

Meeting Minutes of the Chelsea Board of Health  
June 8, 2021

**Attendance: Names of members and Participants**

Board members, City of Chelsea staff and guests were introduced.

Board Members:

- Ola Bayode
- Corinna Culler
- Allen Jackson
- Joshua Merson
- Dr. Dean Xerras

City of Chelsea Staff:

- Dr. Flor Amaya, Director of Public Health
- Paula McHatton, Public Health Nurse

**Adoption of the Minutes of the December 8 Board Meeting**

The Board adopted the minutes from the May 2021 meeting by unanimous voice vote.

**Welcome New Board of Health Member Joshua Merson**

Board members and staff introduced themselves, and welcomed Joshua Merson, who recently joined the board.

**Updates**

Paula McHatton, Public Health Nurse:

- There were no communicable diseases reported in the past month.
- The TB case reported on last month has been admitted to Shattuck Hospital for treatment. They have been tolerating the medication. The patient has been discharged home is being observed for daily medication adherence.
- Another TB case was reported this month. The patient was hospitalized, started on TB treatment and was hospitalized at the Shattuck Hospital as well. TB was ruled out and Paula is awaiting the culture results.
- There were no flu cases reported.
- COVID-19 results:
  - Vaccination rate: 51.7%, 19,079 residents have been fully vaccinated.
  - For the week of 5/28 – 6/4: 10 new cases, 8,881 total confirmed cases.
  - Percent positivity has decreased from 2.24% the previous week to 1.68% last week.
  - Incidence rate went from 13.5% the previous week to 9.1% last week.

Dr. Flor Amaya:

- Vaccination efforts:
  - The EBNCH vaccination site will be moving out of the Broadway site. Their last day will be June 26. They are currently only administering the Pfizer vaccine and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson. The city is

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coordinating with CIC Health and Cataldo Ambulance to increase vaccination days at the Senior Center. Starting next Monday vaccinations will be available from 2pm – 6pm through July. The Senior Center vaccinated 661 people last weekend, with 238 receiving their first dose.

- FEMA Clinics are projected to end on Labor Day and won't continue into the Fall.
- Wednesday, the city will partner with ROCA to hold a mobile pop-up clinic. They hope to vaccinate 20 – 30 of their members using the MGB vaccination van.
- The vaccination rates are lowest among Black/African American residents. The city has been working with Green Roots on outreach, and using a voter map, they've determined that much of this population lives in the Prattville neighborhood. The city is looking into holding a vaccination clinic in Washington Park and Our Lady of Grace is interested in hosting a clinic after mass.
- CIC Health has a pop-up clinic at Market Basket, at vaccinated about 100 people over Thursday and Friday. The City has been providing vaccinations for kids over 12 since 5/12.
- The **Chelsea Eats Program** will distribute new cards on Monday 6/14 to existing program participants.
- **Burial Permit Fees:** Currently the fee for a burial permit in the City of Chelsea is \$10. Dr. Amaya would like to increase the fee to \$20 and transition to an online payment system. The current system is cumbersome, and other neighboring towns charge between \$15 - \$30. Permits are paid by the funeral home. The Board supported Dr. Amaya's proposal.
- **MAPC grant:** The City received a grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to share an epidemiologist with Revere and Winthrop. Ar. Amaya would like the Board to share ideas the epidemiologist could investigate.
- **Heatwave:** Dr. Amaya received several complaints from tenants about the air conditioning. They were told the cooling system couldn't be turned on until 6/15. One complaint involved a senior with multiple health conditions suffering through 88 degree temperatures inside their apartment. Landlords have been interpreting regulations that mandate heat be provided until 6/15 as meaning they could not turn on the AC until that time. She has checked with Inspectional Services, and they don't believe they have authority to intervene. Dr. Xerras suggested reaching out to local housing advocates, and Corinna Culler suggested addressing the question at the state level. Dr. Amaya will look into the matter further.

### **Follow up on Duties of the Board of Health**

Corinna Culler lead a discussion of possible ways of following up on the Board's previous discussions defining the duties of the Board.

Dr. Amaya suggested revisiting the description of the Board of Health on the City's website, and redrafting it given what we now understand what the Board is responsible for.

Dr. Xerras suggested the Board prioritize and pick one issue area to work on over the next year.

Corinna Culler also suggested condensing the list into a list of activities that apply to the Board so that we could use it to guide our work and development of a strategic plan for the Board.

Dr. Amaya then led a discussion about the role of the Board of Health and the types of information the Board wants to see. Corinna Culler suggested the Board continue to receive updates on violations and similar activities.

The Board then discussed ways of being involved in the community. As an example, Dr. Amaya discussed outreach efforts to the Black/African American community and wondered what ways the Board could be involved in those efforts. Dr. Xerras noted that pre-COVID, members of the Board participated in coalitions like Healthy Chelsea. He also suggested we may invite members of the public and health-related community groups in to speak about their work. Corinna Culler suggested Board members may get involved in the various community-based organizations as a way to increase involvement in the community and broaden our scope, based on Board member interest.

Dr. Amaya noted that there are a number of ways that the roles of the Board of Health, Health Department and Inspectional Services overlap (or other departments that technically don't exist anymore i.e. the Dept. of Health and Human Services), are undefined and there is confusion about where responsibility lies. Corinna Culler suggested creating detailed job descriptions and a work flowchart to help clear up any confusion. Paula McHatton suggested getting a copy of the home rule petition. Corinna Culler agreed to follow up with Richie Zullo from the Inspectional Services Division on these docs.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **New Items**

- **Chickens:** Paula McHatton reported that there was a resident who wanted to keep chickens. Corinna Culler suggested reviewing city livestock ordinances. Josh Merson found an article from the Chelsea Record from October 2019 mentioning Chelsea ordinances that allowed residents to keep two chickens per property. He later posted the link to the city ordinance that indicates that two hens may be kept, but no roosters.
- **In person meetings:** Corinna Culler proposed that the Board resume in-person meetings beginning next month. Dr. Xerras suggested maintaining an option for calling-in or attending via Zoom/Webex meetings. Dr. Amaya will check to see if the downstairs room at the library is available.


The next meeting will be held 7/13 at 5:30pm, pending resolution of space questions. Otherwise, it will be held virtually. Corinna Culler will check with the City Attorney to see if the public can attend virtually as well.

The Board agreed to not take August off, but will continue to meet if quorum is present.

**Next steps:**

- Create a list of community-based organizations doing health-related work
- Get a copy of the City Charter and home rule petition
- Create a condensed list of the responsibilities of the Board of Health
- Confirm space for future in-person meetings
- Confirm whether the public can join remotely if the Board returns to in-person meetings

The meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

  
Allen Jackson, Clerk

8/2/2021  
Date

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