

Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2020

Presiding: Rajinder Chhokar-MD

Attending Board Members: James Lopez-DMD, Devica Alappan-MD, Rebecca Covington (Mayor Office), Isaiah Hugley, Sylvester McRae-MD

Not Present: Yasmin Cathright

Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Joanne Strickland, Tori Endres, Gwen Cunningham, Pam Kirkland, Kimberly Fuller, Kristi Ludy, Joie Gosa, Steve Gunby-Atty, Dr. David Lewis, Jeannie Polhamus, Theresa Averett, Sheryl Wadkins

In keeping with CDC/GDPH COVID-19 Community Mitigation Recommendations this board of health meeting was held by conference call. All reports were emailed to all board members. Attendees verified by roll call.

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Decision	Responsibility
Call to order	Dr. Chhokar called the meeting to order at 1:12 pm.	None	None
Approval of Minutes	Dr. Chhokar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged a quorum was present. Referred to minutes from the June meeting. With no questions or discussion from the members, Dr. Chhokar asked for a motion of approval. • Called for the Director’s report. 	Motion made by Dr. Lopez, seconded by Dr. Alappan, and approved by all members present.	None
District Health Director’s Report	Dr. Townsend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated that the number of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 have decreased; and schools have opened. Emphasized the importance of wearing masks and of social distancing. Reminded everyone to be vigilant with this serious disease. • COVID-19 outbreaks have impacted department staff and had to quarantine. Testing continues at our SPOC - back of Comer Avenue building. Temporary nurse staff are running the location. Added a second COVID test site via an independent contract to ease the burden and allow our staff to get back to normal duties. Our staff have been working without weekend and holiday breaks. 	None	None

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announced September 7th is a holiday. • Called on Pam Kirkland to provide Muscogee County (Columbus) COVID-19 case statistics. <p>REPONSE - Pam Kirkland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated current positive COVID-19 cases to be 5,384 with 120 deaths in Muscogee County. We may see an increase in cases due to Labor Day holiday activity. • Reported 8/25 incident with so called "independent reporters called "bashers". They claim they are doing a "1st Amendment audit". Some came to our Veterans Parkway and SPOC facilities unannounced; took pictures and videos without permission. They were very rude and other You Tube videos show that they are very aggressive. Onsite Security Officers responded. Board of Health members need to be aware in case they are approached. <p>RESPONSE: Isaiah Hugley – The group did approach staff at the city's 10th Avenue Annex, the Public Safety Building and are apparently visiting other city government buildings. They were recording and asking questions of a Public Defender; however, they did not obtain any answers. They are not actual reporters but are radicals who try to intimidate others by taking photos and videos. Possibly went into Phenix City as well.</p> <p>RESPONSE/QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – This is good to know. If they ask questions about the health department, do we have to answer the questions?</p>		

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Director's Report Cont'd	<p>RESPONSE: Pam Kirkland – They are radical in the sense that they intimidate, use scare tactics or bully people. They cause trouble on issues with people. They are not hired reporters. You do not have to answer their questions. Your office is not public property. They do not have to answer our questions and we do not have to answer theirs.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>		
Financial Report	<p>Gwen Cunningham on behalf of Joanne Strickland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented financial overview through the end of June 2020, with an original budget of \$6,037,982 and six revisions, leaving the adjusted FY20 budget at \$5,801,882. Total expenses for FY20 were \$5,801,881.16; 100% of budget was spent on target for 12 months of operation. Line 4 shows the comparison to last year at the same time with an expense increase over last year of \$371,872. Total fee income was \$1,193,799. Lines 6 through 17 show fee income comparison to last year, down by \$106,625; primarily due to COVID response. Page 4 shows our grants, which were all on target for 12 months of operation. <p>QUESTION: Dr. Lopez – Do you anticipate any budget cuts for the new fiscal year?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Joanne Strickland – We are aware of a \$70,000 decrease and do not anticipate any more than that.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>	None	None
Excused Absences	None	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None

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New Business	None	None	None
Program Reports	<p>Public Information - Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated COVID-19 daily press releases have continued during the months of June and July; conducted a total of 18 interviews on tv stations, the New York Times, and the Atlanta Journal Constitution – all but one on COVID-19. We placed 42 social media posts covering Coronavirus testing, announcements of test sites, contact tracing, status of health department hours, HIV testing and heat related illnesses and symptoms. Posted tv commercials and video interviews on the You Tube Channel. <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>Environmental Health – Kristi Ludy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the Environmental Health report for June and July as emailed to the members. EH is returning to normal duties, inspecting facilities, issuing temporary food service permits, and handling an influx of complaints in the food service program, most of which are related to COVID-19 restrictions. Complaints are of owners not practicing social distancing or requiring masks, which are not actually food service rule violations. • Many pools are closed. Of 54, 36 opened with permits and 12 were inspected. Two complaints of bed bugs, but they were not observed during inspection. • Reported the annual drive through rabies event will be at the Civic Center in September. 		

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Program Reports Cont'd.	<p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the Nursing report emailed to board members and reported continued COVID-19 response efforts, operating the Specimen Point of Collection (SPOC) Monday through Saturday. • Community activities are still on hold. Continue to participate on the weekly Mayor’s call, internal COVID related conference calls, and virtual meetings and conducted virtual TB case reviews and immunization reviews. <p>There were no questions</p>	Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes.	None
Other	<p>Dr. Chhokar asked for any other reports, items of business or questions.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Alappan – How do you deal with mask wearing in restaurants and related complaints?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Kristi Ludy – Governor’s directive has changed and changed again, so we had to get help. PPE, gloves, face covers not actually required. We recommend sanitizing and hand washing as much as possible. Mayor Skip Henderson’s emergency order is to require masks. Employees interacting with guests must wear masks. Atty Steve Gunby is helping with this and we are passing certain complaints to law enforcement.</p>		
Adjournment	With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Chhokar at 1:25 pm.		

**NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING TO BE HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL:
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 1:00 PM**

Columbus Board of Health Minutes Respectfully submitted by Secretary Peggy Hallmark,
on behalf of acting secretary, Theresa Averett.