

# Minutes

## Board of Health Minutes

September 28, 2021 via ZOOM

Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq., Chairman; Anne Fountain; Dr. Danielle Goodwin, DDS; Dr. Sarah Gamble; Joel Muhlbaum, Esq.; Lauren O’Keefe, APRN, FNP-BC; Maryann Ramos, MPH, PA-C Emeritus

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

Presenters: Tom Miserendino, Greenwich Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) Director of Finance; Tracy Schietinger, GEMS Executive Director; Fred Camillo, Town of Greenwich First Selectman

The ZOOM Meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Robert Carangelo, Esq. at 6:30 pm

### Minutes

The minutes of the June 28, 2021 meeting were presented. No edits were requested. Motion to accept the minutes as submitted were approved and accepted. **(Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Muhlbaum / Vote: 7 in favor – 0 opposed)**

### GEMS Quarterly Report:

#### Financial Report: GEMS Director of Finance, Tom Miserendino:

- Year to date operating assets are a positive \$205,000, which is \$71,000 higher than prior year to date
- Year to date revenue is \$1.9 million, which is over \$140,000 ahead of budget and \$162,000 higher than prior year to date
- Patient revenue is up \$104,000
- Training is up \$43,000
- Standby revenue is \$16,000. Last year there was no standby revenue
- EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) course is going on now

- Primary expenses are the per diem EMTs (\$26,000 under) and the overtime account (\$22,000 under)
- Billable calls are slightly ahead of budget at 977 calls. Last year to date was 966
- 853 calls, which is 15% higher than the prior year
- Cash collection is \$118, 000 higher than prior year to date, which is an increase of 30%

Questions:

- The Chairman asked about the overall finances for the three-month period and how it compared to the budget at the same time last year. Tom replied that that the net change operating assets are \$71,000 higher than the prior year.

**Operations: GEMS Executive Director, Tracy Schietinger:**

- Dan Warzoha, Emergency Management Director for the Town of Greenwich, passed away during the storm. He helped prepare the town for the storm and his passing is a great loss.
- GEMS was ready for Tropical Storm Henri
- GEMS was prepared for Tropical Storm Ida; however, the staff was not prepared for what they actually had to deal with, but they managed it. Regal Care Nursing Facility at 1188 King Street started taking on water from the rain around 10:00 pm. The Fire Department was activated at that time and a GEMS supervisor was called to the scene to evaluate a patient. Two (2) emergency patients were transported to Greenwich Hospital by GEMS and the supervisor remain on scene. At 10:45 pm, it was determined that a full evacuation was needed due two inches of rain water throughout the building, making it unsafe for residents. Forty-four (44) residents were transported across the street to 1165 King Street, which is another nursing facility that had available beds due to there being an empty COVID-19 wing. Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG) Stamford Emergency Medical Services, AMR (American Medical Transportation Co.) and Nelson Ambulances all assisted in the transfer of residents, which was done by 4:47 am.

Questions:

- The Chairman asked what the contingency plan is and how many contingency beds are available and where they are located for an emergency like this. Tracy replied that there are at least 250 (two-hundred fifty) beds throughout the state. During Tropical Storm Henri, there were some relocations that were done preemptively along the shoreline, but the King Street situation was done as an emergency.
- Joel Muhlbaum asked if there was an interstate cooperative with nursing homes that are nearby rather than relocating or shuffling residents throughout Connecticut. Tracy responded that they can transport patients for emergencies, but bringing patients across state lines for anything else is difficult. The State of Connecticut would have to work directly with the State of New York.
- Sarah Gamble asked if the nursing home itself had its own evacuation plan. Tracy responded that they do, but their own plan was not was missing contact information and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) representative onsite was not pleased with Regal Care and they have many issues they will need to deal with.

- Maryann Ramos provided a personal experience as an example that related to the situation
- Anne Fountain also provided personal experience that related and said that Emergency Operations Center Managers would be able to talk from State to State so there would be a communication flow to Westchester County if needed. Tracy replied that GEMS talks to 60 (Sixty) Control, but going through the Emergency Operations Center could be done.
- Joel asked if there is a vaccine requirement/testing for GEMS staff. Tracy confirmed that there is a vaccine requirement and that there is 99% compliance with it. One staff member has received a vaccine exemption and gets tested once per week. None of the staff have experienced a breakthrough. Staff wears personal protective equipment (PPE) and there are no shortages of equipment.

### **Storm Ida Update: Fred Camillo, Town of Greenwich First Selectman**

- Empaneled a task force after Tropical Storm Ida. It has met once and will meet again next Thursday. It consists of employees from the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Law Department, Parks and Recreation (P&R), Environmental Affairs, Risk Management and the Office of the First Selectman. The task force will go review this storm as well as other historical storms and provide assessments. With more building, there have been more problems. Tropical Storm Ida was a 500 (five hundred) year storm.
- 5 dumpsters were delivered to the Pemberwick Road Area that was heavily impacted by the storm. That area got hit by the river rising and the stream that runs under the park that became a waterfall during the storm. DPW has looked into the conditions and think they have figured out the biggest part of the problem. Fred has also asked as to whether the baseball field at Pemberwick Park can be dug up and water retention pond put in. West Lyon Farms retention ponds are also being looked into. One of the retention ponds is natural, but the rest are man-made.
- There is a \$35 million bill in Washington D. C. right now that Congressman Himes is working on that would help dredge and widen the Byram River at the mouth.
- Assessments in other parts of town are being asked for. At least 5 (five) homes in 3 (three) different locations in town are susceptible to catching everyone's water and the town should look into buying them out to fix the problem.
- The website was opened to receiving assessment/damage reports from residents affected by the storm. With all the reports, we should be able to meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) threshold to receive assistance. Governor Lamont said our website was the best in the state.

### Questions:

- The Chairman asked if there were any plans to fill the Director of Emergency Management position and if so, how quickly can it be done. Fred replied that request for proposal (RFP) was published to get the best possible candidate. There are five (5) or six (6) names that are being considered. The Chief of Police has been filling the role in the interim.

- Fred provided his town issued cell phone number to the Board in case anyone needed to get a hold of him

**COVID-19 Update: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health:**

- There have been 5,757 (five thousand seven hundred fifty-seven) cases to date in town. There are 52 active cases to date. This number fluctuates from day to day as cases are completed and new cases come in
- As the colder weather comes in, cases could rise
- Seeing a lot more cases among children that are not eligible for vaccination and the virus is spreading through households
- Percentage of breakthrough cases is about half. Varies from week to week. Breakthroughs are no longer. Unvaccinated individuals are tending to get more severe symptoms than those who are breakthroughs
- We are in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> (fourth) wave, which started mid-June. The 3<sup>rd</sup> (third) wave started in the fall of 2020 and ended late spring leaving only a short break in-between. The Delta Variant is highly contagious. This variant is the most prominent affecting Connecticut and the United States. It is close to 100 % (one hundred) of the cases. Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno has been educating the public concerning this subject
- Testing in schools has begun and made possible by money paid for by the federal government. Testing is available to children that are not eligible for vaccination that want that service. Testing is performed once a week
- Influenza season is beginning. There was not much of a season last year, since mask wearing prevented the virus from spreading. This year could be more problematic. The Department will begin flu clinics this week, starting with an employee clinic here at Town Hall
- Booster shots have been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for use of the Pfizer vaccine to individuals that are 65 (sixty-five) years or older or 18 (eighteen) years of age or older that have a risk associated to their job.
- The Department carries the Moderna vaccine. It is possible that it will be approved in the next several weeks. The Department is looking to get approved to reopen its clinic in the lower level of Town Hall to administer Moderna, once the vaccine is approved by the FDA and CDC.
- Flu shots and booster shots can be administered at the same time

Questions:

- The Chairman asked about the accuracy of the total positive case numbers since some people are not getting tested or taking home tests that aren't reported. Caroline stated that there may be under reporting from people and providers.
- The Chairman asked what is the percentage of deaths of unvaccinated versus vaccinated in Connecticut? Caroline had Kristin Donlin look that information up on the CT DPH website and found in the most recent report from Thursday, September 23, 2021 that there is a much higher death rate in unvaccinated individuals

- Joel asked about homebound patients and how the Department handled it. Caroline responded that calls come in from the public as well as referrals from the State.

**Business: Reported by Robert Carangelo, Esq., Board Chairman:**

The Department will be holding Flu Clinics on October 7<sup>th</sup> (seventh), 13<sup>th</sup> (thirteenth), 18<sup>th</sup> (eighteenth) and 27<sup>th</sup>(twenty-seventh).

**Motion to adjourn requested at 7:35 pm by Robert Carangelo, Esq. (Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Ramos)**

Minutes prepared by, Kristin Donlin, Interim Operations Administrator/Environmental Health Supervisor  
09/29/21

Respectfully submitted by, Maryann Ramos, MPH, PA-C Emeritus, Secretary 10/04/21