

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF HEALTH  
TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM  
MARCH 10, 2020**

Mrs. Plantemoli called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Health to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Adequate notice** of this meeting of the Board of Health was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to both the *Chatham Courier* and the *Morris County Daily Record* on January 15, 2020; notice was posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building on January 15, 2020; and notice was filed with the Township Clerk on January 15, 2020.

**Roll Call**

Answering present to the roll call were Mrs. Ewald, Mrs. Fowler, Mr. Nikolopoulos, Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Plantemoli. Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Dolan were also present. Ms. Taormina was absent.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Ewald moved to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting. Mr. Nikolopoulos seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**Reports**

**Public Health Nurse**

Mrs. Dolan said that the Health Department is receiving frequent updates and guidance from the State regarding COVID-19. Mrs. Plantemoli asked about the Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency and if the Health Department had received any calls. Mrs. Dolan said the only call she received was from a pre-school asking if they should close, and she also commented on the remote learning that schools are adopting in response to the State of Emergency. Mrs. Dolan also said that commercial testing is available for COVID-19 through health providers. Shortages of Personal Protective Equipment is also a concern. Mrs. Gardner asked about independent testing facilities in New York. Mrs. Dolan addressed means of communication of information among medical professionals. Long-term care facilities and the response to COVID-19 was also discussed. Comparisons to the Flu were also discussed, and there is a higher risk for people above 60 and those who have a co-morbidity. Mrs. Plantemoli noted that the disease is easily transmitted, and Mrs. Dolan noted that there could be cases so mild that the person does not know they have it. Mr. Nikolopoulos asked if an infected individual could spread COVID-19 through vaping. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that it is possible that an infected person is most contagious when they are symptomatic. Mrs. Gardener said she heard that re-circulated air on planes has not shown to be an issue with the spread of COVID-19. Mr. Fitzpatrick commented on the physical proximity needed, and Mrs. Plantemoli commented on duration of exposure. Mrs. Gardner addressed the potential for the spread of misinformation. Mr. Nikolopoulos pointed out that the pandemic has raised awareness of hygiene, and suggested using protective measures when using high-touch items in public.

Mrs. Dolan said that reports of the flu have gone down. She also reported on school immunization audits.

School closures due to COVID-19 were discussed.

Mrs. Dolan reported that an upcoming blood test screening clinic has been pushed back to April 23<sup>rd</sup> so as to have enough time for advertizing. A men's health screening will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Ewald asked about a portion of Mrs. Dolan's written report about having two residents to contact. Mrs. Dolan said that the Health Department received notice of two Chatham Township residents who had travelled to high risk areas, and she described her responsibility to those residents as the Public Health Nurse and how they are monitored. Mrs. Plantemoli commented

on the means available to the Township and County OEM to notify the public of concerns without violating HIPAA. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that there is a possibility that COVID-19 may decline with warmer weather the same way cold and flu seasons subside. He also addressed healthy people who are putting themselves at risk to get tested, and suggested that people contact a doctor first. Mr. Fitzpatrick also said that he grew up at a time when childhood diseases such as measles and polio still were common, and he said that presently the mental health concern is greater than the risk of COVID-19. Mrs. Plantemoli stressed the need to still prepare for and take precautions against COVID-19. Mrs. Ewald asked Mr. Fitzpatrick to provide her something to state to the public at the upcoming Township Committee meeting. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted that at this point some of the school closures are administrative days so that they can plan for possible long-term closures. Mrs. Fowler asked how the Board of Health can help disseminate information. Mrs. Plantemoli said that there is information and useful links on the Township website.

Mrs. Plantemoli asked about an email received from a resident raising a concern about the use of reusable shopping bags at grocery stores, and if they create a health hazard amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. The resident stated that the implementation of the Township's ordinance prohibiting the use of single-use plastic bags is poorly timed, and that the cleanliness of reusable bags is unknown. Mr. LaConte noted that once the COVID-19 situation subsides, the potential for reusable bags to spread other diseases would remain. Mrs. Plantemoli also shared the guidance she found on the CDC website regarding high-touch surfaces, and said that hand-washing should be the message being sent out. She also said that people should wash their reusable bags if they become dirty. Mr. Fitzpatrick commented on the lifespan of viral droplets, and said that unless someone is sneezing into their bag then they should generally be safe. He also said that someone who is ill enough to be sneezing and coughing would be less likely to be in a store. Mrs. Plantemoli reiterated the need for hand-washing regardless of the type of bags used. Mr. LaConte noted that the applicable ordinance is not being enforced at this time, and the intent was for March to be a month for education about the new regulations. The consensus of the Board of Health was that the reusable bags are a low risk, and people need to wash their hands regularly.

REHS/Health Officer

Mr. Fitzpatrick reported that all the retail food establishment inspections were satisfactory. He also provided an update on a well permit that was approved in January. Mr. LaConte reported that the required documentation was submitted to his office. He also provided an update regarding the septic permit approved for 479 River Road, noting that the requisite GP24 permit was issued by the DEP and the septic system is being installed. Mr. LaConte also noted that an application for revision to the septic permit approval for 580 River Road will be on a future agenda.

Registrar of Vital Statistics

Mr. LaConte reported that fees were collected for the following items in January 2020:

4 Marriage Licenses	\$112
7 Marriage Certificates	\$50
13 Death Certificates	<u>\$75</u>
Total	\$237

Mr. LaConte reported that fees were collected for the following items in February 2020:

1 Marriage License	\$28
15 Marriage Certificates	\$100
3 Birth Certificates	<u>\$20</u>
Total	\$148

Mr. LaConte noted that the copy of the birth certificate was a home birth from the 1960's, and that during his years working for Chatham Township there has only been one baby born within the Township's municipal boundaries. Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. LaConte both commented on the growing trend of home births.

**Meeting Open to Public**

Mrs. Plantemoli opened the meeting to the public.  
Seeing no comment, the public hearing was closed.

Mrs. Gardner moved to adjourn at 8:40 PM. Mrs. Ewald seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

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Gregory J. LaConte  
Board of Health Secretary