

BOARD MEMBERS
Andrew Tierney, Chairman
Stan Soby, Vice Chairman
Peter Hughes, Treasurer
Rosemary Coyle
David Cox
Ryan Curley
Irene Haines
Kate Morris



DIRECTOR of HEALTH
Russell Melmed, MPH

Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, & Portland

Chatham Health District Board of Health, August Regular Meeting

Time: August 30, 2022 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting ID 81846389295

Present: Andrew Tierney Stan Soby Kate Morris
 Rosemary Coyle Ryan Curley Irene Haines (arrived 2:12)

Others: Russell Melmed

1. Call to order

Chairman Tierney called this regularly scheduled meeting to order at 2:05pm.

2. Additions to the agenda

There were no additions to the agenda

3. Public Remarks

There were no public remarks.

4. Communications

a. 143 Bulkeley Hill Road FOIA Request

Mr. Melmed noted that a FOIA request was received for 143 Bulkeley Hill Road. The requestor was interested in action taken on a prior complaint against the property.

Mr. Melmed noted that nuisance complaints and housing code violation investigations have increased over the last year. Mr. Melmed associated this increase possibly with the end of the moratorium on evictions.

5. New Business

a. Approval of minutes from 8/2/2022

Motion was made by Ms. Coyle, seconded by Mr. Soby, to approve the minutes of August 30, 2022. Vote was unanimous in favor, with Ms. Morris abstaining.

6. Director's Report and discussion

Mr. Melmed highlighted the attached Director of Health report.

a. COVID-19 Situational Awareness Update (see attached)

- b. Administration (see attached)
- c. Environmental Health (see attached)
 - i. Workload analysis
 - ii. Staff assignments

(Ms. Haines arrived 2:12pm)

- iii. Long Term solutions
- d. Community Health (see attached)
- e. Staffing, Budget and Grants (see attached)

Mr. Melmed noted that he would like to meet with the Budget and Personnel Committee in regard to long term staffing issues.

7. Public Remarks

There were no public remarks.

8. Adjournment

Following no further business to discuss motion was made by Ms. Morris, seconded by Ms. Haines, to adjourn the meeting. Vote was unanimous in favor. Meeting adjourned at 2:18pm.



Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, & Portland

Chatham Health District Director's Report 8/30/2022

COVID-19 Situational Awareness Update

- Cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities remained stable throughout the month of August. Our communities continue to have a base of infections likely to drive a significant fall/winter surge. Our contact tracers continue to make calls and support isolation and quarantine decision-making for residents and businesses.
- Pfizer and Moderna have requested EUA for their BA.5-specific boosters. We hope to have them in time for the fall vaccination campaign.
- CHD continues to partner with Griffin Health to offer vaccine in community settings.
- Updated COVID-19 prevention guidance for K-12 schools for the upcoming school year was released by DPH. CHD met with superintendents and school nursing staff to discuss changes to guidance and plan for the upcoming school year.

Administration

- The personnel policy manual review reconvened in August.
- We have scheduled a kickoff meeting on August 31st with HS GovTech, our contracted digital permitting and inspection platform provider. Over the next 4-6 months, we will be working with them to migrate away from our current paper-based system. We expect to go live with portions of the new platform in late 2022 or early 2023.

Environmental Health

- Our summer bathing water monitoring program will conclude this week, with final samples and observations to take place before the long Labor Day weekend. The "swim-at-your-own-risk" advisory for Sears Park on Lake Pocotopaug has been lifted due to improvements in water quality related to Blue-Green Algae. All bathing water data and advisories are posted on our website using a google map. In addition, our communication plan for advisories includes an email blast to subscribers, social media posts, and physical signs posted at entry points to public swim areas.
- We continue to be very busy with regulatory reviews and inspections, and temporary events. Housing code violation investigations have been frequent as well, including several lead-based paint investigations, perhaps owing to the expiration of the moratorium on evictions, or difficulties faced by property owners in keeping up with routine property maintenance due to workforce shortages or financial challenges. The severe drought and heat waves have impacted the work of environmental health staff

as well, but they continue to show great resilience and commitment to getting the job done. From wells running dry, to difficulties reading soils from lower water tables, and occasionally hazardous outdoor working conditions, extreme weather events present challenges.

- We conducted an analysis of land use workload over the last 3 completed fiscal years. The volume of work in East Haddam has increased significantly relative to our other municipalities. East Haddam is our second-smallest municipality by population, representing 14% of the total population in CHD. In FY2020, East Haddam represented 18% of total CHD land use activities. In FY2021 that number increased to 23%. In FY2022, East Haddam represented 28% of all land use activities. With many small lake lots, and very limited public water and sewers serving the town, the complexity of the work is considerably greater than the same work in other CHD towns. This has contributed to some customer service challenges. While we search for long-term solutions, we will be assigning additional staff-hours to cover land-use activities in East Haddam, which may include overtime as necessary.

Community Health

- CHD is partnering with the State Department of Public Health to launch an opioid overdose harm reduction initiative. The initiative is a Naloxone “Leave Behind” program. CHD is securing a small stockpile of intranasal Naloxone kits. The kits will be deployed with local ambulance services and distributed to victims of overdoses or their friends/family at the time they are revived following an overdose. Because the single greatest risk factor for an opioid overdose is a recent history of overdose, leaving a kit behind in the hands of those who might need them can help prevent overdose-related fatalities by reducing the time needed to administer the reversal drug. CHD will be reaching out to local ambulance services in September to roll out the program.
- CHD is partnering with the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern CT and CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence under a DPH grant-funded project to raise awareness of the impacts of sexual violence and the services available to residents to address the issue. The project will focus on leveraging trusted relationships between cosmetology establishment owners/workers and their clients. The first planning session for the project is scheduled for August 31st.
- We continue to schedule community-based COVID-19 vaccine clinics with our partner, Griffin Health. The clinic schedule is posted on our website and distributed on social media.
- Our community health staff have been increasingly responding to Monkeypox in a number of ways as cases and awareness increase. Work involves helping cases and close contacts connect with vaccine providers, monitoring close contacts for the development of symptoms, answering questions from the public, and distributing fact-based Monkeypox public education. We have been authorized by DPH to use ELC grant funding for Monkeypox response.

Staffing, Budgets, and Grants

- CHD remains fully staffed under our current budget.
- We still do not have a final response to our ELC-2 grant application, but have submitted requested workplan and budget adjustments.

- DPH has indicated that local health departments who applied for and were funded last year under a VEPF grant (CHD applied and was funded with approximately \$60,000) can expect another round of funding for similar work. The work largely entailed COVID-19 vaccine outreach to vulnerable populations. We have not been funded yet.
- CHD's Public Health Emergency Preparedness workplan and budget proposal was rejected by DPH. Comments from DPH suggest that they are asking local health departments to move away from using consultants for local deliverables. A revised workplan and budget was submitted which relies less on our preparedness consultant for deliverable, but includes training and mentorship activities for the consultant to ready CHD to take on more of the work independently. No response has been received yet on the revisions.