection demands, including weekends. Review of food truck licensing options is planned for discussion during the Township Committee meeting.

Community pools re-opened in 2021 and all have been inspected. The busy real estate market presented a significant volume of work, due to the Township's ordinance requiring review of a private septic system inspection and well water quality prior to closing. Ms. Marling noted the Township is growing and demands on the Health Department are forecast to increase. New applications for businesses, site plan reviews, and increased population service demands will all have a significant impact on the day-to-day operation.

Ms. Marling noted the department is currently hampered by an outdated database that our IT contractor no longer supports. Ms. Marling is currently researching new systems that will enable staff to streamline complaint and inspection reports, and for residents to pay online for pet licensing, letters of review for real estate, etc. Dog and cat licensing has decreased in recent years and an option for online payment may facilitate compliance. Discussion was held on ways to enhance advertisement of the Township's requirement.

Horacio Hernandez, Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinator, completed a "needs assessment report" highlighting key findings of the effects of COVID-19 on the community during the first round of NJDOH grant funding. Mr. Hernandez worked in collaboration with Mercer County and various social service agencies to hone-in on the needs of Hopewell Valley residents. NJDOH requires an update to the assessment by September 30th.

COVID-19 update: Ms. Marling reported a recent increase in local COVID cases, noting 5 cases this past weekend. The Hopewell Valley has a high vaccination rate overall, but efforts continue to reach residents who have not been vaccinated. Due to overlapping zip codes and census data, it is difficult to provide specific vaccination percentages for each municipality. For example, statistics for Pennington Borough exceed 100%, indicating there are likely Township residents being incorrectly coded as Borough residents.

Ms. Marling discussed the DEP approval of the Community Food Cycle LLC food waste recycling project. The State and Mercer County share goals to increase recycling rates in general, including the recycling of food waste. Ms. Marling reported on certain stipulations around odor monitoring and advised formal complaints can be filed with DEP and County representatives, who can enforce the NJ Air Pollution Control Act. The NJ Hotline for environmental complaints is 1-877-WARNDEP.

Public Section: No comment

There being no further business, Ms. Courtney Peters moved to adjourn, Ms. McLaughlin seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Prassas