

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
CITY OF DE PERE, WISCONSIN – November 16, 2020**

The Board of Health of the City of De Pere, Wisconsin met in regular (virtual) session on Monday, November 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dennis Hibray at 5:30 pm.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Casey Nelson, Kelly Ruh, Dennis Hibray, Teresa Gulyas and Dr. Michael McHenry. Also present were Dr. Steve Stroman, Deborah Armbruster and Kelly Burke.

3. Approval of September 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Casey Nelson made a motion, seconded by Kelly Ruh to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2020 Board of Health Meeting. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Update of Strategic Planning

Deborah Armbruster explained that due to COVID-19, we really haven't done anything formally, but that we met goal #1 (to increase the visibility of the Health Department). We have achieved this through phone calls and letters to residents and businesses. We currently send letters to all our COVID positive cases. We have a COVID Banner up over Reid St. We put up a billboard on Highway 41. We have held three flu clinics which we promoted through the schools and faith based organizations.

In regards to goal #2 (increase financial and other resources), we were able to obtain more funding for our COVID-19 response and were able to hire 3 contact tracers to assist our department. Debbie explained that many of our grants such as Maternal Child Health, Lead, Immunization and Communicable Disease are allowing us to use the money for COVID-19 response.

Dr. Stroman asked why the medical advisor at the time was not included in the Strategic Planning group. He would be happy to be part of it if needed. Debbie responded that we invited the Medical Advisor at the time, but he was unable to attend due to his work schedule.

Dr. McHenry questioned the statement about opportunities including a "more involved Board of Health". He questioned what this meant. Debbie responded that she wanted to take the opportunity to see if the Board of Health felt we were meeting enough during this COVID response. Debbie received a few phone calls indicating that perhaps the Board of Health was not involved enough with the Health Department in regards to COVID-19. Debbie would be happy to do whatever would be of benefit to the Board to keep them informed. Dennis stated that it is only required for the Board of Health to meet a minimum of 4 times a year, however, the Board can meet more often if necessary. Dennis Hibray asked if the Board members felt they were receiving enough information about what is happening in the Health Department related to COVID and other issues.

Since this topic is actually agenda item #7, Dr. McHenry made a motion to move agenda item 7 up to now. Casey Nelson seconded the motion.

7. Discussion of Board of Health expectations of communication from the Health Department.

Dennis Hibray asked for feedback from the Board of Health members regarding communication from the Health Department. Teresa Gulyas stated she felt comfortable with the knowledge she received from the Health Department but she is a nurse. She questioned if others felt that they needed more information. Kelly Ruh stated that she has received inquiries from constituents in regards to the role of the health department and the purpose of the Board of Health. There is an assumption in the community that the Board of Health has a say in decisions regarding the parks opening and schools opening. Kelly Ruh believes we could reduce some questions if we clarify our role in this COVID environment. Kelly also receives questions regarding where COVID-19 is being contracted and the age groups involved.

Casey Nelson stated he has not received many questions from residents. Casey stated that the COVID situation changes daily and the Health Department needs to make decisions on a short term basis. Casey feels the Health Department is sharing what needs to be shared with the Board of Health.

Kelly Ruh added that her questions from the public increased as West De Pere was open for school and the East side was not. People don't understand that it is 2 separate School Boards making the decision. People are looking to the Board of Health to weigh in because we have doctors and nurses sitting on this committee, instead of having general city staff making these decisions.

Debbie Armbruster responded that she did not do the metrics for the City opening, Larry Delo and a team of individuals did them. They did ask Debbie questions, but she did not create the metrics. As far as the schools, Debbie has worked with both of the school Administrations and Superintendents. The Health Department is not able to make those decisions as far as metrics for schools opening. The Unified School District had a data specialist that worked with multiple sources including the Brown County Health Department to determine their opening metrics. The West De Pere School District told Debbie what their metrics were. With both school districts, we have informed them of what CDC and DHS have said which is that in person schooling is not advised at this time. However, Debbie does not have the authority and jurisdiction over making school opening/closing decisions, nor does the De Pere Board of Health.

Dennis Hibray stated that Public Health seems to have less authority than in the past; an example being the extension of the Stay at Home order when the De Pere and Brown County Health Departments chose to extend it, but then it was overturned by the Brown County attorney. Public Health can make recommendations and provide information, but the powers to be make the decisions. Debbie receives her COVID-19 recommendations from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and CDC.

Dr. McHenry stated that he is alright with the current information the Board receives, but would be in favor of meeting 6 times a year.

Teresa Gulyas feels well informed and her concern is how much more work this would be for Debbie. She would be in favor of meeting 6 times a year.

Debbie stated she is happy to meet as frequently as the Board feels they need. She stated she may not have more information to give at the meetings, but the Board may have more questions. Also, Debbie is open to questions from the Board anytime, not just during meetings.

Dr. Stroman stated that early on the COVID response we all felt like we were a little bit unaware and didn't have the information that the public wanted at the time. Dr. Stroman stated that he does not wait for meetings to present information. If something presents itself, he likes to address it right at the moment. He asked that if constituents reach out, please don't wait for a meeting, contact one of us right away and we will try to get the response for the constituent. Dr. Stroman stated that for him personally, it didn't matter if the Board meets 4 times a year or 6 times a year. He feels the Situation Reports are keeping him updated daily.

After discussion, Kelly Ruh made a motion that this Committee meets every other month through COVID and re-evaluate after every meeting if we need to continue with that timeline. Dr. Mike McHenry seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously. The next Board of Health meeting will be held virtually on January 18 at 5:00pm.

5. Updates on COVID-19

Deborah Armbruster stated that De Pere had 2 more deaths since the Situation Report was put out. Debbie explained that St. Norbert's has a dashboard which shows their COVID-19 activity and it is very transparent. St. Norbert's last day of on campus school is November 25th. They don't return to school until the first week in February. The Health Department is working with St. Norbert to do some sort of surveillance testing for the students as they come back in February. Debbie reported that the Wisconsin Disease Activity has added a new level which is the "Critically High" level. Brown County is currently part of this critically high level. There are only 7 counties in the state that are not at critically high.

Debbie stated that the Federal government implemented more testing on the main campuses of the U.W. systems. They are able to do rapid antigen testing and then if a PCR test needs to be done, they would do the PCR. The government is supplying people to man the testing sites.

Prevea has switched their testing site to the Brown County Fair Grounds for the winter and is also keeping their downtown site open. Bellin is switching their testing site to the old Sears building for the winter. Test results are taking between a couple days to 5 or 6 days. The Lab running the State funded tests switched to Mako Lab. This is causing a little delay currently.

Debbie reported that Public Health is having a summit through the State Tuesday and Wednesday of this week to see what we will be doing for 2021.

We meet with our area medical providers twice a week; this includes all the Health Systems, public Health and NEW Community Clinic. The providers in our area want DHS (Wisconsin Department of Health Services) to provide more school guidance.

Over the past few weeks, all health providers filled out an application to be a vaccinator for the COVID vaccine. Moderna and Pfizer both have vaccines that look promising. We have heard that the first line of recipients will include First Responders, hospital personnel, probably Police and EMS. The next group may

be the long term care facilities. It will be a tiered system. We will not have availability for the general public for some time.

Casey Nelson asked if the State was still 7 days behind in contact tracing. Debbie responded that we are still behind, but we are sending out letters and packets immediately which they receive in 24-48 hours. People find out their test results through their testing provider. We (Health Department) follow up with letters and phone calls. We hired another contact tracer to help with this. We do prioritize children under 18 and adults 65 and older. We call these cases first.

Dennis Hibray asked if people were being responsive to the questions. Debbie stated that some are very forthcoming and others are not.

Dennis asked if Public Health would be a source for COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Debbie stated that we signed a contract to be a vaccinator. Debbie explained that the Pfizer vaccine needs to be in a deep freezer, which we do not have. The area health systems do have deep freezers, so we may have to get our vaccine supply from them.

Casey Nelson asked what the metrics were for a close contact. Debbie explained that it would be within 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes over a 24 hour period of time, regardless of masking.

Debbie added that we have had 3 flu vaccine Clinics with 2 of them held at the Community Center. People stayed in their car and filled out their paperwork. They were given a beeper and when it was their turn, they were buzzed to enter the building for their vaccination. Last weekend, we did a drive through Flu clinic at Fire Station 2. We did have appointments for this clinic, and it went well.

Casey asked how the COVID vaccine will be paid for. Debbie responded that we have heard it will be free, paid for by the government. The supplies needed to administer the vaccine should be free also. We are hoping to receive a grant to cover the staff time for giving the vaccines.

6. Community Health Updates regarding Outreach Activities and Disease Report

Debbie stated our focus is on COVID-19, but we are still watching the other Communicable Diseases. We have not been going out in the community doing outreach at this time.

8. Public Comment on Matters not on the Agenda

None

9. Future Agenda Items

Dennis Hibray stated to contact Debbie or Kelly with any items they would like added to the agenda for the next meeting.

10. Adjournment

Casey Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Michael McHenry seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly Burke
Health Department Administrative Assistant