

Minutes

Board of Health Minutes

March 29, 2021 via ZOOM

Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq., Chair; Dr. Andrew Bronin; Ann Fountain; Dr. Sarah Gamble; Joel Muhlbaum, Esq.; Laureen O’Keefe, APRN, FNP-BC; Maryann Ramos, MPH, PA-C Emeritus

Staff: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health; Deb Travers, Director of Family Health; Kristin Donlin, Interim Operations Administrator/Environmental Health Supervisor

Presenters: Thomas Miserendino, Greenwich Emergency Medical Service (GEMS) Director of Finance; Tracy Schietinger, GEMS Executive Director; Daniel Warzoha, Town of Greenwich Emergency Management Director; Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno, MS, RN, NHA, CPH, CDP, Public Health Specialist

The Meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Robert Carangelo, Esq. at 6:36 pm.

Robert welcomed and introduced Joel Mulbaum, Esq. to the Board of Health. Joel practices law in Stamford and Westport and is a member of the Connecticut and New York Bars. His legal practice focuses on elder law, including Medicaid planning administrative, fair hearings, as well as a state planning administration, including probate matters. Joel is a nationally certified elder law attorney and he is a member of the National Academy of elder law attorneys. He is a part of the senior provider network of Greenwich’s Dementia Friends, and he has served on the Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Association Spiritual County Chapter as well as being part of a nonprofit organization serving disabled individuals in lower Fairfield County. Finally, Joel is a former host of the Senior Center Radio Show on WGCH.

Robert announced that Dr. Andrew Bronin will not be maintaining his Greenwich residency and will be exiting the Board of Health.

Minutes

The minutes of the January 25, 2021 were presented. Minutes were approved and accepted. **(Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Bronin / Vote: 7 in favor – 0 opposed)**

GEMS Quarterly Report: Thomas Miserendino, GEMS Director of Finance and Tracy Schietinger, GEMS Executive Director:

Tom presented the 3rd quarter budget report for which ended January 31, 2021.

- The year to date basis or net operating assets increased. This includes \$50,000 of grant revenue which is composed of two grants. One from the Inner-City Fund for \$17,000 and for \$33,000 from the Health and Human Services Department. This excludes the PPP loan, which was received at the end of November and has now become revenue and part of the financial statement. The year to date, through January, excluding the U.S. Paycheck Protection Plan revenue was \$65,000 below the prior year to date. Patient revenue is 6% below which is \$113,000 and \$140,000 lower than the prior year to date. Standby revenue is also down to \$27,000. This is off-set by training revenue which is up 75% ahead of budget. Grant revenue also noted.
- Other income of \$30,000 comes from the sale of two vehicles that we sold. They were fully depreciated and were sold and replaced.
- Year to date operating expenses of \$5.1 million, include per diem medics, EMT salaries and employee benefits. Benefits are down 9% due to lower negotiated rates for healthcare and life insurance and long term/short term disability.
- On the maintenance, they are down 17% primarily on the vehicle maintenance.
- Unable to have the annual in-person gala this year, which is the main fundraising event of the year.
- Received a lower Worker's Compensation rate than planned and received a refund based on claim experience.
- Dr. Sarah Gamble asked if call volumes were picking back up again for which Tom replied they are down about 11 to 15% to date through January.

Tracy presented an operations update.

- Tracy confirmed calls are down
- GEMS have been administering vaccinations at the Greenwich Department of Health Clinic. They also assisting at the Nathaniel Witherell Clinic today. The goal is to work well together as a team. Whenever Caroline needs GEMS, they are there for the Health Department and she's always there for GEMS.
- Station 4 (which covers the King Street area) has been working towards being replaced since 2015/2016 when the original location was deemed uninhabitable after Superstorm Sandy. It was demolished and has been replaced with a temporary FEMA trailer ever since. That trailer was actually procured with the help of the Board of Health. The new building has been approved by the BET Budget committee and is moving towards final approval from the BET later this week. The replacement of the building is a private/public partnership. The Town of Greenwich's Building Construction and Maintenance Division will be overseeing the construction. They look to break ground in July. If modular, the expected completion date would be 6-8 months. If stick built, the expected completion date would be July 2022.
- GEMS is also working towards a new accreditation. The Commission of Accreditation and Ambulance Services has taken about two years to complete this application. GEMS would be the second ambulance service in the state of Connecticut to receive that full accreditation.

- Their bike and marine medic teams will be operational from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Anne Fountain asked that as GEMS applied for grants, is it helpful to get any support from the Board Members in the form of letters. Tracy replied that she does have a draft letter that can be utilized and can be sent electronically by any person or by the Board.

Greenwich Emergency Management Update: Daniel Warzoha, Emergency Management Director:

- Both state and federal government have taken time to loosen the money available to cover damage from Tropical Storm Isaias due to the change in administration.
- After the storm, the First Selectman empowered a panel to look at the what was good, what was bad and what was ugly for that entire event and a report was submitted to him. Since that time, that panel has been tasked with the different pieces of the puzzle and significant progress has been made with planning.
- Greenwich is part of a pilot program that is using new software for emergency dispatch. It takes 30-40 seconds to process the information, assess the priority and get a ticket number back from the automated system.
- COVID-19 monies to be given back to municipalities. This is mainly for fire and police.
- Training has been curtailed due to the pandemic. More virtual than in-person training has taken place. No table top exercises have occurred. The Chairman questioned that with the decrease in training during the pandemic on whether we are prepared for emergency events.

COVID-19 Variants and COVID-19 Vaccine Presentation: Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno, MS, RN, NHA, CPH, CDP, Public Health Specialist:

Stephanie's background was introduced to the Board of Health by the Chairman.

- She formally served as the Director of Community Health for the Greenwich Department of Health from 2002-2009. Since then, she has received her Doctorate in Nursing, currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Nurses Association and has returned to work part-time for the Greenwich Department of Health as the Public Health Specialist and is performing contact tracing and clinic vaccinator duties.
- Stephanie presented a slide show with up-to-date information covering COVID-19 background, simulations, and statistics for world, national and state infections.
- During and after the presentation, various board members asked questions. Dr. Bronin explained the difference between droplets and aerosol.

Greenwich Department of Health COVID-19 Response Update: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health:

- To date, the Greenwich Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic has administered over 2,500 doses of the Moderna Vaccine. It operates 3 days a week for 3.5 hours and 165-175 doses are given at each clinic. The Clinic is operated by Department Staff from all Divisions as well as Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers. Over 100 hours have been logged by MRC volunteers each month.
- There are 3 other clinics operating within the Town of Greenwich. Greenwich Hospital/Yale New Haven is operating out the Sampson Field House located at the Brunswick School on King Street and at a medical office located at 500 West Putnam Avenue 7 days a week. Family Centers is

operating out of the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center 5 days a week. The Greenwich Department of Health has partnered with Family Centers twice recently with clinics at the Hill House Senior Residence and just earlier today at Nathaniel Witherell. A GEMS medic was also onsite at Nathaniel Witherell.

- Director Baisley mentioned that there is a fear and doubt about the vaccines, possibly due to them coming out so quickly, but stressed the importance of getting vaccinated. The Greenwich Department of Health has been administering the Moderna Vaccine since January at its clinics. There is now an adequate supply coming in to the state. As of April 1st, all Connecticut residents and workers are eligible to receive the vaccines. Sixteen and Seventeen year old individuals have only been approved to receive the Pfizer vaccine. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is slowly coming into the state, mostly being received by the hospital locations. By May, the supply of vaccines will outweigh the demand.
- There has been an increase in cases, locally, throughout the state and across the country. This could be an indication of a possible 4th wave. Eighty-one cases have been reported in town from just this past Wednesday to Friday. School vacations and traveling have contributed to these numbers getting the weekly case numbers closer to 200. There are currently 160 active cases.
- Director Baisley is disappointed that the Department of Economic Community and Development (DECD) has loosened restrictions on food service establishments and other businesses allowing them to return to 100% capacity amid an increase in cases. Social distancing, barriers, face masks and cleaning are still required. If a 4th wave is confirmed, restrictions may have to be put back into place.
- The Department of Health will continue to run clinics at capacity each week and to date, no shots have been wasted.

Motion to adjourn requested at 8:05 pm by Robert Carangelo, Esq. (Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Fountain)

Respectfully submitted by, Maryann Ramos, MPH, PA-C Emeritus, Secretary 4/6/2021

Minutes prepared by, Kristin Donlin, Interim Operations Administrator/Environmental Health Supervisor
4/3/21