



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
*East Orange Department of Health & Human Services*  
*143 New Street*  
*East Orange, New Jersey 07017*  
*July 21, 2020*  
**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

**Council Liaison:**

Leneus Bergson

**Board of Health Counsel:**

Joseph Campbell, Attorney assigned to the Board of Health

**Health Department Staff:**

Dr. Griffith, HHS Director  
Victor Kuteyi, Health Officer

**Mayoral Staff:**

Mayor Ted Green

**Public in attendance:**

None

**Approval of February 18, 2020, Meeting Minutes:**

It was decided the ratification of meeting minutes will be deferred until the next BOH meeting to allow all members an opportunity to thoroughly review them.

**Announcements President Harris:**

1. President Harris remarked she believes the Vaping Forum was a very successful presentation. Thanked Dr. Griffith for moving talking points and flyer forward for the Vaping Forum. The forum consisted of various points of communication, i.e., panel



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
*East Orange Department of Health & Human Services*  
*143 New Street*  
*East Orange, New Jersey 07017*  
*July 21, 2020*  
**MEETING MINUTES**

discussion, PowerPoint presentations, and interactive games. While there was not a large turnout, students and parents that participated were engaged and received a wealth of knowledge on vaping. President Harris suggested we continue to offer these forums to students and schools post COVID-19.

2. President Harris shared happiness that Trustee Corbitt and her husband are doing well after battling COVID-19. It was suggested Trustee Corbitt share her personal experience with COVID-19 from the financial, emotional, caretaker, and survivor aspects during a townhall session.
3. President Harris shared Rutgers Child Health & Wellbeing Research Group will host a zoom teleconference on August 5, 2020, for schools as they try to navigate the classroom settings post COVID-19.

**Dr. Griffith Updates:**

**Reopening**

There are a lot of discussions on reopening, unfortunately, we have not entered that phase in New Jersey. Nationally we have witnessed many states entering into their second wave, due to reopening prematurely, citizens not adhering to the safety guidelines, or leadership not enforcing said guidelines. In East Orange, we have seen a general decrease in numbers from week to week. In the beginning stages of the crisis, we were seeing upwards of 300 new positive cases per week, whereas between late June through early July we have seen approximately 12 new positive cases. We are sandwiched between states that have seen drastic increases in numbers. We are doing everything within our power to protect our residents including the continuation of offering testing services to our residents. While we continue to monitor the situation, these numbers have given us the confidence to strategically open.

**Parks, Campsites, and Pools**

As of July 21, 2020, 3 pools in East Orange have recently reopened Elmwood, Haire, and Columbian pools. There are also recreational youth camps that are open. Elmwood Park is the primary camp facility but depending on need the number of City-sponsored camps may increase. Elmwood and Rowley parks are both open to the public, however, Rowley park is only open to the public after the youth camps end between 4 pm – 8 pm. The delayed opening to the general public is to keep the groups distinctly separate to limit the interaction between them and the children who attend the camps. Other parks are open on the weekends as well during the day, but the exercise equipment is off-limits. This is to stave off the second wave by limiting surfaces touched by multiple individuals.

Trustee Corbitt asked if the Explorers Museum is a campsite. Dr. Griffith shared it is a potential campsite but a formal decision to reopen has not been made at this time. Trustee Corbitt expressed concerns about whether social distancing and masks can be adhered to at the pools. Dr. Griffith shared there are guidelines in place which reduce the capacity at the pools based on the bather load and depth of the pool. This formula has been released by the state and Dr. Griffith has worked with HO Victor and REHS inspector Thomas, to ensure the



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
*East Orange Department of Health & Human Services*  
*143 New Street*  
*East Orange, New Jersey 07017*  
*July 21, 2020*  
**MEETING MINUTES**

appropriate social distancing, maintenance of locker rooms, and sanitation protocols are created. Temperature monitoring has also been instituted. Lifeguards and staff will manage the quantity of time individuals may stay at the pool. Once the max capacity has been reached, individuals will be notified and turned away. Dr. Griffith stated she took her time reopening the pools to ensure all these issues were properly addressed.

#### COVID-19 Testing

Dr. Griffith shared the Essex County website, [essexcountynj.org](http://essexcountynj.org), which offers daily updates on each municipality and its COVID-19 related data. We are working to increase access to testing and supporting those efforts. We will open our Municipal testing site once every other week and that frequency seems to be the most appropriate based upon the response from the community; with the understanding that there are multiple testing sites available to residents. Our testing site is going to reopen on July 24, from 9-1 pm, and two dates in August the 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Insurance and appointments are required. Because insurance is required, we need to emphasize that the test is not free it is billed to the insurance companies, however, there is no out of pocket cost for the resident such as copays, deductibles, or balance billing. Balance billing refers to the gap between what insurance will cover and the remaining balance for services rendered to a patient.

There is still a cost for the provider and the staff that collects the swabs, costs associated with the test kits themselves, and the processing of the specimen. Due to the Cares Act still being in place the cost of these things is absorbed by the insurance. Should that shift we will be able to make the needed changes and updates. President Harris asked if we are seeing a great response at the testing sites. Dr. Griffith explained the response is relative, as we do not see hundreds of individuals needing testing per day the site is available because there are numerous opportunities to obtain testing. But we do have a consistent number of people that are scheduling appointments. We do have the flexibility to increase the number of dates if needed beyond the August schedule.

President Harris asked if we had statistical data referencing the number of individuals in EO that have been tested. Dr. Griffith shared those statistics have changed drastically over the past month and are managed by the County and will be shared once they are received. President Harris commented that the numbers of positive cases indicate we are following the appropriate protocols, i.e., wearing masks, social distancing, and proper sanitization. Trustee Corbitt asked if the testing site on Park Avenue is affiliated with the City or managed independently. Dr. Griffith shared the site is managed independently. Trustee Corbitt asked if all COVID-19 results of EO residents are forwarded to the EO Health Department. Dr. Griffith stated regardless of where residents are tested, we will receive the results via the State's system, CDRSS. President Harris asked if an ordinance had been created for outdoor dining. Dr. Griffith stated the Planning department created an ordinance for outdoor dining as businesses do want to provide support and offer outdoor dining. The plan is for there to be a joint effort between the Health, Code Enforcement, and Planning Departments; where each entity plays a role in inspecting and evaluating the restaurants.



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
*East Orange Department of Health & Human Services*  
*143 New Street*  
*East Orange, New Jersey 07017*  
*July 21, 2020*  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Health Officer Kuteyi Updates:**

Contact Tracing

Health Officer Kuteyi shared contact tracing is being coordinated from the State level and over 1,000 individuals have been trained as contact tracers. There's a company that produces the software utilized by contact tracers called ComCare. They are responsible for managing the contact tracing database, similar to CDRSS. ComCare is linked to CDRSS so that once new data is received, it is also loaded to the CDRSS website within approximately an hour. Once a positive case has been identified it is reported to both programs although the information supplied is not as detailed in ComCare which does not focus on things such as hospitalization and client care post-diagnosis; rather ComCare focuses on submitting names of individuals and their addresses. Vice-President Henry asked how long a case can remain pending in the Comcare system. Victor explained that is a case by case basis. Some cases remain pending because an individual cannot be located. Health Officer Kuteyi noted once you have been assigned a case you are required to begin the investigation within 2 hours. Trustee Corbitt asked how far back the contract tracers go when doing their investigations. HO Kuteyi shared there are some cases from March and April that were investigated because the individual tested positive more than once. But usually, the tracing goes back a few weeks.

President Harris asked how hyper-inflated the numbers for those are who have COVID-19 since you have individuals who have taken numerous tests after testing and receiving multiple positive and negative results. She also asked if the goal of Comcare was to trace every individual who has tested positive. HO Kuteyi stated that he believes the CDC is counting each positive result as a separate case since persons can be positive then negative and then contract it over again. HO Kuteyi stated it is imperative that tracing be completed on as many individuals as possible since there were tested but gave false information and didn't receive their results or were not contacted at all because the labs were overwhelmed. Vice-President Henry asked how East Orange is dealing with people who have traveled to Hot Zones. HO Kuteyi shared we do ask individuals who have traveled to various hot zones to self-quarantine for 14 days following their return, however, this is dependent upon our residents and community being forthright to protect themselves and those around them. Once alerted to someone who has traveled to a hot-zone, HO Kuteyi goes to their location to find out more about their travels and recommends a course of action based on his discoveries.

President Harris shared there should be a grant that will assist us with contact tracing and individuals from Rutgers School of Public Service.

**Attorney Campbell Updates:**

Pending Legislation

Attorney Campbell stated he will review all pending legislation at a later time with Dr. Griffith, as he believes there have been conversations between Dr. Griffith and Ryan Linder. Dr. Griffith stated there have not been any ancillary conversations between herself and Ryan Linder, however, she asked the BOH to review all pending legislation. The legislation had



**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH  
REGULAR MEETING  
East Orange Department of Health & Human Services  
143 New Street  
East Orange, New Jersey 07017  
July 21, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES**

been moved to Health and Education Committee, but there was a request made for the BOH to have another opportunity to review the legislation and make any amendments they would like to see before moving it back to Health and Education and then moving it forward. Dr. Griffith shared a meeting with Attorney Campbell would be beneficial but also wanted to make sure a resolution was provided to the BOH before moving the legislation forward or introducing any new legislation; as there is a need for new public health legislation.

**Open Discussion:**

President Harris asked how regular inspections were going. HO Kuteyi stated the inspections are going well they just have to shift focus from COVID-19 related matters to re-evaluate the regular inspections.

President Harris shared the NJ State Association for Local Boards of Health has revamped its website. Also, a letter was remitted to the Governor, Commissioner and State Legislators regarding physicians and COVID-19. That letter is available on the website and President Harris encouraged all to review at [njboh.com](http://njboh.com).

President Harris thanked the Mayor, and the City for having the weekly Town Halls, which she described as informative, with a great panel and a wealth of information on how the City and local government is managing COVID-19.

At the conclusion of Board business, President Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jo-Ann Mills  
Board Clerk