



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING**
*East Orange Department of Health & Human Services
143 New Street East Orange, New Jersey 07017
January 18, 2022*

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Call to Order – 5:30 PM

Board President Christine Harris read the following **Sunshine Law**: This meeting, which conforms to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter **231**, and Public Law of **1975** is a regular meeting of the City of East Orange Board of Health. Notices have been filed with our official newspaper, with the City Clerk, and posted on regular bulletin boards. The public is permitted to participate at this meeting.

Zoom Communication ID: 988 9958 5888

Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/98899585888?pwd=SkZvUHVtT0dJQ1czS1BJS0dWUjZdz09>

After the roll call, it was determined there was a quorum to convene the meeting.

Board Members Present:

Christine Harris, President
Horace H. Henry, Vice President
Tobbia M. Corbitt
Deanna Phillips
Angela Jones-Williams – excused absence
Dr. Tonya X. Cook

Council Liaison:

Leneus Bergson - absent

Board of Health Counsel:

Attorney Farah Abuobead

Health Department Staff:

Dr. Griffith, HHS Director
Victor Kuteyi, Health Officer

Mayoral Staff:

None

Public in attendance:

None

Approval of October 19, 2021, Meeting Minutes:

Approved Unanimously



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Announcements President Harris:

1. President Harris spoke on November 17, 2021, following Commissioner Persichilli's presentation on the State of Health of NJ. The 2021 NJ Leagues of Municipalities Conference featured the theme "Creating Your Legacy."

Dr. Griffith Updates:

HIV Program

President Harris asked for the status of the additional funding that we applied for to supplement the HIV program. Dr. Griffith stated we decided to go in a different direction as the funding EOGH was supplying would not have aligned with our existing internal program. The goal was to enhance the types of services that are provided to the community. The HIV program mostly operates internally via our main building. We are exploring different populations that we might not typically have access to because our focus has either been those that come into the department or outside agencies that either have the higher risk populations that we support.

Vaccination Efforts

Due to the severity of COVID, it has turned into somewhat of a separate program and its unexpected longevity needs support longer term. We are putting together a COVID Response and Recovery Team (CR&RT) to support that effort and reduce some of the burdens on existing personnel. The new CR&RT will be comprised of new staff, starting within the next few weeks, and will help stabilize some of what is occurring in the department. The team will assist with the COVID response and manage other aspects of COVID that have impacted the community such as the moratorium on evictions being lifted and other financial, social, and even behavioral repercussions. Dr. Griffith shared we will be offering the pediatric COVID-19 vaccination clinic in late January. The clinic will take place at Stem Academy and provide Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J vaccinations for children ages 5-11.

Booster Vaccinations

President Harris asked the Health Department for an update regarding the booster vaccinations. Dr. Griffith stated FEMA is operating the vaccination site in conjunction with the Health Department to reach a broader base and increase our numbers. We are also poised to continue to offer first doses to residents as well while partnering with the county and any other providers, to continue efforts where they are needed.

Border Crossings

President Harris asked if there has been any indication of individuals coming from the southern border illegally into East Orange. It is her understanding that young people are being flown into New York, New Jersey, and other major cities across the US, without being tested or identifying their vaccination status. Dr. Griffith stated she is not aware of any individuals being transported under these conditions and would not be notified unless there was a larger evaluation or assessment that warranted the involvement of the health department.



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Recreational Marijuana Updates

President Harris asked had there been any conversations regarding the recreational marijuana ordinance. Dr. Griffith stated there have been no additional conversations regarding this since the last meeting.

HO Kuteyi Updates:

East Orange General Hospital

President Harris announced the EOGH has been renamed CareWell Health Medical Center, as a part of an organizational transition. President Harris asked if there had been any additional communication since the last meeting. Dr. Griffith stated there has not been any additional communication regarding the hospital's transition plans. Dr. Griffith mentioned that despite any transition the primary resources are expected to stay the same. They are looking to enhance services at the hospital including providing an inpatient detox unit for substance abuse, working to explore the enhancement of the behavioral health supports, and transitioning the east pavilion.

Retail Food Inspections

There has been a steady flow in the number of inspections done so far this month. We continue to monitor retail foods stores with regular compliance issues as well as COVID-19 safety violations. As usual, if they continue to remain non-compliant, we will issue them summonses.

Illegal Dumping on Derelict Properties

HO Kuteyi shared he has organized a task force with Code Enforcement, and DPW to facilitate the process of removing garbage and debris from derelict properties. The REHS inspectors will continue to monitor and work with EOPD to report instances of illegal dumping and occupations of these properties.

Attorney Farah Updates:

President Harris asked if there has been any movement on the Marijuana Ordinance since the last meeting. Attorney Farah stated that she is not currently working on the ordinance; that would fall under the purview of Attorney Linder. President Harris asked if Attorney Linder is the only person from legal working on this ordinance. Attorney Farah stated she is not aware if other lawyers are assisting Attorney Linder. Attorney Farah stated she will ask for an update from Attorney Linder once the meeting concludes in preparation for the next BOH meeting.

Open Discussion:

President Harris asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the previously discussed ordinances regarding the barbershop, nail salons, e-cigs. HO Kuteyi shared he did review the material and wanted to begin moving towards focusing on the pertinent ordinances. HO



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Kuteyi shared he has already seen two new hookah parlors in East Orange. HO Kuteyi explained if no ordinance directly addresses the hookah parlors, the businesses can circumvent the Health Department by going to Planning to request a permit. We need to address the ordinance again with the Health and Education Committee and Legal to provide them with an opportunity to review the documents.

President Harris explained the cigarette ordinance would have been a great way for the Health Department to generate revenue. Dr. Griffith explained there are no pending items per se with legal for the E-cigarette ordinance. The feedback that we received from Legal before Farah came on was that it should somehow be incorporated into the mercantile license. They were not in favor of developing additional ordinances that would call for separate fees. In terms of a stalling point, the issue would be how would any of these new fees be integrated into the mercantile license and how would then the mercantile license be rolled out and enforced. For the mercantile license, if the language is there, we would then have to make sure that all businesses are notified properly and informed of any fees that they would need to pay.

We must evaluate the process to determine how to incorporate the language of the mercantile license and where we can concentrate on the public health aspects of the ordinances. Legal is stating there is a mercantile license that was created years ago for that purpose so if there is a shift and we are looking to change it we would have to be very explicit as to what the changes would be. In addition to that, if we are looking to then add something separate, we should be able to articulate how these new fees would be different than the mercantile license. President Harris asked if we should revisit the ordinances with Farrah. Dr. Griffith stated she and Victor provided the documentation as requested in the last meeting and provided it to Attorney Farrah. President Harris remarked on the importance of revisiting the ordinance as it relates to the income it generates and how that can be distributed to health-related endeavors.

At the conclusion of Board business, President Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo-Ann Mills
Board Clerk