

Norwalk Health Department Board of Health Actions

PUBLIC HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 21, 2003

ATTENDANCE: Judith Rivas, Chair; Barbara Hudgins, Jeanette Olmstead-Sawyer, Peter Wien

STAFF: Tim Callahan, Director of Health

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rivas called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 17, 2003

Corrections:

Page 3 – 1st paragraph under Hatch & Bailey Neighbors, the last word in the sentence should be, planted.

Page 3 – 2nd paragraph under Hatch & Bailey Neighbors, 1st sentence should read Ms. Delia Paulk introduced herself and greeted the committee

Page 3 – 3rd paragraph, 2nd line, where it reads, and that Hatch & Bailey did not argue to put the tarps down. should read and that Hatch & Bailey did not agree to put the tarps down.

Page 4 – 1st paragraph, 4th line down, where it reads, hours and that they are within their zone to do their business should read hours and that they are within a legal zone to do their business.

Page 4 – 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence, where it reads, Ms. Diane Lauricella introduced herself to the committee as a reporter and supporter should read Ms. Diane Lauricella introduced herself to the committee as advisor and supporter

Page 5 – 2nd paragraph, 5th line down should read, the Mayor wants the residents to sign off,

Page 5 – 4th paragraph, 5th line down, should read, unless they have a subpoena.

Page 6 – 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence from the bottom should read He said that perhaps the neighbors can eventually approach Hatch & Bailey after all the other committees have been approached with the issues.

Page 6 – 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence should read Mr. Wien stated that it is almost too late for the trees to be planted because it may cause the trees to die due to any shock elements they might be exposed to by the late season.

Page 6 – 3rd paragraph, last sentence should read He said that the neighbors

** MS. RIVAS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES WITH CORRECTIONS

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

September 16, 2003

Correction:

Page 2 – 2nd paragraph under Health Director's Report, the 1st sentence where it reads, Mr. Callahan said the Board of Education should read Mr. Callahan said the Board of Health

** MS. OLMSTEAD-SAWYER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED

** MOTION PASSED WITH THREE VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MS. OLMSTEAD-SAWYER)

BIOTERRORISM GRANT

Mr. Callahan stated this was year two funding for Bioterrorism that is being funded by the State of Connecticut. The contract period is from 9/1/03 to 8/31/04; the amount awarded was \$90,114.00. He updated they were still negotiating minor details for local contracts.

Mr. Callahan reviewed the tasks to be defined and said when developed, the focus shifted to prepare for small pox, but this year, the stated decided to come back and look at it on a smaller scale and they would also give more focus to Anthrax. He said the primary focus is to develop a local response plan that would be broken down for the region, consisting of six local areas in Connecticut indicated. He said at some point later in the year, they would conduct some kind of drills via a mock scenario to gauge response time to an emergency; these drills would be made up of varied services such as the police, fire department and the hospital, it was noted that Norwalk Hospital has already expressed interest in participating.

Mr. Callahan further reviewed the Emergency Response Planning Project list that was contained in the packets; he commented on the items where applicable below, otherwise the item was reviewed as outlined:

7. Participate in the development of a Health Alert Network (HAN) template

Comment: the state has implemented a Health Alert Network and Norwalk would like to do it on a local level to allow better communication with private doctor's offices and health care providers. He explained there is currently a fax alert system in place to enable them to communicate with doctor's offices quickly, but the new network would expedite communication even more.

*Mr. Callahan noted the network would also include flu vaccine information.

8. Education and training for staff related to bioterrorism preparedness and response

Comment: when they developed the plans, they would rely on staff to fit into a position for the response system, i.e., different service persons would be doing varied training aspects. The funds are expected to be in place this year and would be done a statewide basis.

*Mr. Callahan added the plan is ambitious and moving along with the person that is coordinating it.

Mr. Wien asked how much the plan is costing the Health Department per month. Mr. Callahan said a couple of thousand dollars.

Mr. Wien asked if they would be reimbursed. Mr. Callahan said yes.

Ms. Hudgins asked if Stamford was drilled as part of the program. Mr. Callahan said yes, and he stated he received different takes while observing them; and in seeing different perspectives, he noted Norwalk's plan for mass distribution is to use Norwalk High School and Norwalk Hospital as locations where people would go to designated staging areas to be bused to one of the sites; this was discussed further to determine if they should have police manning the staging areas to better control things.

Ms. Hudgins asked if this system would work for a statewide emergency. Mr. Callahan gave an example of what might happen should there be a regional emergency, open discussion followed regarding who would be authorized to declare a state of emergency.

Ms. Hudgins commented the plan seemed to be something that should be done. Mr. Callahan said they were getting there, but there is still a lot to be done, such as addressing which town leads in devising the plan and ultimately, this would be left up to the Governor.

The following authorization items were reviewed by the chair to be passed to the Common Council:

** MR. WIEN MOVED TO PASS THE ITEMS TO THE COMMON COUNCIL

- a. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, ALEX A. KNOPP, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR THE BIOTERRORISM PLANNING AND

PREPAREDNESS PROJECT FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2003 TO AUGUST 31, 2004.

- b. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, ALEX A. KNOPP, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE BIOTERRORISM PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS PROJECT AND ANY AMENDMENTS THERETO

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

HEALTH DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Callahan updated on the following:

24 Cliff Street - clean up is in progress and there is some interior to be done.

The dump across from Connecticut Limousine - all agreed it is a mess and Mr. Wien stated something needed to be done, because there is constant dumping ground. Mr. Callahan noted to check out the situation on Wednesday.

Ms. Olmstead-Sawyer said it seemed someone had been cleaning it out, but then a week later, it's full again. She asked if DPW was possibly cleaning it up. Mr. Callahan said it's probably the Redevelopment Agency doing it.

New Canaan Avenue - it's an overgrown property. Mr. Callahan said the house is owner occupied and there is no violation.

Mr. Callahan recalled a situation where a house was overgrown, but the owner expressed he liked it that way, so as long as there are no rodent problem, then there is not much they can do.

Elevator – was approved by the committee and the item would be on the next agenda; if it's approved, they would then hire a contractor to begin the work.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Rivas spoke about the summary for Hatch & Bailey; she said she was putting together a cover letter and would advise Chris Perone and Kevin Poruban of the contents. She further stated there was a concern of continuing support due to the upcoming new elections, but she hoped they would still have some people to address the issue. She said she also spoke to Delia Paulk and sent her the package of reports that were distributed at the meeting.

Ms. Olmstead-Sawyer asked for an update on AIDS in Norwalk. Mr. Callahan said the numbers of cases were down and the program is as small as it has ever been and they are down to three full-time people.

Ms. Olmstead-Sawyer questioned there being no increase in cases, and felt this conflicted with information among other cities. Mr. Callahan said the number of cases has leveled off and he thought this was due to education.

Mr. Wien asked if the Health Department does testing and if it is anonymous and confidential. Mr. Callahan aid they do testing and it is anonymous and confidential.

Ms. Olmstead-Sawyer asked if there was also a decrease in STD testing. Mr. Callahan said yes, but this area was a little bumpy because of the fee that is charged, but staff doesn't turn anyone away if they can't pay. However, others have stressed they were upset over the Health Department charging a fee, noting that this complaint differs from someone not being able to pay.

Mr. Wien questioned what happens if someone comes in and refuses to pay. Mr. Callahan explained the person at the front desk contacts the supervisor and the standard three to four question interview is given asking general questions to determine a person's ability to pay; if they pass the test, they must pay, but if they don't, then a notice is signed off for the file stating the person doesn't have the ability to pay.

Mr. Wien commented they could probably always expect there will be people that will try to get out of paying.

ADJOURNMENT

** MR. WIEN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN

** MS. HUDGINS SECONDED

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Graham Telesco Secretarial Services