

MINUTES

Board of Health Meeting

June 27, 2016

- Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq.; Dr. Marilyn Ross Cahn; Dr. Andrew Bronin, Julia Chiappetta, Vick Sandhu, Esq., Dr. Mark Armstrong, Caroline C. Baisley, Director
- Absent: Kurt Schaffir
- Guests: Charlee Tufts, Executive Director and John Strong, Financial Officer, GEMS; Ingrid Gillespie, Communities 4 Action; Dennis Bladnicki, Liberation Program; Dr. Peter Arturi, Physician of Record; Dr. Robert Ailleo; Dr. Michael Franco; Alyssa Wade; Jill Ailleo; Amanda Ailleo
- Staff: Carol Dixon; Doug Serafin; Deborah Travers

Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM. and welcomed the newest members of the Board, Mr. Sandhu and Dr. Armstrong.

MINUTES

The minutes of the May 23, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

**(Motion: Bronin / Second: Ross Cahn / Vote: 4 in favor - 0 opposed – 2 abstentions
[Mr. Sandhu and Dr. Armstrong were not at the meeting])**

Chairman reported that Mr. Schaffir was not in attendance due to the death of his brother, and extended his condolences.

GEMS QUARTERLY REPORT

John Strong offered a financial report:

- GEMS is a 501c3 stand-alone organization
- Salaries and employee benefits (excluding workers compensation) were significantly positive
- Workers compensation expenses reduced
- Employee benefits were favorable

Dr. Cahn noted that the way GEMS reports has been changed to more closely parallel the reporting system of Town departments and that the change was well received by the RTM.

Charlee Tufts reported that there have been some personnel changes – Art Romano had been with GEMS since 1993 and has retired and his vacant position has been filled. Two part time positions have been expanded into a full time training position and there is a new director of operations.

The bike team is back at Greenwich Point. The team operates on weekends and holidays throughout the summer. The Town party went well from an EMS standpoint, even though it was a very hot day. GEMS maintains a tent at the party and had no serious calls.

Charlee spoke about Narcan, which has been in the news. It is actually not a new drug, having been developed in 1967. GEMS has carried it since they began, but it has received a lot of attention at the State level recently.

Charlee also mentioned a recent New York Times article about privatization of ambulances services with the intent of making them for profit. White Plains, New Rochelle, Harrison and Mt. Vernon were all affected when Trans Care closed quite suddenly. There was no ambulance service. The article outlined the effect on patient care.

Dr. Franco remarked that GEMS rivals any service in the nation with regard to cardiac arrest survival rates. GEMS consistent survival rate is 30 – 35% - a recent national study cited the average save rate is 8% across the nation.

Substance Abuse Presentation

Ingrid Gillespie reports that in our region (Greenwich, New Canaan, Darien and Stamford) the big substance abuse issues are alcohol, marijuana and opioids, adderall and vaping. Among Greenwich teens, the two prevalent substances are alcohol and marijuana. Dennis Bladnicki states that quite often teens are injured and put on prescription pain medications, then get addicted very quickly. Because the medications can be expensive they move on to heroin and fentanyl. Charlee Tufts added that GEMS has not seen the problem with opioids that many other towns have experienced, but they are seeing prescription drugs – some belonging to the patient, but many belonging to someone else. New State legislation will include a 7 day prescription limit for pain medications, instead of 30 day prescriptions. Dr. Ailleo wondered why abuse of some of the pain medications that have been around for years, such as Percocet, is now so much more prevalent. Ms. Gillespie stated that data shows a direct correlation between pharmaceutical companies coming in with very aggressive marketing for particular pain medications which increased sales and, as a result, increased addiction.

Dennis Bladnicki states that the heroin today is so pure a needle isn't needed – it is snorted or smoked. “Vapes” are the latest mechanism for taking in drugs. There is a lot of focus on opioids, but Xanax, a drug used to treat anxiety, has become number one over Percocet. Much discussion ensued regarding pain management, addiction, opiates, heroin, medical marijuana, vaping with juices that can

mask the detection of the drugs and prescription drugs.

Laboratory Programs and Projects 2016

Doug Serafin, Laboratory Director, discussed well water testing and reported that 11% of wells tested for bacteria failed. For this reason if a person has a well it is important to test the well water, and if it fails the bacteria test it is easy to fix. He also reports that well water lead testing requests had increased, most likely due to the situation in Flint, Michigan. Of the wells that were tested for lead, only 1 had elevated levels.

In the tick testing program, 593 specimens were tested for Lyme Disease, with 20% testing positive. 1% of the specimens tested positive for Babesiosis, and 1 tick tested positive for both diseases. People are also requesting testing of the ticks for Erlichiosis, but the lab does not have the ability to test for that disease. Discussion ensued.

Doug stated that the promotional radon program had been well received. In addition, 10 animals that had been sent to the State for testing and 2 (20%) had tested positive for rabies - both were bats.

Recognition of outgoing Board of Health members

The Chairman then presented the contributions of Dr. Franco and Dr. Ailleo.

Dr. Franco was appointed to the Board in October, 2008. Dr. Franco is also the Medical Director of the Intensive Care Unit at Greenwich Hospital and has been an important link between the Department and the hospital. Prior to coming on the Board, Dr. Franco chaired the Board of Selectmen's Greenwich Environmental Action Task Force to tackle the Town's practice of using pesticides, particularly on athletic fields. In April of 2008, Dr. Franco was responsible for writing and presenting the Resolution from the Task Force to the Board of Selectmen which, in turn, was passed thus preventing the use of pesticides for the most part on Town athletic fields. Also during Dr. Franco's eight years of service, he served as the Board's Secretary for the past four years, he served on the Greenwich Coalition to Improve End of Life Care and devoted his time to educating the public on the need to embrace end of life matters. During his tenure he has been passionate about environmental issues and the need for the Department to be involved – these issues include, but are not limited to, soil contamination at Greenwich High School, New Lebanon School and Byram Park. He supported the Department fully on the area of public health emergency preparedness and embraced the Department's designed response plans. Dr. Franco served on the Working Committee on Artificial Turf and supported the Nathaniel Witherell Project Renew. He's been an advocate for the Department's laboratory and encouraged the laboratory to apply for the State's Lead grant in support of the blood lead testing program and he's been an ardent supporter of GEMS and their budgets. Dr. Franco supported changes to the Department's noise ordinance, as well as to the Greenwich Municipal Code on heat. Dr. Franco was an advocate for the Department's Community Health Planning program and spoke at the BET's public hearing to reinstate funding and lost positions. He offered guidance and suggestions on the well water testing program and supported the GEMS Governing Agreement Extension which expires in 2019. He served on the subcommittee relating to leaf blowers, was an advocate for the Department's nursing program and supported the addition of vaccines to the public. With an extremely busy schedule at the hospital he found time to serve the Town through the Board of Health. As a result, the Chairman proposed a Resolution recognizing Dr. Franco's significant contribution to the fields of medicine and public health, and expressed the Board and the Department's utmost appreciation of Dr. Franco's dedication and accomplishments that touched the lives of so many. He noted that the Resolution would be set forth to the minutes of this meeting.

Ms. Chiappetta moved to include Chairman's comments in the meeting minutes.

(Motion: Chiappetta / Second: Ross Cahn / Vote: Unanimous - 6 in favor - 0 opposed)

Chairman pointed out that the position of Board Secretary was now vacant and Dr. Ross Cahn nominated Dr. Bronin to fill the vacancy.

(Motion: Ross Cahn / Second: Carangelo / Vote: Unanimous - 6 in favor - 0 opposed)

The Chairman then recognized and thanked Dr. Ailleo's wife and daughters for coming and spoke about Dr. Ailleo.

Dr. Ailleo was appointed to the Board of Health in 1996 and became the Supervising Dentist to the Department's Dental Health program. During his twenty years of service Dr. Ailleo served as Chairman of the Board for four years, as Vice-Chairman for one year. He continued to serve as the Supervising Dentist throughout his twenty year tenure on the Board, and has agreed to continue to serve as the Supervising Dentist even after he steps down. Having expertise in public health planning and policy, Dr. Ailleo served on the Board's Budget Overview Committee reviewing the Department's budget. He also assisted the Department in opening the HIV/STD Clinic, which is a collaboration of services between the Department of Health and the Greenwich Hospital. As Chairman, Dr. Ailleo provided oversight to the Department during the reorganization and managed the Department's Study Assessment, which was funded by an anonymous donor. He also assisted the Director of Health during the crisis involving the emergence of West Nile Virus – which included the larvacide program that treats over 6,000 Town catch basins. Dr. Ailleo was very supportive of the Department's laboratory which began to offer services of tick testing and radon testing, which have been a huge success. In 2000 the shellfish beds opened to the public after being closed for forty years, due to a hepatitis outbreak. As an advocate for the environment, Dr. Ailleo supported the Department's role in the recreational shellfishing program as well as the Byram River study. He supported the sewer extension project in the areas of North Mianus, Milbrook and Hillcrest Park. As Chairman, Dr. Ailleo was responsible for the Department's new role in emergency preparedness and supported a Town Emergency Preparedness Director position, which was created shortly after 9/11. It was stated that Dr. Ailleo acted extremely quickly in a time when people really didn't know what was going on. Dr. Ailleo initiated and supported the development of the Town's first Bio-terrorism/Influenza Pandemic plan, designed by the Department which has since been fine-tuned several times. Dr. Ailleo was instrumental in transferring the School Health Nursing program to the Board of Education, which was done in the best interest of the children. Dr. Ailleo also supported the Prevention Begins at Home program for parents of fifth grade and up that provided education on drugs and substance abuse. As a public health advocate Dr. Ailleo opposed a change in the Greenwich Town Charter that would transfer the oversight of the Department of Health from the Board of Health to the Board of Selectmen. He also opposed a leaf-blower ban which would have restricted homeowners from using leaf blowers at all during the summer months. During the years that followed Dr. Ailleo supported the Laboratory's Cholesterol Testing Program, and supported revisions to the Greenwich Municipal Code which adopted changes to Nathaniel Witherell's Building Committee so that project work could run efficiently and effectively. He also assisted Departmental staff during the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic outbreak and has graciously volunteered to continue to assist the Department of Health in the future if they need assistance. The Chairman stated that although the list he gave of Dr. Ailleo's accomplishments is long, there were many more such accomplishments during Dr. Ailleo's long tenure on the Board. The Chairman proposed the passage of a Resolution recognizing Dr. Ailleo's significant contribution to the field of medicine and public health. He stated that on behalf of the Board of Health and the Department of Health he wished to express the utmost appreciation of Dr. Ailleo's dedication and accomplishments, which touched the lives of so many. He then further resolved that this Resolution be set forth in the minutes of this meeting.

(Motion: Carangelo / Second: Ross Cahn / Vote: Unanimous - 6 in favor - 0 opposed)

There being no further regular business, Dr. Bronin moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:08 PM.

(Motion: Bronin/ Second: Ross Cahn /Vote: Unanimous - 6 in favor - 0 opposed)

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Bronin, M.D.

Secretary

Attachments: Resolutions

