



Farmington Valley Health District
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Minutes
Board of Health Meeting
Members attended via a Zoom online meeting due to COVID19
April 7, 2020

Present: Brandon Robertson, Kathy Blonski, Debra Brydon, Jeff Shea, Sue Beardsley, Mary Jane Parlow, Melissa Appleby, Jean Donihee-Perron, Joe Doering, John Ward, Dennis Brown, Tom McKeon, Warren Humphrey, Maura Shea, Diane Hensdorf, Jennifer Kertanis,

Absent: Jadwiga Gocłowski, Dan Jerram, Beatrice Isabelle

Regular Meeting

- I. **Public Comments:** Brandon Robertson opened the regular meeting at 12:10 p.m. He asked if there were any public comments, there were none. Brandon said that we all recognize the uniqueness of the situation we find ourselves in. He wants to recognize the remarkable, outstanding work of the FVHD. The Board should take great comfort in the lead Jennifer has taken. Thank you, Jennifer, and all the members and staff.
- II. **Minutes of March 3, 2020:** Brandon Roberson asked if there were any changes or questions on the March 3rd Board Meeting Minutes. There were no comments, he asked for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mary Jane Parlow 1st, Deb Brydon 2nd, motion passed.
- III. **Business:** Jennifer Kertanis thanked all of the Board members and told them that Deb Doyon was in the room taking minutes.
 - I. **Staffing:** Jennifer said that she has hired Kirsten Carew to fill the new position of Epidemiologist for FVHD 3 weeks ago. She is a resident of Simsbury and is finishing her MPH degree. Kirsten has jumped in with both feet and really has been quite instrumental in helping us track all of the COVID19 cases. Jennifer said that she has divided the staff into 2 teams which will work half of the week in the office and half of the time at home. She has bought laptops for them to use while they are at home. Justine Ginsberg and Jennifer will be in the office all 5 days. She said that they have a cell phone that they are using so that people can reach the FVHD 24 hours/day. The answering machine message has been updated to give people that phone number. Jeff Shea asked what they were doing about protective gear. She said that staff are wearing masks when going into the field. Jennifer said that revenue for FVHD will likely be negatively impacted. About 2/3rds of our salon have paid to date and some are asking to have late fees waived. We may get push-back on the price of the fees since they will have late openings. Warren Humphreys asked what kind of push-back? Jennifer said they may ask for discounts.

Jennifer Kertanis said that they the food permits are scheduled to be mailed out the end of May and she is working on a plan. At the next board meeting she will propose a plan and policies for pro-rating fees on restaurants. Some are open for take-out only but some are closed. She is thinking about how do we re-open once

allowed. We will be working on that in the next few weeks. Brandon Robertson asked if the governor should be involved? Jennifer said that might be difficult given that health departments do not handle fees the same.

II. Request for federal emergency funding: Jennifer said we received a package today from DPH which requests our proposal for emergency funding for state and local health departments through the federal government. We will be submitting reimbursement for COVID19 related supplies and overtime pay for the period of January 20th – March 31st. With another application coming for April. She said she will need to charge the entire salary for Justine Ginsberg to the FVHD budget and not any part of it to the Men's Health Grant. We required support from our IT company for all of the laptops and her goal is to put all of these expenses into reimbursement from the State. Jennifer asked if there were any questions? Brandon Robertson said that if we will be adding revenues for FVHD that we should talk to our auditor to get the grant into the budget. Warren Humphrey said that to be careful with that because the towns will be seeking extra help as well. Brandon said that FEMA recordkeeping is very difficult and if Jennifer needs help to please reach out. Jennifer said that in the past, FEMA did not recognize health districts as a reimbursable entity. We will have to get more clarification. She said the CDC is where the money is coming from. She will get more details on FEMA but her strategy is CDC funding.

IV. Report from Director: Jennifer Kertanis asked Kirsten Carew to speak to the Board about what she has been doing regarding COVID19. The Board all welcomed her. She said that she has been very busy and her main priority is to look at data from DPH regarding number of cases tested and number of cases confirmed. She has been making charts showing this data for our website. So far there are 78 confirmed cases and 416 have been tested of people that live in the Farmington Valley area. She said if you go to the DPH website you may see a discrepancy in their numbers compared to ours and that is because we get laboratory reports via paper that the DPH does not. She said that most of our cases are between the ages of 50-59 and 60-69. There are no confirmed cases as of yet in Colebrook or Hartland. She said the wait time between when the test was collected and when the results are available is 6 days on average. We make phone call to everyone as soon as we get them. Hopefully the wait time will get shorter. We are not testing people without symptoms. Dennis Brown asked Kirsten how we compare to the rest of the state. Kirsten said we cannot look at other areas because testing is not uniform. Kathy Blonski asked why the numbers in Farmington are substantially higher than other towns. Kirsten said 134 out of 416 cases are in Farmington. She said that Farmington is having more tests done than other towns and that might be why their numbers are higher. In addition, we are sorting out the long-term care facility cases. Farmington's rate is 26.4% positive. The entire state is 25.9%. Jennifer Kertanis said that the test data remains very challenging. We prioritize for the very sick and hospitalized. We do the best with the data we have. Diane Hensdorf asked when will the tests be more numerous? Jennifer said that some people say there are new tests but the State is not talking about it yet. She said they are trying to keep track of all the cases that come into the FVHD. If we have a confirmed case through MAVEN or a paper report, we make contact with that person. We also send documents to them electronically. Most of our contact is with family members. We want to let them know how to protect other members of the family through separation.

I. Update-2019 novel Coronavirus: Jennifer Kertanis told the Board that Long Term care, Assisted Living and Group Homes are very concerning. They are tracking 8 Long Term Care facilities so far. Two LTC facilities have covid19 cases and we are making sure to follow-up with them. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is needed, we do not have enough. The State Health Department asked that we get prepared to receive a supply. These will go to the communities for Urgent Care Centers and doctors but we do not have all the details as of yet. They want us to have one central location to bring them to. Melissa Marquis is working with Jamie DiPace. The FVHD will be coordinating the supply shipment with the BBHD. They will drop them off to cars and

trucks that will be showing up. Dianne Harding will be the safety officer and work with the police, plus one other person. We will have to call people to let them know we have PPE for distribution. Jennifer said she will be pushing out bulletins regarding guidance to the general public. The public does not need masks they can wear something else; bandanas, homemade masks and scarves. We are letting the towns know that when they pick up food at restaurants that are doing take-out, that they need to wear a mask. Grocery stores workers should also all be wearing masks. Jennifer said she is sending guidance to group homes regarding routine daily operations on how to keep everyone safe. Warren Humphrey asked if there are any standards on face masks? He said that people are making masks at home and there might be a huge variation on the effectiveness. Jennifer Kertanis said that health care providers need to wear the proper masks but that the general public can use other types of masks, homemade etc. according to CDC. There are patterns on the internet to make your own masks but these are in no way in lieu of social distancing. Brandon Robertson asked if PPE is being delivered to Avon? Jennifer said on Friday. They will get information from the State in 24-48 hours, they have nothing yet. Kathy Blonski said that there are pop-up drive-up sites that you can go to for testing but no one knows where they are. Jennifer said that we don't know where they are either so we put a request into the State for that information. There is a list of some that are near hospitals. It is appropriate that they are in tents and Jennifer will let them know as soon as she gets the info. Dennis Brown mentioned that not all of the tents are for testing, some are used for triage. Jennifer asked if there were any further questions. Brandon Robertson said he did not have anything further and wanted to say that Jennifer has been invaluable and we want to be sure you are properly staffed. Brandon asked if there was anything else that the Board can do for her and what does the future look like for us. Jennifer said the schools will not go back this year if the models hold true. The relaxing of social distancing is tricky for me, she said. We cannot compare us to New York or California. We are concerned also with a resurgence of this virus in China. When we look back on all of this, we might see an approach that worked better.

- V. **OTHER:** Brandon Robertson asked if there were any other business. There was none.
- VI. **ADJOURN:** Brandon asked if there was a motion to adjourn; Mary Jane Parlow 1st, Deb Brydon 2nd. Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. Brandon mentioned that the next meeting was May 5th.