

MINUTES

Board of Health Meeting

March 28, 2016

Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq.; Dr. Marilyn Ross Cahn; Dr. Andrew Bronin; Julia Chiappetta; Dr. Michael Franco; Kurt Schaffir; Caroline C. Baisley, Director

Absent: Dr. Robert Ailleo

Guests: Charlee Tufts, Executive Director; John Strong, Fiscal Officer, GEMS

Staff: Ann Augustine; Joanna Lipson; Michael Long

Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 29, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

(Motion: Bronin / Second: Ross Cahn / Vote: – 4 in favor - 0 opposed – 2 abstentions [Dr. Franco and Ms. Chiappetta not at February meeting])

GEMS QUARTERLY REPORT

John Strong stated that GEMS had a successful fiscal year and offered the following financial report:

- Call volume was over budget by 31 calls for the fiscal nine months ending January 31, 2016. Budgeted calls were based on a multi-year historical experience and are consistent with the prior year fiscal 2015 budget.
- Payables and accrued expenses were over the prior year end balance by \$25K
- The change in net assets for GEMS' funds was higher by \$371,000, largely resulting from capital purchases; the change in operating net assets for the unrestricted fund was positive by \$319,000 for the fiscal nine months ending January 31, 2016
- Cash and Cash Equivalent – Unrestricted reflects a balance of \$1,776,000. The Town fee is received semi-annually resulting in peaks and valleys both in the cash position and in the Other Receivables balance sheet account.
- Patient receivables were higher than at the end of fiscal 2016 by \$21,000
- Contributions from donors to be used for capital purchases totaled \$369,000 for the fiscal nine months ending January 31, 2016.
- Patient care service revenue was \$1,797,000 for the fiscal nine months ending January 31, 2016 – within 2% of the budget due to volume and reductions in allowed billing rates
- Total operating expenses were under budget by \$333,000 for the fiscal nine months ending January 31, 2016. Personnel expenses were favorable to budget

Charlee Tufts reported that:

- Art Romano, Deputy Executive Director will retire within the next few months and the position will be redesigned to include an Educational Coordinator and a Professional Standards Coordinator.
- Funding was approved in the budget to purchase land at Fairview Country Club to construct a building to house the Northwest Fire Service and GEMS.
- The Annual Awards Ceremony is scheduled for May 6, 2016
- Chamber of Commerce Luncheon to honor GEMS is scheduled for May 17, 2016
- The second Annual Cos Cobber Fundraiser will be held on May 19, 2016 from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM and GEMS will receive a percentage of the proceeds during that time.
- The bike team will be in effect at Greenwich Point from Memorial Day through the end of September

Chairman thanked Ms. Tufts and Mr. Strong for their reports.

ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE OVERVIEW

Joanna Lipson, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, stated that Zika virus is spread primarily through the bite of an *Aedes* species mosquito (primarily *A. aegypti*) infected with the Zika virus. The *A. aegypti* mosquito is a tropical and sub-tropical species of aggressive daytime biters but they also bite at night.

The disease can be transmitted through:

- Mosquito bite
- Intrauterine and perinatal transmission
- Laboratory exposure
- Blood transfusion
- Zika virus can be sexually transmitted by a man to his sex partners, and this is of particular concern during pregnancy. All reported cases of sexual transmission involved sex without a condom with men who had or developed symptoms.

Symptoms are mild, last for several days to a week and include

- Fever
- Rash
- Joint pain
- Conjunctivitis

Other symptoms include muscle pain and headache. There is no specific antiviral treatment and only supportive care is advised.

Persons eligible for diagnosis and testing include:

- Symptomatic patients with at least two of the four primary symptoms and history of travel within the previous two weeks to counties and territories with active Zika transmission

- Pregnant women with a history of travel within 12 weeks to countries and territories with active Zika virus transmission whether they had symptoms or not

Strategies for mosquito prevention include:

- Preemptive mosquito management
- Public education
 - Use insect repellent according to manufacturer’s instructions
 - Cover exposed skin
 - Treat only clothing with insect repellent containing permethrin
 - Stay and sleep in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms
 - Practice mosquito prevention strategies indoors and outdoors throughout the entire day
 - Eliminate/reduce mosquito breeding sites

CDC Recommendations for Pregnant Women Considering Travel include:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing
- Pregnant women who are considering travel to one of these areas should talk to their healthcare provider and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip
- Women who are considering getting pregnant and traveling to territories or countries where there is ongoing Zika virus transmission should speak with their health care provider

Microcephaly linked to Zika virus has been reported in:

- Brazil: >5200 cases of suspected microcephaly temporally linked with current Zika outbreak
- French Polynesia: 17 cases of central nervous system malformations among fetuses and newborns that were temporally linked to 2013–2014 Zika virus outbreak
- Investigations in Brazil and French Polynesia are ongoing

Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) has been reported after Zika virus infection, but causal link has not been established.

- It is unclear how many children have had GBS after Zika virus infection
- Brazil: 6 patients aged 2-57 years with neurologic syndromes (GBS and Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis) after Zika infection
- French Polynesia: 38 cases of GBS, none among children

Discussion ensued and Dr. Ross Cahn stated that the most up-to-date on Zika virus can be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/MMWR. Ms. Baisley stated that there will be a talk ***Lets Talk About Zika*** on April 7, 2016 from noon to 1:00 PM at Greenwich Hospital Noble Conference Center.

Chairman thanked Ms. Lipson for her report.

Other Business

Greenwich Time Article About Town Restaurant Inspection Reports: Chairman stated that Dr. Bronin called his attention to an article “How Safe is Your Food?” that appeared on the front page of the March 27th Greenwich Time and inquired about the process of how the information was obtained. Michael Long, Director of Environmental Services, reported that in January a reporter from Greenwich Time inquired about restaurant inspections and requested an interview. Mr. Long spoke with the reporter at length about the inspection process. Restaurants are inspected four times a year and a failing score is 80 or less or a 4 point violation. The inspector may request that a violation be corrected immediately if needed, otherwise the regulations allow two weeks to correct violations. After the two week period the restaurant is re-inspected. In some cases, if the violation is severe enough, the inspector has the authority to move forward with a process and close the restaurant.

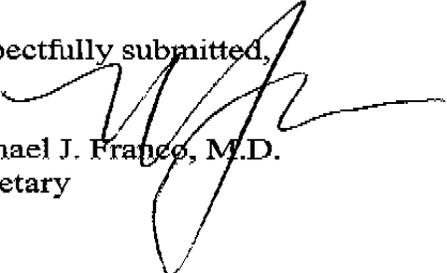
Discussion ensued about the process of restaurant inspections, closure and the ability to obtain information from the facility files. Dr. Franco stated that the Department should have requested to review article before it was published. The Director stated that such requests are rarely allowed by the media. Chairman noted that he believes that the article was written in a manner that could be inflammatory. Lengthy discussion ensued about the process and procedures for inspecting licensed facilities such as restaurants and body care facilities in Town. The authority of the inspectors was also discussed. Dr. Bronin stated that there should be a written standard to release information from the Division’s files. Dr. Ross Cahn stated that it is important to make sure that there is no danger to the public and restaurant violations that were reported in the newspaper were corrected before the article was written. Director Baisley stated that the inspectors are all certified and their responsibilities ensure there is no danger to the public. In addition, there may have been some facilities that were not re-inspected at the time the article was written. The Director noted that there is a list of municipal records from the Connecticut State Library; however, it only lists a retention schedule.

Chairman directed Mr. Long to draft a policy for his Division to release information according to the regulations for discussion at the April 25, 2016 meeting. He also requested that Mr. Long be prepared to discuss his office policy with regard to the inspectors’ daily routine. Chairman noted that he would like to see the policy in writing. A formal policy for release of information to the public will be developed.

Greenwich Time Article: Kurt Schaffir referred to a newspaper article about toxic areas in Greenwich which alleged that the Director of Health was not doing her job in protecting the public’s health. Director Baisley stated that she was aware of the article and that Mr. Horton is not knowledgeable about what is going on. The Department of Health was very influential in having all of those sites roped off for public use until the state or federal government gave approval to remediate the site.

There being no further regular business, Dr. Bronin moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:20 PM.
(Motion: Bronin/ Second: Franco /Vote: Unanimous - 6 in favor - 0 opposed)

Respectfully submitted,


Michael J. Franco, M.D.
Secretary