

East Longmeadow Board of Health Agenda

Wednesday, July 14, 2021; 6:30p.m. at East Longmeadow - Zoom

Board of Health Members Present: Karen Robitaille, R.N. Sarah Perez McAdoo, MD and Christine Johnston, MPH

Health Department Staff Present: Aimee Petrosky and Alix Shipman

Visitor:

Topic	Discussion/Action Taken/Decision Made
Call to order and Chair Announcements	Meeting called to order by Chair, Sarah Perez McAdoo at 6:30 p.m.
Approve minutes of previous meetings: May 26, 2021	Motion to approve minutes as written from May 26, 2021 made by Karen Robitaille and seconded by Christine Johnston out of necessity. Motion passed 2-0. Sarah Perez McAdoo abstained.
Public Comment	
New Business	
2022 Annual Action Plan	The Health Department creates an action plan every year with goals to keep us on track and inform the Town Manager and Town Council to make them aware of the goals and objectives the Health Department has. It's updated and presented quarterly so they can see our progress. Due to Covid-19, we are presenting our action plan later than usual and it is written more as a two-year plan for 2021 and 2022 since we are strategically planning for 2022 already. This year we added two new sections including the Master Plan and SAPHE 2.0. Sarah asks Aimee about regionalization being left in the action plan after Town Council voted against it last summer. She asks as we're thinking about moving forward, what are elements of the regionalization that we need to keep into account moving forward? The SAPHE bill and regionalization are going to shape Public Health. If we're not within that structure, what does that mean for us being able to meet the SAPHE bill requirements once it's passed? This is something the Health Department will have to take into account as the SAPHE bill gets closer to being passed and what was once a recommendation for minimum services will then become a requirement for local Health Departments to meet. Karen says pulling in the master plan is awesome because you can see the correlation with the work that we do and the work with the master plan. Aimee went and spoke to the town planner, Bethany, and told her that we would be providing them our annual report so they can see how it aligns with their objectives so we can collaborate.
After Action Report: Covid Pandemic	Aimee shares the after action report that documents what the Health Department accomplished throughout the pandemic, how we accomplished it, where we struggled, and what we can do to fix future problems. Aimee is planning on sharing the report along with the Annual Action Plan to Town Council and asks the board if they have any feedback on it.

<p>Public Health Nurse Update</p>	<p>We posted the Public Health Nursing position three or four weeks ago and interviewed two candidates. Both were really great for different reasons that would complement the position nicely. The job that we are expecting them to do is a 3-5 hour a week position. Some will be in the office and some will be remote. They will be responsible for all the MAVEN reportable diseases, including Covid-19, and education and outreach. Given that the Council on Aging cut their nursing position for FY2020, there is huge gap in the community in terms of those services. Having the nurse do a monthly education seminar at the library was part of this, as well as blood pressure screening, diabetes checks and those types of preventive checks are also included during office hours. We offered the position to someone, they declined, and then we offered it to the second person who also declined. Tuesday we interviewed another round of candidates. Both were really qualified and skilled. One we felt was a little more qualified, so HR started doing the reference checks and hopefully it all checks out and we can offer the position soon. The CTC is ending and we will be in a lot of trouble if we can't fill this position before then. We're really looking for someone who is excited to build a program because if we can start to collect data like we did with inspecting, we can validate the need for more hours of nursing services. They will be a partner in creating what this position looks like and validating the needs of these services. Once we have the health needs assessment, we'll have a lot more data for what services are needed in the community as well.</p>
<p>Discussion about upcoming meeting with Mary McNally</p>	<p>Aimee tells the board the Town Manager, Mary McNally, wants our thoughts and ideas about what we think we could use ARPA funding on and asks the board if they have any thoughts on what to use the money on. Karen asks if the money is coming in the form of a grant, allocation and how much. Aimee says she believes it is a grant and it is a lot of money. It is a competitive grant and regionalized communities have priority over those who are not. What the money can be used for is very broad. It could be staffing, programming, data systems, etc, which is why Aimee thought it would be good to share with the board what their thoughts are coming from three different skillsets. Addressing health equity issues are high priority for this grant. What jumped out to Aimee was nursing services, but you can only use the money to cover Covid-19 nursing services. At this point, that would be only a very small task. However, we don't know what it will look like in the fall with Delta surging. The money cannot be spent on retroactive things, only items moving forward. Karen says that the school health portion of ARPA funding is for workforce development, so it's not just related to Covid-19. It's about recognizing that the public health workforce has been traditionally underfunded and understaffed and it's intended to support districts to get kids back in school. Therefore, Karen says she's not sure the tasks have to exclusively be focused on Covid-19. For example, a nurse checking MAVEN every day is pandemic response planning, which is something the funding can be used for.</p> <p>Sarah says the grant is asking about mitigating the impact on Covid-19 at a broader scale. Thinking about the data Aimee shared earlier, what are the gaps in East Longmeadow and is there any kind of document of the overall impact of Covid-19 across the town? This data would give us a better idea of what the gaps are and what we can do to build resiliency within our department using the ARPA funding. We need a little bit more information on how the local economy has been affected beyond Public Health and can use that to strengthen our relationship with the businesses in our committee. If there is an opportunity to see the broader impact of Covid-19 in our community outside of our domain, it also might help spark some ideas about how we can go about using these funds. Karen says certainly mental health diagnoses, referrals and emergency room visits</p>

are way up and we can expect substance use rates are up. These are all impacts of the pandemic, especially in areas we had been trending downwards prior to the pandemic. She suggests that maybe now would be a good time to do our PNAS survey in the schools with this funding or look at more DART programming or other kind of overdose interventions since they have all been impacted by the pandemic. Christine says interpersonal violence is way up as well. Karen says this is where the health needs assessment is really helpful because we need the data to know what has been impacted by the pandemic. People are putting off other treatments, so we're going to see things like cancer rates and heart disease rates increase as well. So many things we've made progress on in Public Health have now backslid and they all have health impacts. Aimee says maybe one of the things we want to do with the money is finance a secondary health needs assessment. Then we will be able to see the longitudinal effects of the pandemic on some of the indicators from the first health needs assessment. Karen asks what is the town doing for FEMA reimbursements? Aimee says the Fire Chief is handling all of that.

Sarah says we can look at the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations and is also thinking about some of the social determinants of health. Food insecurities have been a big deal thinking about how our food pantry is doing or other small things we can start linking together. One of the examples that stuck out to Sarah was broadband infrastructure. The digital divide is huge and is directly linked to access to health services and community resources. We might be able to do referrals to East Longmeadow services and maybe even regional services for residents. The other piece is workforce management and mitigating the loss of jobs for people. Some people were able to work from home safely and others didn't have the tools to do so, compromising a person's ability to do their job. For example, Sarah's family had to make some adjustments to their broadband for everyone to be able to go to school and work under the same roof. Broadband is one example of how you can link to three of the major social determinates of health; access to education, access to employment and access to health services. We need to be able to access data to see the impacts of the pandemic on internet services. Sarah suggests maybe the schools have data on this based on if they had any children who had issues with internet access at home or some businesses who's staff worked remotely in town. This all ties into the resiliency of a community because we will have another pandemic of some kind come down the line later on. Just because we live in East Longmeadow doesn't necessary equate that everyone has the same access and it's important for us to know where the gaps are in our community to create a long term plan to the key determinates of health that relate to community resiliency. If we can make sure people have the essential things they need at a higher quality if another pandemic hits, we can build a more resilient community. Aimee says she'll read the grant a little more depth and come to our next meeting with some ideas. Sarah says she's happy to meet with Aimee before the next meeting to go over everything as well.

Motion to adjourn made by Karen Robitaille and seconded by Christine Johnston out of necessity at 7:26 p.m. **Motion passed 2-0.**

This listing is reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Christine Johnston 8/26/2021
Christine Johnston, Secretary

