



# TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

## MEETING MINUTES January 16, 2025

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Attended In Person):**

T. Nytech, DVM, President  
W. Simmons, Vice President  
J. Raftis, DO, FACEP  
T. Leary, FNP  
W. Standinger III, Legislator  
R. Kapur-Pado, DO

### **ABSENT:**

T. Hills, DVM

### **OTHER(S) PRESENT:**

H. Vroman, Public Health Director  
A. Reigelman, Secretary  
P. DeWind, Tioga County Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 7:31 a.m. by Dr. Nytech.

**PRESENTATION:** None

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Meeting Minutes (November 2024): Motion to approve prior minutes made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Raftis, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Dr. Nytech inquired about high enforcement for Reese's Hideaway Diner. Ms. Vroman explained that the price was due to the number and type of violations. An inquiry was made on the water enforcements, which Ms. Vroman explained are due to water reports not being provided. Brief conversation about the new lead and copper rule for municipalities which the Environmental Health Director is providing oversight on.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- By-Law Review: Ms. Vroman explained that in current By-Laws it states that the Board must review at least annually which is why it is an agenda item. Also due to new law change to allow mid-level providers to serve in lieu of three fully licensed physicians, Ms. Vroman proposed making this change within current By-Laws. Copies of New York State Law were distributed electronically to Board members prior to meeting for reference. Copies of the proposed changes to the By-Laws were distributed to Board members in hardcopy during meeting to review.
  - Dr. Raftis inquired if By-Laws should also reflect law update to allow providers who are residents in contiguous counties to serve as members, or if able to amend By-Laws if/when the need arises. Board members discussed and decided not to make this change at this time.
  - Motion made by Ms. Leary to approve proposed By-Law changes to read as:

Chapter III  
Membership

*Section 1. The Board of Health shall consist of seven voting members, one of whom shall be a member of the Legislature, selected by the Legislature. At least [three] one of whom shall be a physician licensed to practice in the State of New York, and two shall be a*

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*physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or any combination thereof licensed to practice in the State of New York, and one veterinarian. Remaining members should reflect varied aspects of the community including geography of the population.*

No further changes recommended; seconded by Dr. Kapur-Pado, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.

- **Member Roles and Responsibilities:** Ms. Vroman stated that she thought it would be good topic of discussion as Mr. Simmons had mentioned it in the November meeting. The Tioga County Board of Health Reference Manual was distributed to members electronically and in hardcopy for reference. Ms. Vroman stated that this document was in existence before she assumed her role. It references Public Health Law for member roles and responsibilities. Ms. Vroman stated that the applicable laws are 347, 308 and 309 and will send out to Board members after meeting. Ms. Vroman also noted that the current By-Laws reference member roles in Chapter 2, Section 1, 2 and 3; Chapter 5, Section 6 and 7; and Chapter 7, Section 6. Dr. Nytch made note of subcommittee creation and that ensuring it is a cooperative effort between Public Health staff and Board of Health when it comes to requiring orders. Members had no further discussion surrounding reference manual.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Ms. Vroman stated that she wants to start providing a written report to the Board, which will not be given out ahead of time in case there is anything that needs to be added prior to the meeting. She asked members to let her know if they would like any format changes or if they would like to see different information topics.
- **General Public Health Information:**
  - On Tuesday, the Governor gave the State of the State Address. There was no notation of Public Health matters; as of now no foreseen burden of local budget. Will provide more information as it is released.
  - **Avian Flu-** Ms. Vroman thanked Dr. Nytch for keeping her and Board informed with updated information. Since April 2024, 61 human cases; one fatality in Louisiana; no human cases reported in New York. This week, received notice from Regional Department of Health of surplus of seasonal influenza vaccine. Have discussed and will be reaching out to local farmers to see if interested in receiving vaccine with assistance from Cornell Cooperative Extension. Messaging will need to be on point, as this is not targeted at Avian Flu; do not want misconception.
    - Mr. Simmons stated that it might be better to reach out to Pro Dairy Program lead as they have a better connection with larger dairy farms. Dr. Nytch inquired if Mr. Simmons could reach out to his contact to establish connection for Public Health. Mr. Simmons agreed. Mr. Simmons also discussed more frequent milk samples being taken.
  - **Illicit cannabis shops-** Some counties have implemented local laws through environmental health sanitary codes to regulate. This is just to share and make the Board aware, not something to implement immediately.
    - County Attorney DeWind noted that since New York State already has regulations in place, would not want to challenge.
  - **Pertussis** is on the rise, Public Health sent out press release to inform the community. Did have outbreak in one school district. Most cases have been fully vaccinated. Cases have been well-mitigated and have not had a case in a few weeks.
    - Dr. Raftis noted that it is difficult to find prophylaxis in certain areas.
    - Mr. Simmons stated that he has warned his connections within the local Amish community of the rise in Pertussis.
  - **Flu** is widespread in New York now. Have seen increase from last year in number of cases.

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- Inquiry was made about what the majority of cases are being reported as (flu type), and what is the match to the current flu vaccine. Ms. Vroman stated that she believes it is Flu A, but she will verify.
- Staffing Updates:
  - Albert Knapp, Public Health Sanitarian, has retired as of January 3rd. He trained his son, our new Public Health Technician, in the Septic Program.
  - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position is still vacant, if members know of anyone who may be interested reach out. This is a paid position. Felt the position needed to be full time.
  - Had to part ways with AmeriCorps member.
  - Excited to report that the current mobile dental unit dentist will be working one extra day a week. Worked with Personnel and Tioga County Legislature to change County policy to allow paid time off for the part time dentist.
    - Legislator Standinger noted that this was a carve out specifically for Dr. Sarnicola, and Public Health made a good case.
- Ms. Vroman wanted to mention that the Agency Report that is sent out with agenda packets via email highlights Public Health's noteworthy tasks each month as well as tracks data trends within the Data Summary on last page of report. Encouraged members to review.
  - Mr. Simmons noted that Stray Haven is no longer taking in dogs. East/North Tioga County has no where for dogs to go. Foresee an issue to come with this. Berkshire dog control officer is looking to approach the County on this matter. Tied this to dog bites/confinements.
  - Ms. Leary inquired if influenza numbers are tied into Communicable Disease total number. Ms. Vroman stated that she believed it was but will confirm.
  - Board discussed RSV and the new RSV vaccine for those over age 50.
- Accomplished Tasks:
  - Hosted Lunch & Learn for Code Enforcement Officers on lead paint hazards, water, septic program, rabies exposures and public health nuisances. It was relationship building.
  - Provided medicine lock boxes to UHS Methadone clinic.
  - In December, a group from Eastern Tennessee University came to evaluate the dental program and learn how the funds received from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) benefitted the program. A report will be coming to us from this visit, and will share when received.
  - Mr. McCann presented on the Public Health Infrastructure Grant to NYSACHO regarding how Tioga County Public Health used the funding, as this department is looked at as a model county for the use of the grant.
  - Ms. Vroman presented to NYSACHO on Tioga Castings.
    - Board discussed cleanup efforts and current state of the homeless community. Noted fire within Ithaca's "Jungle" recently.
- In Progress Tasks:
  - Security on Dental Van is a current Quality Improvement Project. Looking at cameras, locking doors via swipe, panic buttons and how to alert 911 of emergency. Noted recent school lock down, how to handle emergencies of this matter while Dental Van is parked at school districts.
  - Other Quality Improvement Projects include: electronic Environmental Health permit applications and tying to electronic payments, Rabies Investigation Program, Safety features at rabies clinics.
  - Local veterinary office will no longer be participating in Public Health rabies clinics due to Public Health not providing rabies prophylaxis to their staff.
    - Dr. Nytch inquired of issue of rabies vaccine that was noted at end of last year by local veterinarian. Ms. Vroman explained scenario and stated that Dr. Hills had assisted in drafting letter to send to the veterinarian in question.
  - The County Administrator will be coming to Tioga County Public Health to meet with staff for Public Health "orientation days."

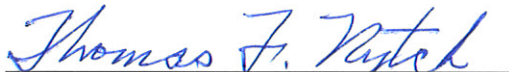



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- Strategic Plan is carrying on.
- Assumed leadership of the Suicide Coalition, Ms. Wait is leading. Discussing merger with ASAP coalition.
- Will be launching Credible Mind Platform for electronic mental Health information.
- Will be having a training on de-escalation for all Public Health staff next week.
- Other Information:
  - Legislator Ray Bunce is now a member of the Health and Human Services Legislative Committee, replacing Jake Brown.
  - In December, Ms. Vroman completed her Master's in Public Health degree.
    - Dr. Nytch stated that he would like a proclamation on record and made motion of appreciation for Ms. Vroman's hard work and congratulations from the Board of Health in this endeavor; seconded by Mr. Simmons, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
  - Decided as of January 1<sup>st</sup> to officially be branded as "Tioga County Public Health" for consistency. In the past, have had various names for the department.
  - Ms. Vroman stated that she will not be able to attend the February Board of Health meeting and inquired if members would still like to have a meeting or cancel. Noted that if they would still like to have meeting, will have Ms. Medina lead on her behalf. Agenda items to include Quality Assurance Report and overview of partnerships and coalitions.
    - Members discussed. Dr. Raftis stated that he will be out of town too but could attend virtually. Mr. Simmons motioned to meet February 20, 2025 for normal meeting; seconded by Dr. Kapur-Pado, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
      - County Attorney DeWind stated that if Dr. Raftis attends virtually and is not attending as a voting member, address information will not need to be included on the agenda. However, a quorum must be assured.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.

  
Thomas Nytch, DVM, President

  
Abigail Reigelman; Secretary

Minutes approved February 20, 2025