

**RAMSEY BOARD OF HEALTH  
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD MAY 14<sup>th</sup> , 2020**

**1. President’s Announcement**

Tami Azouri called the meeting of the Ramsey Board of Health to order at 8:03 P.M. In accordance with requirement of N.J.S. 10:4-6, Tami Azouri made the following announcement:

THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW WAS ENACTED TO ENSURE THE RIGHT OF ALL CITIZENS TO HAVE ADVANCE PUBLIC NOTICE OF AND TO ATTEND ALL MEETINGS OF PUBLIC BODIES AT WHICH BUSINESS AFFECTING THE PUBLIC IS DISCUSSED OR ACTED UPON. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT, NOTICE OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE LEGAL AD SECTIONS OF THE BERGEN RECORD AND RIDGEWOOD NEWS ON DECEMBER 27, 2019. NOTICE OF THIS MEETING BEING HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL WAS GIVEN TO THE BERGEN RECORD, POSTED ON THE BROUGH WEBSITE, AND POSTED ON THE DOORS OF THE BOROUGH HALL.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that pursuant to Section 13 of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 of the laws of the State of New Jersey, the regular meetings of the Ramsey Board of Health of the Borough of Ramsey for the year 2020 are held on the second Thursday of each month at 8:00 P.M. and shall be held in the upstairs Council Chambers of the Municipal Building located at 33 North Central Avenue, Ramsey, NJ as follows:

**3. Call to order, attendance, minutes:**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Mrs. Tami Azouri	X	
Mrs. Joan Waring	X	
Mr. Jeffery Nemeth	X	
Dr. Albert Tartini	X	
Mr. William Lara	X	
Ms. Heidi Martin	X	
Dr. Angela D’Alessandro	X	
Ms. Sara Poppe	X	
Dr. Carla Souza	X	

<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Mr. Jane Woods, Council Liaison	X	
Mr. Sam Yanovich, Health Officer	X	
Mrs. Martha Sobanko, R.E.H.S	X	
Ms. Danielle Monaghan, Board Secretary	X	
Pete Scandanario, Borough Attorney	X	
Chris Hurley, Ambulance Corps	X	

The roll was called by Danielle Monaghan. Motion was made by Jeff Nemeth to approve the minutes from the April meeting and seconded by Sara Poppe.

**4. Announcements:**

Tami began talking about waiting for guidance on opening the Ramsey pool and community pools and the Ramsey Pool Commission is eager to open. The Ramsey Farmer's Market is scheduled to open on Sunday, June 7th with additional guidelines that can be found on their website as Mayor Dillon announced in her last swift reach message. Martha stated she will be going out a week before the farmers market opens with the police to check the table spacing and set up and assure all guidelines are being followed. Joan announced they have been hosting Virtual Bones on Tuesday mornings at 11 via Zoom. Once we the senior center is open again the regular Healthy Bones program will resume. About 40 people have been participating and it has been very popular. Tami announced that the tennis courts and pickle ball courts are open again but with restrictions and recommendations.

**5. Codes, Ordinances & Legislation:**

Joan discussed mandatory vaccinations. She sent an email to the senate president who is sponsoring the bill to restrict exemptions for only medical reasons and/or siblings having negative reactions. Given the pandemic, newspapers are stating that the virus has actually empowered anti-vaxxers and helped them organize. The limited exemptions bill is still in committee. Tami said she is worried with the current public health situation that people may not be following up with their regular vaccinations and could put children at risk. Sara discussed the topic of parents wanting to cancel well visits for their children in fear of going to a doctor's office during a global pandemic. Pediatricians are trying to reassure parents that it is safe and that it could do more harm by skipping them. Joan discussed the possibly of putting out a statement. Sara suggested putting a statement on the website. Danielle said if anyone wants to send a statement or link it can put on the webpage. Lastly, Tami discussed Governor Murphy's Executive Order 142 that was released yesterday about non-essential business allowing curbside pickup and non-essential constructions resuming with restrictions. This order also allows for car gatherings.

**6. Special Matters:**

**COVID-19:**

Tami said there is good news. We are seeing the numbers go down for positive cases as well as hospitalizations and it is nothing like it was in March. Al Tartini said Valley hospital has also seen a decrease in numbers and only have 4 to 5 patients admitted a day for COVID compared to 300-400 a day. Over 1,000 have been discharged. He also said 65-70% of the hospital is now "clean" and Holy Name hospital is now converting COVID units back to clean units. Elective surgeries may resume June 6th. He also stated that COVID-19 seems to be moving south and places such as Monmouth County are now seeing an increase. There have been 1,423 deaths in Bergen County to date and close to 10,000 in New Jersey. Politicians want to open beaches, businesses, farmer's markets etc. Anthony Fauci predicts a reemergence. Spikes have been seen in Texas and other states that have begun reopening. COVID is not going away and 60% of people in the world will need to contract the disease before we can create herd immunity. There really is no treatment still but there have been some that shorten the length of sickness but social distancing is what has shown to be proven to work. Tami said we need to find a balance to keep us safe and we must keep using masks and social distancing. Joan feels she has seen a

recent relaxation on who is wearing masks compared to last week. Dr. Tartini said family practice doctors in the area feel that the virology is weaker now than it was in March after social distancing was implemented. His opinion is he has seen milder cases in people who test positive. There is still more scientific research to be done. Joan asked if respirators being used. Tartini said ventilated patient numbers are going down but there are still some patients who have been on a ventilator for over 7 weeks. The CDC has extended self-quarantine guidelines from 10 days to 14 days for and no fever 3 days to now 5 days. Joan asked about new symptoms and why did the list of presenting symptoms increase? Tami said new information is being collected during the interviews and contact tracing process such as loss of smell. She also said the receptor site that the virus binds to is found in the lungs and is prevalent in the GI system. Jane asked about how the numbers are counted and if a neighbor presents symptoms but is not tested and recovered at home would that be counted? The answer was no, only tested, positive confirmed cases are counted. Dr. Tartini said Dr. Fauci said the number of cases and number of deaths maybe inaccurate. COVID is causing clots and dying from heart attacks, strokes and pulmonary embolisms with no history of heart disease. Contact tracing will help with the numbers. Joan asked about testing reliably and the Rutgers saliva test. More information needs to be found.

### **Blood Drive:**

Jeff Nemeth also discussed the possibly of hosting a blood drive. The Ramsey school system was discussing the Red Cross looking for sites since they had to close the Ridgewood building. Dr. Murphy is interested in looking into the logistics of it such as recruiting volunteers, liability and scheduling. The initial thought was Dater School would be the best site to use. It would be a big undertaking and although Ramsey has held blood drives in the past he wonders if it would be the best time to hold one right now. Jeff wanted to bring it to our attention to get the Board's feedback. Dr. Tartini doesn't think it is a good idea right now and would be a big liability. We are still figuring out antibody testing and they are still getting false positives. We couldn't guarantee they do not have active disease. Jeff agrees because you would need to keep social distancing and people could come in who are asymptomatic. In conclusion the Board of Health will currently recommend postponing this idea and relooking at hosting the blood drive later in the summer and it can be reconsidered. Jane said currently in the real estate market people have to sign something, wearing booties and gloves, using hand sanitizer, but they are not screening for temperatures.

### **7. Site Plans:**

None.

### **8. Public Water Supply:**

Danielle read the operations report by Mike Skroupa.

### **9. Public Health:**

COVID-19 was discussed during special matters. There are currently 139 Ramsey resident positives cases to date. Sam discussed that Bergen County has mobile testing units for saliva and antibody testing. This is a county run operation. Sam reported that towns are short staffed and the events are well attended. Towns are looking for help with staffing but a lot of people are reluctant to work at the clinics out of fear. The State of New Jersey is having a conference call on the Northern Region on Saturday to

discuss testing strategies. Yesterday a standing order came down from the Department of health blanket statement to order Board of Health that labs need to report back within two days. The state is also creating a plan to ramp up contact tracing. About 3,000 workers will be needed in Bergen County. Currently it is handled in house with HARP nurses conducting the contact tracing. Harvard Medical students have been in contact with Sam saying they are interested in helping out in the community. Sam also mentioned the new Pediatric Multi System syndrome that is affecting children. Most children who are diagnosed with that are also testing positive for COVID-19. Tami asked if patients want to be retested can they go back to the county testing site. Sam said yes they can but was unsure on the fees. Sara asked how effective the uses of masks are. Dr. Tartini said currently ER personnel is testing negative which shows that N95 masks and PPE are working but everyone should still take proper precautions. There have been a few people early on who did test positive. Standard masks have shown that they do make a difference since the curve is flattening. More information needs to be found on this. Jane asked about the percentage of positive cases. 80% were elderly and 40-50% were from nursing homes. 70 deaths were in the VA in Paramus. The county reports these statistics every day. Joan added wearing masks not only protect you from others but also others from you. Sara said she saw a statistic that people who were sheltering in place were still testing positive, but it is difficult to confirm that those people have not been anywhere.

**10. Health Education; Communication; Outreach:**

Tami briefly spoke about ideas for the future such as CPR classes since our March classes were canceled and she will get guidance from American Heart Association. Also, fall will be coming up before we know it and it will be flu season. We need to thinking about how we will be able to have the flu clinic safely. Tami recommended it is something to think about and brainstorm ideas. Danielle mentioned new information is being put up on the website.

**11. Inspection Reports:**

Martha reported that she did not go on inspections during April due to COVID-19.

**12. Abatement Orders:**

Martha read her complaints and abatement report. She also reported Ramsey had positive rabies results come back on a raccoon and a groundhog. There were also two summonses given out for residents feeding wildlife after not responding to warning letters. Information on feeding wildlife was posted on the website. Joan asked about the oversight on the restaurants doing pick up and takeout. Martha said there are guidelines she gave to the restaurants need to be following.

**13. Vital Statistics:**

Danielle read her Vital Statistics report. Marriage licenses resumed May 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Dillon is also performing marriages again in May with restrictions and following proper social distancing.

**14. Financial Report:**

Mr. Nemeth read off what income came through Board of Health Licenses and Vital Statistics.

- 15. Ambulance; Ramsey Municipal Alliance; other organizations:**  
Sara said the Ramsey Alliance is for the most part still on hold throughout the public health emergency but they are here if anyone needs help with anything. Rodger said there were people who are interested in checking in with seniors.
- Chris gave a report on the Ambulance Corps. They are all using proper PPE and sanitizing protocols. The borough continues to provide sanitizing equipment and supplies and the ambulance corps got a new sink. They had 64 calls in April which is a decrease in calls since last month. 18 of those calls presented with flu like symptoms. Tami added that people may be hesitant to call for symptoms because they are scared to go to a hospital for this.
- 16. Conferences and Training:**  
None.
- 17. Council Report:**  
Jane congratulated the Ramsey residents who recovered and left the hospital and Mayor Dillon’s help. She also reported the senior center is finishing up final touches such as trim, light fixtures, etc. The paving in the parking lot has been completed. The budget has been slightly adjusted due to revenue concerns. The 2020 road resurfacing project is continuing. A resolution was passed last night for the road reconstruction for Main Street’s streetscape. The project is underway continuing the brick sidewalks. The Board of Education’s had a “Let’s Talk Mental Health” virtual event on Tuesday night that was virtually attended by 50 people.
- 18. Correspondence**  
The health department handles complaints or concerns on places in town where employees are not wearing masks and all calls are followed up and abated.
- 19. New Business:**  
Tami spoke to Ralph Venturini from the Ramsey OEM. They are working on a plan to reopen the library and reopening town hall and what they would need such as masks and gloves. Tami recommended following the CDC guidelines. Sam said the county is distributing PPE and supplies. Tami also said Glen working with FEMA in Trenton and distributing ventilators. The FEMA hospital tent is closing down.
- 20. Review of Assignments:**  
None.
- 21. Public Comment:**  
None.
- 22. Adjournment:**  
The Board moved to adjourn at approximately 9:15 PM. Motion was made by Bill Lara, seconded by Joan, and carried by all.