

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MINUTES

For July 19, 2011

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter typed SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, July 19, 2011 in the 2nd floor conference room of the Human Services Center, Canton, New York.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Bunstone, Benjamin Gruda, Elizabeth LoGalbo, and Timothy Monroe

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF PRESENT: Susan Hathaway, Director; Myrna Barney, Public Health Sanitarian

MEETING TO ORDER: President LoGalbo called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2011 MEETING: Dr. LoGalbo asked for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Bunstone made the motion and Mr. Monroe seconded. The minutes were passed as written.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Hathaway referenced an email from Mr. Donald Hassig received by Ms. Rosemary Brown on July 16, 2011 that was addressed to Dr. LoGalbo as President of the SLCBOH and asked members to review. Ms. Hathaway stated that Mr. Hassig is requesting time to address the SLCBOH with a ten-minute presentation regarding burying and dumping of solid waste. After a brief discussion it was decided that Mr. Hassig would be welcome to present a two-minute presentation under the guidelines of the Public Comment section of the meeting. Mr. Gruda stated that Mr. Hassig was also welcome to submit any written material to the SLCBOH prior to the meeting for their review.

Also the email expressed Mr. Hassig's displeasure with the SLCBOH's decision not to create a local sanitary code and their decision to utilize the existing state sanitary code. The members again discussed their decision and their reasons for making that decision. The main issue would be the matter of enforcement. How are we as a board going to enforce the code if someone refuses to follow the law? As long as the state sanitary code is utilized we will not have an enforcement issue. The state sanitary codes are mainly enforced through local code officers or local officials and if there is an issue that cannot be handled, the problem is presented to Ms. Hathaway. If there is no solution, it would be brought to the SLCBOH for resolution.

St. Lawrence County is the only county in New York State that has a Board of Health and the local health department is not a full-service department. If we had a full environmental department, the cost would be approximately \$600,000 more and at this time would not be cost effective even though we would be bringing in revenues from fines that have been levied. Ms. Hathaway also read to the Board a portion of the Powers of Board of Health from the NYSDOH “Nuisances – Duties and Powers of Health Officers and Boards of Health” to enforce the realization of the power they have as a Board of Health.

ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

According to Public Health Law 350, a county board of health shall elect annually one of its members as president and another as vice-president. The Board of Health may designate the county public health director to act as its secretary without extra compensation. Under the St. Lawrence County Board of Health By-Laws at least one of the persons elected must be a physician and the election should take place at the July 2011 meeting. No member can hold a given office for more than two consecutive terms.

Ms. Hathaway asked if there were any nominations or volunteers for the office of the President of the SLCBOH. Dr. LoGalbo expressed her wish that she not remain President, but would be happy to accept the position of Vice-President. Mr. Gruda was nominated for President. Mr. Bunstone made a motion to have Mr. Gruda serve a one-year term as President and Dr. LoGalbo serve a one-year term as Vice President. Mr. Monroe seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ms. Hathaway told the committee that Mr. Kimmes had submitted his application for reappointment, but the Board of Legislators had revised the biodata sheet and he will have to complete it again as soon as the revised version is available. The new form has to go to the Board of Legislators for approval and she was unable to get the new form until after that time. Mr. Bunstone stated that he would check into the matter as the form would more than likely be approved as the approval is more or less a formality.

MEETING FREQUENCY, DATE, AND TIME FOR 2011 – 2012

Ms. Hathaway asked members how often they would like to meet. Members felt that as the first year was a learning time, they could now reduce the frequency of the meetings from monthly to every other month. After much discussion the following months were decided on: July, September, November, March, April, and June. The time will remain the same with each meeting starting at 6 pm on the third Tuesday of the month. Elections of officers will be completed in June 2012.

Ms. Hathaway told the members that if anything important came up that she felt needed the immediate attention of the Board, she would contact the President and he would call a special board meeting. The board members stated that they would rely on Ms. Hathaway to decide the importance of an issue in requesting a special meeting. Ms. Hathaway also told the Board that she would keep them up-to-date via email. Also any information needed for a meeting will be sent out before the meeting so they could be prepared to act when they met.

REVIEW OF BYLAWS

The SLCBOH reviewed the Bylaws and decided to accept them as originally written without changes.

PLANNING

Goals for the Second Year

Ms. Hathaway asked members for goals for the upcoming year. Mr. Gruda voiced his concern of the lack of training for coroners and would like to be able to find a way to ensure they receive necessary training. Ms. Hathaway told Mr. Gruda that Dr. Samuel Livingstone (medical examiner) and Vonnice Joels (medical investigator) from Jefferson County are invited to Coroner's meetings and this serves as some form of training. A suggestion was made that the Medical Examiner or District Attorney act as coroners. Ms. Hathaway stated this was not possible and we would have to remain with our coroners. A suggestion was made that a speaker be brought here to do training or possibly find on-line courses for training. Ms. Hathaway told the committee that a benefit of better investigations of death and more autopsies have resulted in better death data. A discussion ensued as to why the Coroners were under the auspices of the Public Health Department and not the Board of Legislators. Ms. Hathaway stated that she had asked that the Coroners Program be taken over by the County Administrator's office. Mr. Bunstone stated that he is going to look into why Public Health has the coroners which cost the department \$268,000 this year. Public Health also provides a staff member to order supplies and to bill and this is all at county cost.

Topics to Focus On

As a long-term goal, the SLCBOH felt they may want to look further into the issue of establishing a local sanitary code. The county already has a local law #4 established for whey spreading. Anyone wishing to spread whey must apply for a permit annually. It was suggested that the board make a "laundry list" and choose something from the list to solve and then go on from there. Myrna Barney would be a good resource and she would be able to give the Board guidance as to steps needed to be taken. The topic of hoarders was also discussed.

Another issue discussed for further focus was tobacco. Disease in St. Lawrence County is high. We know we have an identified problem with tobacco use. Although a resolution was written to ban tobacco use on county property, the resolution was postponed at this time. Mr. Bunstone stated that at the time the resolution was to be presented, the Board of Legislators (BOL) was dealing with another issue and it was felt that the timing was not appropriate, but he thinks it is worth pursuing again and presenting the resolution to the Board of Legislators along with documentation on the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. Ms. Hathaway expressed her concern for the young people who are starting the habit of smoking and especially smokeless tobacco. She stressed that the endeavor would require a lot of work and it would not happen overnight even if the Board voted in favor of the resolution. It was suggested that once the budget process is completed, the resolution be presented to the BOL.

Mr. Gruda again addressed his wish to focus on the prevention of tobacco sales in pharmacies. Dr. Monroe suggested we include hospitals and schools. Ms. Hathaway stressed the Public Health Department has the tobacco grant and staff to help with this project. The SLCBOH can actually pass laws towards not smoking. This could then be presented to the BOL who could create a county law. A discussion ensued regarding whether or not to make the law specific to pharmacies or to encompass hospitals and schools. A concern was expressed that if the resolution was too broad and encompassed too much it may not pass the BOL. It was decided it would be better to start small because we would also have to enforce the law. Enforcement of the law and whether or not we could bring a charge and make a final determination of the charge when a person is brought before the Board for non-compliance was discussed. The Board decided they needed to investigate further on how the enforcement of such a law would need to be handled.

Waste

The disposing of household hazardous waste, batteries, and e-waste are a concern for the SLCBOH. The concern of where the public can dispose of this material has been discussed at other meetings and still remains a concern. It was suggested that we have someone from Casella come to one of our meetings and discuss how they deal with this problem. Also suggested was to investigate further where these materials can be disposed of inexpensively or for no charge and educate the public of these waste sites. Mr. Bunstone stated that if the county is serious regarding the dumping of this waste, they need to have sites set up where there is not an already existing site or an enormous cost. This is something that we should be pushing for through the SLCBOH.

Waste and tobacco seem to be the two main topics of focus for next year. Other topics briefly discussed were obesity and drugs.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THE SLCPHD?

Ms. Hathaway asked what the SLCBOH would like from the SLCPHD. The Board expressed total confidence in her ability to distinguish what the Board needs to be informed of. Ms. Hathaway stated that she would like to present communicable disease statistics and possibly reports of other selected topics. She also told the Board that she would apprise them of anything that she felt they should know about. Dr. Monroe felt that the Board should be focused more on what we do and if Public Health has a problem the Board needs to know and it needs to back Ms. Hathaway in any way possible.

Other

We are having a difficult time recruiting another physician to replace Dr. Badenhausen. Two physicians have expressed interest in serving. Any candidate will have to complete the new Biographical Data Sheet to be submitted to the Board of Legislators. Mr. Bunstone stated that he would check with Chandra Coffey to see if the form could be expedited and sent to Ms. Hathaway for her to send to the physicians.

Payments for per diem and mileage will be forthcoming. Ms. Hathaway apologized, but during the process of setting up accounts and trying to find out who and how board members would be reimbursed, the submitted forms have been misplaced. Ms. Hathaway asked whoever had submitted a reimbursement form to redo the form, except for Mr. Gruda's which we have as it was submitted later than the others.

The judge presiding over the H1N1 lawsuit against Public Health has decided not to throw the case out of court and we have contacted the State Health Department and they are taking over and have pulled in the CDC as well.

Ms. Barney discussed a rat problem in the Village and Town of Gouverneur. The problem started with a hoarder whose home has recently been condemned. The home was full of animal feces and garbage. When confronted by the Village to clean up the place, he calmly agrees to do it and then doesn't follow through. The town has spent almost \$10,000 to clean up his property. The code officer for the town has approached Myrna regarding what a health officer could do to help with the situation. We can tell him he has to clean it up but again we do not have the enforcement piece.

The SLCBOH went into executive session at 8:09 pm. It was moved by Mr. Bunstone and seconded by Mr. Gruda. The executive session adjourned at 8:43 pm. The motion was made for adjournment at 8:43 pm and Mr. Monroe seconded the motion.

Submitted by,

Rosemary A. Brown
Administrative Assistant