

Cayuga County Board of Health Meeting
Tuesday, July 25, 2023
In-Person and Virtual @ 12:15pm

Members Present: Dr. Dorothy Ainsworth
Dr. John Cosachov
Mr. Tim Fessenden
Dr. Cassandra Archer
Mr. Ralph Battista

Members Excused: Ms. Elane Daly
Dr. Brian Brundage

Guests Present: Mr. Charles Hart
Ms. Michele Wunderlich
Mr. Carl Collier
Ms. Aileen McNabb-Coleman
Mr. Robert Harding- Virtual

Staff Present: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Deanna Ryan, MCH
Eileen O'Connor, PE
Christina Armbruster
Deb Pickering
Janine Clifford
Megan Bell
Thadine Collier
Dr. Philip Gioia

The meeting was called to order at 12:19pm.

Public to be Heard:

Mr. Charles Hart again appeared to address the Board regarding a fine associated with a Board of Health Hearing regarding his septic system.

Minutes of the June 27, 2023 Board of Health Meeting: With no questions or corrections a motion to approve the minutes from the June 27, 2023 Board of Health meeting was made by Mr. Tim Fessenden with a second from Dr. Cassandra Archer and all other members in attendance in favor.

Director of Administrative Services: Janine Clifford

Janine reviewed the claims with warrant dates of 06/15/2023 and 06/29/2023 and credit card statements with dates of 5/29/2023 and 6/15/2023. Dr. Gioia asked what the Robert Half Agency was and Janine shared that it is a temporary services agency similar to Kelly Services but they employ higher level professionals. With no further questions or discussion, a motion to approve

the claims was made by Mr. Tim Fessenden with a second by Dr. Cassandra Archer with all other members in attendance in favor.

Public Health Director: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH

Kathleen reviewed this month's immunization and communicable disease statistics. She shared that we are seeing the typical seasonal up-tick in Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses.

Kathleen also shared that our Early Intervention Program recently underwent a KEPRO review. The focus of the review was on how we are operating as a municipality. The review went very well, and we are still waiting for our formal letter that summarizes the review and any changes/corrections they would like to see made. They did cite us for not removing an agency that is no longer performing evaluations from our list of eligible evaluators that is presented to parents.

There are still several vacancies at the Health Department. Kathleen shared that we have recently held interviews for our Early Intervention Service Coordinator positions, and we had some very good candidates. Offers were made to the chosen candidates and we are hoping they will be able to start in the next few weeks. We are still looking for a nutritionist for our WIC Program, but we did recently fill a vacant Competent Professional Authority position at the WIC Program. The Director of Community Health Services position still remains vacant and we are going to adjust some of our advertising and focus on the nursing director aspect of the position. Junior accountant is another vacancy that we are having difficulty filling and we are going to potentially look at adjusting that role as we anticipate forthcoming retirements in our accounting division.

Kathleen also shared with the Board that this is Eileen O'Connor's last Board of Health meeting as she is set to retire in early August. Kathleen congratulated Eileen and expressed how deeply she will be missed. Dr. John Cosachov as president of the Board of Health presented Eileen with a proclamation from the Board in honor of her years of hard work and dedication to the Health Department. Kathleen also shared that Senator Schumer's office sent a letter congratulating Eileen on her retirement and thanking her for her years of dedicated service.

Ms. Aileen McNabb-Coleman from Senator Rachel May's office also presented Eileen with a proclamation thanking her for her dedicated service to the members of this community and congratulating her on her well-earned retirement.

Deputy Director of Health Services: Deanna Ryan, MCH

Deanna shared that a lot of work is being done to review and update our emergency plans surrounding Harmful Algal Blooms. We have had a lot of transition of staff and want to be sure everything in the plan is current and accurate. The next step is going to be providing the community with ways they can be prepared in case there is ever a do not drink order issued.

Deanna also updated the Board regarding the WIC Program. Tania Young is back as the WIC Program Coordinator. We still have a nutritionist vacancy in the program, so we are actively trying to fill that position. We had a CPA and a peer counselor start this week, so we are getting close to being back to full staff. Staff have also been attending farmers markets to hand out participant's farmers markets coupons.

Deanna introduced Deb Pickering as our new Director of Health Education and Public Information.

Director of Health Education and Public Information: Deb Pickering

Deb shared some background information about herself with the Board.

Deb shared with the Board that in preparation for HAB season they had a very productive meeting with some of the administration from the City of Auburn, Town of Owasco, the County IT Department, County Emergency Management Office and School District Administration for Port Byron and Weedsport.

Deb discussed encouraging members of the public to sign up for hyper-reach as a great way to be quickly notified of emergencies in our community.

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program just finished canvassing the Village of Port Byron where staff were able to reach 271 homes, canvassing has already been completed in various census tracts within the City of Auburn with approximately 83 home visits having been scheduled so far this grant year.

Deb distributed a brief visual of the new Lead Grant Campaign that will be launching in the Fall. The focus of the campaign is encouraging homeowners to have their homes tested for lead especially if they live in an older home or have young children.

The Bike Wheelsport Program is holding several bike rodeos throughout the community this summer. The focus of the rodeos is road safety and is also an opportunity for children who do not have a bike helmet to receive one for free.

Deb also shared our Fight the Bite flier as we are reminding everyone of the dangers of mosquito and tick-borne illnesses.

Director of Environmental Health: Eileen O'Connor, PE

Eileen reviewed the Hearing and Consent Orders:

AJS Housing NY LLC- Auburn (C)

DB Drains LLC

Pleasant Valley Mobile Home Park- Moravia (T)

Malave Property- Moravia (T)

Flannagan Property- Moravia (T)

Murray Property- Moravia (T)

Buchanan Property- Moravia (T)

Boyd Property- Moravia (T)

With no further questions or concerns a motion to accept the Hearing and Consent Orders was made by Dr. Cassandra Archer and seconded by Dr. Dorothy Ainsworth with all other members in attendance in favor.

Eileen shared an update with the Board regarding the revisions to the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. A meeting was held on June 29, 2023 where representatives from several State Agencies and their legal teams were present. Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) started the meeting by stating that water quality of Owasco Lake has not changed much in the past 50 years. They showed phosphorus data from early 1970s, late 1990s and 2000s. Eileen said she pointed out that they had neglected data from Upstate Freshwater Institute from the late 1980s that showed that the phosphorus levels were less than ½ of the current values. (The decline from the early 1970s to the late 1980s was attributed to restrictions on phosphorus in laundry detergent.) In addition, Eileen reported that she pointed out that the current issues of excessive Disinfection Bi-Products (DBP) and Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) toxin levels show that the water quality has declined significantly in the past 20 to 30 years. DEC then continued by listing all of the funds that New York State has spent so far on projects to protect Owasco Lake and improve its quality.

NYSDOH attorneys then said that since the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program is in Ag & Markets Law, that implies primacy and therefore Ag and Markets exclusively can regulate agricultural activities, and therefore these activities cannot be regulated by Rules and Regulations. Eileen reported that the local group has since asked for their legal reasoning in writing but hasn't received it yet. The NYSDOH has had the draft rules and regs since Dec 2020, and in May 2022 the DOH reported that the review with the state partners was completed, and this is the first that time the local group heard that legally the rules and regs cannot include any restrictions on farming because Ag and Markets have primacy.

At the meeting the State Health Dept attorney said that no other Rules and Regs in New York State address farming. Eileen reported that she pointed out that that was not true, Skaneateles and the current Owasco Rules and Regs both have some agricultural regulations. The DOH attorney responded that it was because Owasco and Skaneateles Rules and Regs were adopted prior to the AEM program which was adopted in 2000, but Eileen reported that she pointed out that the most recent version of the Skaneateles Rules and Regs was adopted in 2005.

The NYS Health Department continued to say that the voluntary programs that are in place are effective and will protect the water without providing any proof.

Eileen reported that this is so frustrating for so many reasons.

1. Water quality has declined since the AEM program has been in place. It is perplexing as to why the NYSDOH thinks this voluntary program will all of a sudden start improving water quality. The NYSDOH did not provide any suggestions on how they will have more farmers participate in these voluntary programs.
2. Both the 9 Elements Plan and DEC's HABs Action Plan both say farming is responsible for 90% of the phosphorus loading into the lake. If 90% of the problem cannot be addressed, how can water quality improve.
3. The Ag requirements in the proposed rules and regs are minimal: management plans and buffers, both of which are recommended by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and could be financed by NYS to offset the costs to the farmers.

4. NYSDOH told us at the first meeting that they were worried about precedent, how this would impact regulations on farms at other impaired water bodies, and it appears public health took a back seat.
5. The proposed rules and regulations were developed over a three-year period with intense public input, including that of the agricultural stakeholders, and now people from Albany are telling us what we can and cannot do to protect our drinking water.
6. The proposed regs would promote resiliency which, in light of more violent storms recently, is supposedly a goal of NYS.

Eileen reported that she was discouraged that the NYS Department of Health, who has the legal responsibility to protect drinking water supplies, is failing spectacularly in meeting their responsibilities.

The NYSDOH said that they would be re-writing the Rules and Regs and present them at another meeting that has been scheduled for July 31, 2023.

Eileen introduced Christina Armbruster who is our new public health engineer. She will fill Ani's position as Ani transitions into Eileen's position. Eileen thanked the Board of all their support over the years especially their support surrounding water quality issues.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Philip Gioia

Dr. Gioia shared some of the anticipated impacts of a do not drink order should it ever have to be issued. He reminded everyone that when recreating in the lake they should be on the look-out for active blooms and to report them when seen.

He also noted that this is the season for tick-borne illnesses.

With nothing further to discuss a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Tim Fessenden and second by Mr. Ralph Battista with all other member in attendance in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 1:23pm.