**BOH Minutes, January 16th, 2024**

**Hybrid Meeting**

BOH Meeting start: 7:38 pm

Opening Statement read by Secretary/ Township Clerk

Present: Mayor Dafis, Mr. DeLuca, Ms. Cripe, Ms. Adams, Ms. Engel

A resolution was read by the Clerk stating that as permitted by the Open Public Meetings Act, stipulating that active participation by the public is limited to observation as set forth in the Agenda.

Ayes: Mayor Dafis, Mr. DeLuca, Ms. Cripe, Ms. Engel, Ms. Adams

Nays: None

BOH Chair Engel made a motion to approve December 6th, 2023 meeting minutes.

Ayes: Mayor Dafis, Mr. DeLuca, Ms. Cripe, Ms. Adams and Ms. Engel

Nays: None

**HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

**Health Department Updates:**

Mayor’s Wellness Campaign: The application for 2024 is being worked on. The Health Department also received a monetary award for participating in the 2023 MWC, these funds will be donated to help cover the costs of the Midnight Madness event.

**Environmental Health:** a rundown of environmental health activities, investigations and inspections were provided for the month of December.

Dog and Cat Licenses: 2024 dog and cat licenses are now available. The last day to apply for a license without receiving a late fee is January 31st 2024.

Animal Control: November and December 2024 statistics were shown for how many animal control calls were received.

**Communicable/ infectious disease updates:**

Nursing Report: 1 Reportable Disease investigated. The health department nurse provided homebound Influenza vaccines to 0 residents, and Homebound Covid-19 vaccines to 0 residents.

COVID: The FDA has approved the 2023-24 COVID-19 Vaccine for those ages 6 months and older. You can go to vaccines.gov to find your closest vaccination available. There are free COVID-19 test kits available at town hall, residents can also order up to 4 test kits from the federal government here: <https://www.covid.gov/tests> . Residents should take an at-home Covid-19 test when they: have symptoms of Covid-19, had close contact with someone who has Covid-19, will be with someone who is at high risk for severe Covid-19, or plan on attending an event or gathering. New Jersey is now in medium and high for hospitalizations due to Covid-19, the Health Department will continue to monitor the situation. A document showing testing guidance was shown in regards to when to test and retest. The FDA has said to test multiple times following an exposure.

Flu/RSV: Those 6 months and older are recommended to get the flu vaccine, if residents are interested there is a supply at town hall available to the public for $20, insurance is not needed. RSV can be dangerous to older adults and young children. Those ages 60 and older can get the RSV vaccine and those 75 and older should get the RSV vaccine. The RSV vaccine should last 2 years and is covered by Medicare part D as well as most insurance plans. Essex County is offering their mobile health clinic, though only flu vaccinations are available at this time. The dates and times can be found on their website. Influenza transmission as of January 6th is also high in New Jersey, the Health Department recommends practicing respiratory hygiene and etiquette, washing hands frequently, wearing a mask, and staying home when sick.

**Social Services/ Mental Health:**

Universal Home Visiting: Family Connects NJ is offering free home visits to new mothers and babies. These visits are free regardless of insurance.

Courageous Conversations: Reveal to Heal is hosting an 8 week series for parents with young children to discuss bullying, loss and trauma.

Winter Termination Program: This program will help keep residents from having their heat turned off between November 15th and March 15th. Those who are low income or use a federal assistance program may qualify for this program. Those who qualify are encouraged to contact their utilities company in order to have their heat kept on without payments. Residents are encouraged to continue to make payments, even if they are minimal, to reduce their bill.

Naloxone: Residents can go to the Stop and Shop at 407 Valley Street and those that are over 14 can request a free Narcan with no questions asked. Narcan is used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, and can save lives. There is also a free virtual Narcan training available through Rutgers, those who participate will receive a free Narcan kit. There are at least 6 trainings offered monthly.

Farmers Market: On January 22nd from 4-6 there will be a farmer’s market in East Orange which offers free fresh fruits and vegetables to the public. There will also be free children’s books available.

Cervical Cancer Awareness Month: 11,00 people are diagnosed with cervical cancer annually, however 196,000 have cervical precancers. Cervical cancer can be prevented with regular screenings for the disease and vaccinations. This month the SAVE program has cervical cancer screenings included in their screenings, no insurance is needed.

5 Tips for Exercising in Cold Weather: Warm up and cool down to stay safe, put on reflective clothing, be extra careful, learn about signs of hypothermia, and check the forecast.

Frostbite versus Hypothermia: Signs of frostbite include redness and pain followed by grayish yellow skin areas which eventually becomes firm and numb. Signs of hypothermia include: shivering, exhaustion, slurred speech, and drowsiness. If a person’s temperature is below 95 degrees seek medical attention immediately.

Medications: 70% of those who have an opioid addiction occurred because they had access to someone’s medication in their home. Keep medications out of sight of children and others in your home. The Maplewood Police Department has a permanent drug drop box in their lobby which is available 24/7.

Make the right call: A graphic was shown listing the numbers for poison control, social services, and a mental health crisis in order to encourage the public to use these services.

Medical Equipment Loaner Program: For those who are suffering from an injury please reach out to the health department to get a loan of wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, shower chairs, and commodes. The health department is also accepting donations of any of the above-mentioned products.

**Questions:**

Committee Member Dafis asked about Opioid data for the township.

Health Officer Davenport stated she would bring it to the next Board of Health Meeting.

Mayor Adams asked Health Officer Davenport to explain the timeline of testing when someone thinks they may have COVID-19.

Health Officer Davenport stated that when you are exposed to someone with COVID you should test 5 days following exposure, or when you start to show symptoms. You should also test if you are going into a high risk setting or if you are planning to visit someone at high risk of severe COVID-19. There are 2 types of tests, an at home antigen test and a PCR test which is done at a lab. A simple at home antigen test does not rule out infection, if you test negative it is recommended that you retest 2 days later. If you test positive it is recommended that you isolate for at least 5 days and are 24 hours symptom free. Those who are vaccinated have a lower risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms and hospitalization. In order to avoid where a mask between days 5 and 10 after a positive test you can take a test on days 6 and 8 and if they are both negative you do not need to mask anymore.

Mayor Adams asked Health Officer Davenport what the testing recommendations are for someone who has recently had Covid within the past 90 days.

Health Officer Davenport recommended that if you have had COVID in the past 30 days and you are symptomatic that you use an antigen test. If you are not symptomatic is not recommended to test. If your first positive test was within 31 to 90 days it is recommended that you take an antigen test, as if you have a high enough viral load to spread to others you will most likely receive a positive antigen test.

Committee Member Engel commented that she was excited to hear about the results of the Universal Home Visiting program.

Presentation adjourned at 7:59 pm

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments made at this time.

Members motioned to adjourn.

Ayes: All committee persons.

Nays: None

Meeting adjourned: 8:00 pm

Schedule to meet next on February 6th, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Houghton, Health Department Assistant, 2/2/24.