



EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
East Orange Department of Health & Human Services
143 New Street
East Orange, New Jersey 07017
July 16, 2019
MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Call to Order – 5:40 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.

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

Board Members Present:

Christine Harris, President
Horace H. Henry
Tobbia M. Corbitt
Deanna Phillips
Angela Jones-Williams - absent

Board of Health Counsel:

Shantika Dorsey, Attorney assigned to the Board of Health

Health Department Staff:

Dr. Monique Griffith, Director of Health and Human Services
Victor Kuteyi, Health Officer
Karen LaRussa, RN, Nurse Educator

Mayoral Staff:

None

Public in attendance:

None

Approval of June 18, 2019, Meeting Minutes:

Approval unanimous.

Announcements President Harris:

1. Attended the 3rd Annual Baby Shower, on Saturday, June 22nd at Langston Hughes Academy. It was a beautiful event, and the mothers were ecstatic about all of the gifts received. Commended Ms. Lavie Chandler (MOET), Nurse LaRussa and all of those who made this event a success.
2. Attended the NJ State Association Annual Election and Educational Seminar on June 29th at the Middlesex Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ. Extended thanks to Mrs. Corbitt,



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Health Officer Kuteyi and Nurse LaRussa for attending. President Harris emphasized the importance of local boards participating in these types of events and acquiring educational credits. An overview of Commissioner Dr. Shereef Elnahal's numerous accomplishments were shared and Karen Blumenfeld, the Executive Director of GASP provided a comprehensive presentation.

3. Met with Mayor Green and Chief of Staff Tony Jackson on July 16th, to discuss BOH autonomy and related issues. Also, in attendance: Mayoral Assistant Ajah Baldwin, Health Department Director Griffith, Health Officer Kuteyi, and Board of Health members Mr. Henry, Mrs. Corbitt, and Ms. Phillips. It was determined that more information is needed to make an informed decision and Mr. Jackson will conduct a background search for City Council reasoning leading to changing the board's status and needing a standard operating procedure for creating and passing ordinances. Both parties agreed to resolve the issue prior to the end of 2019.
4. President Harris provided board members with a folder from NJ Local BOH State Association Annual Election and Educational Seminar containing public health materials, news articles, and publications.
5. Shared that East Orange is a member of Sustainable Jersey, a statewide and nationally recognized program providing a framework to assist municipalities in developing programs that improve the quality of life for their citizens. The Health Department will identify new initiatives and other health-related programs. Director Griffith indicated that she is aware of the program but has not yet had an opportunity to reach out to them. HO Kuteyi stated we have not been very active in taking part in Sustainable Jersey although the City hosts the Farmer's Market. HO Kuteyi hopes moving forward we begin to research grants that would support efforts of meeting Sustainable Jersey standards. Director Griffith shared the Health Department currently offers many activities that would qualify us for additional support including but not limited to Healthy Homes Initiative and Rabies Clinic. President Harris expressed being active in the program aids towards receiving Health Department accreditation.

Dr. Griffith, Director – Updates:

EMS Services

A bid was resubmitted for EMS services on July 9th and Procurement is in the process of making decisions based on the bid packages received.

Homeless Population

Director Griffith shared that the team is attempting to establish a relationship with the shelters and group homes. The 3 shelters operating in East Orange have a waiting list and access to this information will provide answers to any pertinent questions needed for



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research. East Orange has 95 persons, self-identified as homeless and may qualify. Trustee Corbitt revealed some of the group homes accept residents who live throughout Essex County which may skew our numbers. Director Griffith stated that she will forward a copy of the questionnaire draft to the BOH for perusal prior to finalization. Vice-president Henry asked if the data collection tool will require the approval of the legal department. Attorney Dorsey confirmed that generally, any document distributed to the public will need the law department's approval, however, legal review is not needed for internal distribution.

Lead Grant

Lead Division obtained HUD's final approval and a public announcement informing the community of our ability to provide access to funding for residents is forthcoming. A screening/eligibility process is in place. The program is federally funded, and eligibility is based on the property owner's income/financial information, not the tenants. If the owner's income is over the qualifying threshold, the property is ineligible for assistance, however, the homeowner is still responsible for abating the issue. Trustee Corbitt stated that since this issue is being addressed statewide the number of lead screenings for children will most likely increase. HO Kuteyi communicated that pediatricians have been notified by the State of mandatory lead screenings for minors. Nurse LaRussa revealed East Orange is one of a few municipalities to include lead screenings as a requirement for admission into the school system. HO Kuteyi concurred stating all pediatricians in East Orange participate in lead screening its patients. Director Griffith stated there is legislation in the works geared towards making lead levels apart of the immunization records for children. Director Griffith shared the new Lead Grant Administrator should begin employment with the City soon.

Dental Program

President Harris asked Director Griffith if she has a good rapport with FQHC. Director Griffith shared that she has a good relationship with Mr. Clark. Director Griffith imparted our dental program offers services that supplement the services they provide and both parties refer clientele when needed. The Dental Program is exploring grants that would allow us to serve other groups such as seniors and veterans in addition to uninsured minors. The new dental assistant has aggressively contacted former patients and clientele numbers have increased. An additional dentist may be acquired. We are in the process of developing patient satisfaction surveys to generate more information about patient experience and then translate that data into improvements within the clinic. They are also working on the outreach component in engaging the school district. At this time, we have outside agencies who are going into the school system and providing services that could be provided by us. Director



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Griffith wants to ensure the Dental Program has the capacity to maintain existing clientele prior to accepting new ones.

Health Department Relocation

President Harris inquired to the status of the Health Department's relocation. Director Griffith indicated the Health Department will not be relocating, rather the City will fund the renovation of the existing building as this is more cost-effective. The renovations will begin with the basement and extend to the upper floors. President Harris asked if our record-keeping will be modernized for offices such as Vital Statistics and Nursing. Director Griffith shared the modernization of our record-keeping process is on her agenda. Health Officer Kuteyi reminded the BOH that previous attempts to obtain software that can be utilized throughout various departments have not been successful therefore hindering the process of record modernization.

CACFP Staff

Upon inquiry, Director Griffith confirmed that the Food Program was terminated on April 30th and the program officially closed on May 30th. As of June 1st, all remaining staff has transitioned into their new roles.

Health Officer Kuteyi – Updates:

Immunization Exemptions

President Harris inquired about immunization exemption. HO Kuteyi replied that East Orange requires parents to provide documentation for exemption, which at this time most parents obtain religious or medical exemptions from vaccinations. HO Kuteyi believes the Health Department should explore the State's stance on immunization exemptions and follow their guidelines. Attorney Dorsey shared at this time the State has not passed legislation excluding all exemptions except those of a medical nature. President Harris probed the Health Department's preparations for the upcoming school season. HO Kuteyi disclosed he will be preparing to concentrate on vaccinations such as flu. Trustee Corbitt suggested we pair things such as a vaccination clinic with our entertaining summer programs to create accessibility for busy parents and ensure children are properly vaccinated; Director Griffith concurred. HO Kuteyi also stated a mobile clinic would be ideal as sterility and care for the immunizations is key when transporting them to various locales. Trustee Corbitt suggested we work with the Board of Education to utilize the existing clinic at Cicely Tyson. President Harris had inquired, in the past, about using the clinic as its intended purpose however, it was met with a negative response and clarity was never afforded. Attorney Dorsey acknowledged it may have been a liability issue which prevented them from saying yes. Vice-President Henry



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inquired would it be more cost-effective to rent a mobile unit versus buying. HO Kuteyi stated we may be able to approach Essex County to see if they have any vehicles that are not currently in use which could be transformed into our mobile unit.

WIC Relocation Updates

HO Kuteyi shared Ms. Blue has a meeting next week with the State which she hopes will provide some insight as to the status of the renovation grant. President Harris asked if we had ruled out the other locations for WIC relocation. Director Griffith stated the other locations were either lacking enough space or not cost-effective to serve as a permanent WIC site. 7 Glenwood is still ideal because it houses other agencies such as social security which is frequented by WIC clientele.

Attorney Campbell - Updates:

Attorney Dorsey will ask Attorney Campbell to forward any updates on the mold ordinance to the Director and the BOH upon his return.

Health Department Staff:

Nurse LaRussa – Nurse Educator:

East Orange Schools

Nurse LaRussa shared feedback she received from East Orange Schools stating kids are using e-cigarettes at an alarming rate and further emphasized the significance of the Health Department addressing this issue before it becomes an epidemic.

No Smoking Signage

East Orange has new “No Smoking Cigarette and E-cigarette” signage which should be visible in all parks by the end of the year.

Summer Interns

Nurse LaRussa stated her current roster of student’s internships will be ending the first week in August.

Upcoming Events

Lincoln Park Festival will be held July 26th, 27th, and 28th in Newark. This year the event will have a different concentration each day. Friday the 26th is Senior Village Day, Saturday the 27th is the Modern Family Village Day and Sunday the 28th is the Multicultural Men’s Health Village Day. Veterans and Mental Health will also be important concentrations during the



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festival. Meet, Move and Mingle is also coming up in September and there will be a few additional events added to the roster this year. East Orange will host Pink Out of the Oranges on October 19th. After noting the BOH on many of the Health Department's flyers Trustee Phillips offered her services at any upcoming events. Nurse LaRussa suggested having a table for the BOH where they can connect with residents and talk about the importance of their roles. The BOH will organize some content to be distributed at events.

Open Discussion:

Nurse LaRussa shared that Karen Blumenfeld, from GASP, was instrumental in East Orange's early beginnings of creating ordinances which would establish tobacco/smoke-free parks. Ms. Blumenfeld's presentation at the NJ State Association Annual Election and Educational Seminar was much more detailed than her usual public outreach demonstration. Commissioner Dr. Shereef Elnahal's speech was also fascinating and he has continually been a remarkable public health resource.

Vice-President Henry commended the Health Department for their ability to supply detailed information to the BOH without advance notice to prepare. The Health Department's ability to do so ensures the BOH can make informed decisions in a timely and efficient manner.

Vice-President Henry asked if there are any seasonal occurrences related to this time of year that we should be concerned about. HO Kuteyi responded that this time is when we have more environmental concerns such as rodents, mosquitoes, e-Coli, salmonella, and legionnaires. The REHS Environmental Team is on alert in the event there is an outbreak or infestation, requiring immediate action. HO Kuteyi revealed the State sent out an email expressing the importance of issues such as e-Coli, salmonella, and legionnaires being investigated within two weeks. If any clusters are identified they should be reported quickly.

President Harris shared EMS staff has been authorized to administer Narcan for opioid overdoses. This is especially helpful in reducing the number of fatal overdoses and alleviating severe withdrawal symptoms, allowing time to seek medical services. Also, there is an increase in the numbers of physicians prescribing medical marijuana.

Our next meeting will be held on September 9/17.

At the conclusion of Board business, President Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo-Ann Mills
Board Clerk