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Farmington Valley Health District
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Minutes
Board of Health Meeting
Members attended via a Zoom online meeting due to COVID19
May 5, 2020

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

Absent: Dan Jerram

Regular Meeting

- I. **Public Comments:** Brandon Robertson opened the regular meeting at 12:03 p.m. He asked if there were any public comments, there were none.
- II. **Minutes of April 7, 2020:** Brandon Roberson asked if there were any changes or questions on the April 7th Board Meeting Minutes. There were no comments, he asked for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Jean Donihee-Perron 1st , Sue Beardsley 2nd , motion passed.
- III. **Business:**
 - **Quarterly Financial Report:** Jennifer Kertanis provided an update on FY 19-20 Year to Date – Third Quarter. 78% of the total revenue has been receive and expenses are tracking very well. We are tracking COVID19-related expenses. She has put in for first two months of expenses to CT DPH She said she will be putting through another request for April expenses soon. Brandon Robertson asked if there were any questions. Warren Humphreys said that Jennifer has done a good job and keeping expenses down. It shows good management. Jennifer Kertanis replied that the biggest expense we have is human resources so there really is no place to cut or reduce expenses. She is tracking all expenses and the trick will be in bringing in food revenue. She said she appreciates his comments.
 - **Review FVHD Policies Regarding Permitting/Late Fees:** Jennifer Kertanis reported that we are sending out reminders to salons that have not paid their fees for the permitting year which began on April 1st. They have decided not to pro-rate any of the yearly fees since they are \$100 for inspections and \$50 for permits. If we did pro-rate the \$50 permit fee it would only be about \$4. For restaurants the permit year runs July 1 to June 30. The staff has gone through all of the restaurants and found that most have been open for take-out during this time although the chains have closed and all of the restaurants is the Mall have been closed. After some discussion with the board regarding options, it was decided that permit renewals will go out as normal. Public swimming pools should be getting guidance soon on when they can open and we will permit once they open. Jennifer said the single most significant source of revenue for FVHD is restaurants which is approximately \$200K. Brandon Robertson told Jennifer that it was a good summary. We may get a lot of phones calls in the scheme of things.

Jennifer said fees, for a Class IV is \$500, and most big restaurants are \$450. Brandon said since restaurants have been open in some capacity, is the Board okay with us sending out their normal invoice or do any of you have any questions? Jennifer said that no one has asked yet for a refund but she is expecting some push-back. Diane Hensdorf asked if we are going to have to do more guidance when they reopen? Jennifer Kertanis said that yes and we have already done that with the restaurants that are doing take-out. She said we will be doing abbreviated inspections for those that are open now. She said they will be doing full inspections for the restaurants that are re-opening. Warren Humphreys asked if a restaurant needs to be inspected before they open? Jennifer said yes. Warren then asked if Jennifer will be deferring payments? Jennifer said that she doesn't have the administrative support to do that, it would be challenging. Not enough staff for enforcement. Jadwiga Goclowski said to Jennifer, just send out the invoices and see what kind of responses we get. Brand Robertson asked if she means we should deal with issues by exception? Jadwiga said yes. Brandon said it was a good approach, he is concerned about deferring or waiving of fees. He said fee revenue is a large part of our income. He asked if there is a general consensus from the Board. The Board agreed. Melissa Appleby asked if that includes refunds. Jennifer Kertanis said that historically, we have not done this, we can bring them back to the Board for review. Brandon said we should resolve those at the staff level. Jeff Shea asked if we have a cash flow issue? Brandon said no, and asked Jennifer to keep us up to speed on any revenue strings.

- **Request for Federal Funding:** Jennifer Kertanis reported that FVHD will be getting some CDC emergency preparedness funding through the State. The first reimbursement request from the State covers the period from 1/1/20 – 03/31/20. This money is from federal funding, crisis funding that was given to the State of \$7 million. The State did get more but DPH has not indicated that local health departments will get any additional funding. Jennifer said that we put in for \$10K for overtime and \$10K in items that were purchased for our COVID response including lap tops. She is hopeful that we will get that full reimbursement and will let the Board know. The State is pushing back on the purchase of the laptops. Brandon Robertson asked what was the timeframe for reimbursement. Jennifer said she has not heard yet. They are a month behind. Brandon asked if the State retains what they don't give out? Jennifer said yes.
- **Staffing:** Brandon Robertson asked Jennifer if everyone (staff) was healthy? Jennifer said yes. The staff is working half week from home and half in the office on rotating basis but she will be bringing everyone back next week. Deb Doyon will retire as of June 12th. She is busy writing protocol on instructions on her duties. She said the job description is ready and she said we may be inundated with resumes. Jennifer said that we are asking for payroll experience and the application will help with that. There will be overlap for training. It will be difficult to train with social distancing still in place. Brandon Robertson said congratulation to Deb as well as some of the other Board members.

Debra Brydon asked Jennifer if she is getting a lot of complaints of restaurants not doing the correct things with social distancing? Jennifer said we are getting some.

- IV. Report from Director: Update-2019 novel Coronavirus:** Jennifer Kertanis said that as of 5/4/20 the Farmington Valley had 424 lab confirmed cases and 60 deaths. 200 lab confirmed cases and 54 deaths were in long term care facilities. The older population has been hit hard. 1.3% of the total population has been tested in our area, 3% have been tested in the State. She said it is discouraging, the testing capacity has not changed. The drive-by testing sites close at 11:00 a.m. because of lack of supplies. Dennis Brown said most of the testing has been in the “hot” spots, Fairfield county and the shoreline. He also said that the rapid tests are showing a lot of false positives. Jennifer Kertanis said that the FVHD has been doing all of their own contact tracing since we received our first positive, all except for

the long-term care facilities. She said the State has just purchased a new software to aid in the tracing. She said that she needs timely results. Need to know who they were in close contact within a 48-hr period.

Jennifer Kertanis said she has held a meeting with school nurses for contract tracing. Some are showing some interest. The State does not want her to do a general recruitment but that it is okay to work with community partners. The State is proposing to recruit from universities. FVHD would prefer to use local contact tracers as we are better able to refer to social services that support isolation and quarantine like food, prescriptions and other social services. Brandon Robertson told Jennifer she gave an excellent overview. Jennifer said she is paying a lot of attention to the governor and that the start of opening up the state on May 20th will result in a lot of phone calls for us. She said we have not seen anything in writing from him and she is waiting for further guidelines. Jennifer said it is a challenging time. She is getting calls from the individual towns as well. Questions on outdoor dining and what that will entail, salon reopening, recreational areas, small businesses etc. She said that social service directors are dealing with food insecurities, food bank, mental health and other resources across the board. We are fielding questions regarding school graduations and she thought the governor would speak to this. Nothing yet. There is still the regulation of no mass gatherings of more than 5 people until May 20th.

Jennifer Kertanis said that every week they are doing PPE distribution. Staff goes to the regional distribution site to break them out. We received PPE for FVHD and the BBHD. On Fridays we are doing a community-based distribution; VNA, home health aides, dentists etc. It is going well but it is time consuming. Brandon Robertson said it is an extraordinary time for the District. He asked if there were any issues with the towns to send Jennifer an email or a phone call. He said that this is an opportunity for the District to shine. He asked Jennifer if there was anything we could do to help, coordinate meetings, conference calls with the all the administration or staff? Jennifer said thank you, she will take that into consideration. Jennifer said she will be getting back to the superintendents about the school nurses for contact tracing, that would be so helpful. She said we need to promote flu vaccine this year, it needs to be a big push! She said that we will need to look at doing flu vaccine clinics as well as COVID19 vaccines when it becomes available.

- V. **OTHER:** Brandon Robertson asked if there was any other business? There was none.
- VI. **Adjourn:** Brandon Robertson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jadwiga Gocłowski 2nd. Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.