

**MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF HEALTH  
REORGANIZATION MEETING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 at 7:30 pm**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>
Mr. Charles Perry	Ms. Brielle Cook	David Pennella, BOH Attorney
Dr. Arnold Pally	Dr. Sunil Shah	Aimee Puluso, Health Officer/Secretary
Ms. Betty Bowers		June Hercek, Asst. Administrator
Dr. Steven Marcus		Victor Canning, Township Administrator
Dr. Sachin Shah		Dr. Matthew Kayne, Township Committee
		Sarah Foye, resident

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

With a quorum present, Mr. Charles Perry called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. Ms. Puluso took a roll call of members present.

As required by the Open Public Meetings Act (a.k.a. “Sunshine Law”), adequate notice of this meeting was provided. The notice specified the meeting was to be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Health Department at the Montville Township Municipal Building, 195 Changebridge Road. Legal notice of this meeting e-mailed to The Daily Record newspaper, posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Building, posted with agenda on the Montville Township website at [www.montvillenj.org](http://www.montvillenj.org), and filed with the Montville Township Clerk.

**Appointment of Interim Board of Health Secretary**

Mr. Perry read Resolution 2020-05 Appointment of Interim Board of Health Secretary Aimee Puluso.

Discussion: Dr. Pally requested clarification on the former role of Aimee Puluso on the Board of Health. Ms. Bowers asked if serving in that role would be a burden regarding communication from the Board, which at this time must go through Township Administrator Victor Canning. Mr. Pennella explained that Aimee Puluso was and continues as the Health Officer. Ms. Puluso clarified that the appointment as Interim Board of Health Secretary was temporary, probably for this meeting only, and that the Township was in the process of appointing a permanent Board of Health Secretary, who should be in place prior to the next meeting. Mr. Pennella clarified that the Interim Board of Health Secretary role was solely to facilitate the meeting, and record it and the Board’s actions.

MOTION: Mr. Perry a motion to accept the resolution. SECOND: Dr. Pally. In favor: Dr. Pally, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Charles Perry to approve the minutes of the Board of Health meeting held on July 13, 2020. Second – Dr. Marcus. In favor: Dr. Pally, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus. Against: none. Abstain: Ms. Bowers. Motion passed.

**Public Comments**

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Perry to open the meeting to public comments from any citizen wishing to speak before the Montville Township Board of Health on items on the agenda, and items not on the agenda. Second – Dr. Pally. In favor: Dr. Pally, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Ms. Sarah Foye did not have a comment, was just there to listen.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Perry to close the meeting to public comments. Second – Dr. Marcus. In favor: Dr. Pally, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Dr. Sachin Shah joined the meeting at 7:50 pm.

### **Reports**

Ms. Puluso presented the July 2020 Health Department monthly report, the August 2020 Health Department monthly report, the COVID summary dated August 7, 2020, and the COVID summary dated September 11, 2020, Q/A dated September 14, 2020.

Discussion: Dr. Marcus requested that any time there was an acronym or abbreviation on the Health Department's monthly reports, that the definition be included on the page. Dr. Marcus asked for more details on the communicable disease investigations. Regarding the hepatitis investigations, he requested an explanation as to why some of the cases remain open and under investigation. He noted that there was a salmonella outbreak associated with certain foods, and would like to know if those foods were associated with the salmonella case we were investigating. Ms. Puluso noted that in the Q/A, she had responded to this question and that for any foodborne illness investigations, any known outbreak of that disease linked to specific foods would prompt questions about that specific food or foods during our investigation. The group discussed the option of including narratives for such investigations. Ms. Puluso stated that if there was a confirmed foodborne illness, a note would be added indicating whether or not it was linked to any current outbreak linked to specific foods. Dr. Marcus stated that the my response to his question in the Q/A document about whether or not someone was routinely inspecting the food establishments or only when there was a report was "wishy" as I had stated that sometimes it was in conjunction with an inspection and sometimes it was a spot check for that purpose alone. Ms. Puluso clarified that the question she had received in writing and had responded to was "Were retail food establishments which had outdoor seating reviewed actually inspected and cleared" and that the response was that all retail food establishments that requested approval for outdoor dining were visited to ensure compliance with regulations, some in conjunction with regular inspections, and some as spot checks for that purpose alone to ensure compliance. Dr. Marcus stated that the term "sometimes" was what had confused him.

Dr. Marcus brought up the question he had submitted about the Towaco section of town being over-represented by cases. He noted the potential reasons for this that were included in the response (perhaps residents there don't follow recommendations as closely, perhaps they are more likely to seek testing, perhaps it is natural variation). (Note: as of the 9/11/20 COVID summary, Montville and Pine Brook have a slightly lower percentage of cases than population, and Towaco has roughly 3% higher amount of cases than population). Dr. Marcus requested a study to determine the reason. The group discussed the feasibility of such a study. Ms. Bowers asked that since Dr. Marcus offered to conduct such a study, was there a reason he should not. Mr. Canning stated that conducting such a study was not the role of a Board of Health member. Ms. Bowers suggested that he could conduct the study as an epidemiology expert and not a Board member. Mr. Canning stated that he could not divorce himself from his role as a Board of Health member. Mr. Pennella concurred with Mr. Canning's statement. Mr. Perry suggested postponing a study until such time as the Health Department had the time and the resources to conduct it. Dr. Pally stated that one issue is that he didn't know if the difference in cases was going to be statistically significant or not due to the small sample size, but that information from such a study may prove valuable, and that resources should not dictate whether or not the study was conducted. Ms. Puluso noted that the Board is a body that can set policy, and if they voted to have such a study conducted, it would then be her role to determine how best to accomplish that. Mr. Pennella confirmed that.

MOTION: A motion was made by Dr. Marcus for the Department of Health to collect in a composite form the information that might explain the excess cases in the Towaco section of the township. Second – Dr. Pallay. In favor: Dr. Pally, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus, Dr. Sachin Shah. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Resolution 2020-06: Mr. Perry read Resolution 2020-06 Authorizing the execution of a shared services agreement with the Board of Education of the Township of Montville for the provision of nursing services to non-public schools located within Montville Township

MOTION: Mr. Perry a motion to accept the resolution. SECOND: Dr. Marcus. In favor: Dr. Pallay, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus, Dr. Sachin Shah. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

COVID vaccination distribution/administration plans: Ms. Puluso described the current COVID-19 vaccination distribution/administration plans. Discussed: the type of vaccine that currently is likely to be chosen, when it may become available, the stages in which it is going to be distributed, the no-cost vaccination kits that will be distributed from CDC to the state, from the state to county LINCS health departments, and from the LINCS health departments to the vaccination sites, what the kits will include and what they won't, the challenges of obtaining supplies, the search for additional medical suppliers for both anticipated vaccinations and emergency stockpiles. Dr. Kayne asked about businesses and residents who wanted to donate PPE and other medical supplies, Ms. Puluso responded that the Health Department would welcome such donations. Dr. Marcus cautioned against receiving donations due to potential suspect items being donated. Dr. Marcus asked if hospitals were contacted for extra supplies, Ms. Puluso responded that local area hospitals were asking health departments for supplies, not the other way around.

Ms. Puluso stated it was highly unlikely that the municipalities would be conducting COVID vaccination clinics, and it would most likely be a regional approach, but that the decision would be made by the state, with input from county and local health departments.

Dr. Pallay recommended that the Board be included in discussions regarding vaccines. He expressed concerns about the efficacy and availability of potential vaccines, and that the public may put pressure on municipalities to provide the vaccine, and that the Board will require further information should such decisions about vaccinating at the municipal level need to be made. Ms. Puluso noted that as NJ is still operating under a declared State of Emergency, the state will be determining how the vaccine will be distributed, and there was some question as to how much input any individual municipality or Board of Health would have in vaccine distribution.

Dr. Marcus stated that the FDA would be reviewing vaccines for effectiveness and safety, but both vaccines being considered now pose difficulties in transportation and storage at sub-zero temperatures. Dr. Marcus stated he was more concerned about people refusing to get vaccinated rather than putting pressure to obtain the vaccination.

Mr. Perry stated he agreed the logistics would be very difficult.

Mr. Perry expressed concern about rapid test kits.

Ms. Puluso responded that local health departments were being discouraged from purchasing sub-zero freezers, and that another challenge was that the vaccines currently being considered required 2 doses, each dose about 28 days apart.

Ms. Puluso discussed rapid test kits, and the difference between the less-sensitive rapid antigen tests, and PCR tests, which remain the "gold standard" for testing.

Ms. Bowers asked for clarification on the definition of “PCR”, Dr. Marcus responded with a general description and stated he could provide further details offline.

Dr. Pallay discussed his experiences in his office with testing, and that reliability and accuracy is much more important than a faster result.

Ms. Puluso noted another challenge with the rapid tests in physician’s offices was that the physician would then be required to create an account in CDRSS and enter the case information. She noted that local health departments, including here in Montville, did not have the staffing or resources to do the administrative work of entering faxed reports from various physician offices in the area, and that these reports could potentially number into the hundreds per day when negative results were included.

Upcoming influenza clinic: Ms. Puluso stated that working in conjunction with Social Services, Police Department, DPW, and our Child Health Conference physician Dr. Baran, we have a tentative date for the clinic (based upon receiving vaccine in time, which at this time appeared likely). Current plans are for a drive-through clinic in front of the Senior House, and will be limited to senior citizens, with 50 high-dose vaccinations available for them. In addition, we have some homebound seniors that we vaccinate at their homes each year, and Ms. Puluso requested that if anyone knew of a senior that needed to have the vaccine given to them at their home, to notify the Department or Nancy Mertz so we could add them to that list. In addition to the high-dose vaccine, we have 50 regular dose vaccinations available to Township employees, and that it will be subsidized by the Health Department to provide the vaccinations to employees at no cost to them to encourage them to receive the vaccine. Ms. Puluso noted that historically, local health departments were a safety net for the uninsured and underinsured, and with those numbers being lowered by the Affordable Care Act, and the availability of flu vaccinations at convenient locations such as pharmacies and supermarkets where most times the shots are covered by insurance, the number of people seeking flu vaccinations from the Health Department appears to diminish each year. Ms. Puluso also noted that national chain pharmacies and supermarkets ordered such large quantities of vaccine that they are among the first to receive their vaccine delivery, usually in August, whereas the smaller orders from local health departments are not delivered until mid-late October.

Dr. Pallay asked how many employees there were in the Township. Mr. Canning responded 100.

Dr. Pallay requested that the Board make a formal recommendation to all Township employees that they get vaccinated this year for flu, either from their own local sources or by way of the Health Department’s services. Ms. Puluso consulted the Board attorney Mr. Pennella for the most appropriate method to make that formal recommendation. Mr. Pennella responded that a resolution was the appropriate method, and what Dr. Pallay had already stated was sufficient.

MOTION: Dr. Pallay made a motion to accept a resolution that the Board strongly recommends that any and all Montville Township employees receive flu vaccine by whatever method they can get it, personally, or by means of the Board of Health, at an appropriate day.

POINT OF ORDER: Dr. Marcus raised a point of order to suggest amending the motion to specifically include first responders. Dr. Pallay changed the motion to include all first responders.

SECOND: Dr. Marcus. In favor: Dr. Pallay, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus, Dr. Sachin Shah. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Contact Tracing: Ms. Bowers had submitted questions regarding contact tracing, including resistance to cooperating with contact tracers. Ms. Puluso responded that there was an increased lack of cooperation. As mentioned during the Governor’s press briefing the Friday before the meeting, cases were increasing among the age group 19-24, and that age group is now at the highest percent positivity (6%) that any other age group, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading age group was 14-18, with a 4% positivity rate, and all

other groups were decreasing or remained flat. We began to see cases since August that refused to cooperate with our investigations, and the majority of those cases were under the age of 30. According to NJDOH Commissioner Persichilli, two reasons include cases don't want to "rat out" their friends or family. Cooperation is voluntary, and we can't force it, but we do our best. We make two phone calls, and if we don't hear back from them, our inspectors or Dial-A-Ride drivers put a sealed note on the door or hand it to the intended recipient that the Health Department has been trying to reach them, and please call them, and that helps in some cases. Some of the cases who do call us as a result of the notes indicate they don't want to cooperate, and we try to explain why it is important to comply with our communicable disease investigations. It can be difficult to sway people. NJDOH created a PSA, and a video was posted by Ms. Puluso on the Health Department's COVID page that encourages everyone to participate in contact tracing efforts, and was also sent out on the Township social media accounts, and a contact tracing overview was also put on the COVID page.

Mr. Perry noted it was unfortunate that younger people did not want to participate. He wanted to know if the Board could put out a statement encouraging participation. Mr. Pennella suggested that Ms. Puluso propose language for a resolution that the Board could consider. Ms. Puluso suggested that the language be similar to Dr. Pallay's previous motion regarding encouraging Township employees to get their flu shots.

Dr. Sachin Shah asked if a contact tracing app could be used. Ms. Puluso stated that none were being used in an official capacity in the US at this time due to privacy and security concerns, and that all contact tracing is being done through CDRSS and CommCare.

Dr. Pallay suggested that Ms. Puluso put together a suggestion and send it to the Board members for consideration after the meeting.

Dr. Pallay requested an effort on improving the technology for the next meeting, as the audio was very difficult for everyone to understand due to echoes and other interfering feedback, and that understanding what is being said is critical to the complex issues that are being discussed.

Ms. Puluso noted that the audio seemed better if only one person at a time was unmuted, and encouraged all Board members to use the Webex app (either via computer or smart phone) if at all possible instead of calling in on a phone line, so that the "raise hand" feature could be used, or if they are using a camera, they could physically raise their hand to be recognized.

## **Adjournment**

MOTION: There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Mr. Perry to adjourn the meeting. Second – Ms. Bowers. In favor: Dr. Pallay, Ms. Bowers, Mr. Perry, Dr. Marcus, Dr. Sachin Shah. Against: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.