

**Rehoboth Board of Human Services and Community health
Minutes of Meeting
January 11, 2024
Francis Building, Francis Farm Campus**

In attendance: Brittany Bixenman, Kimberly Ciociola, Marie-Juanita DiGioia, Elizabeth Doyle, Robert Lambe, Richard Panofsky, Bruce Thayer. Excused: Gary Zimmer.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Minutes. R. Panofsky moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 9, 2023 as written; B. Thayer seconded; the motion carried unanimously. R. Panofsky moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2023 with a spelling error corrected; B. Thayer seconded; the motion carried unanimously.
3. Public Health Report.
 - a) R. Lambe reviewed the various status documents. Covid wastewater levels are higher than last year, same months; we very likely will see a significant surge in cases over the next two week. There are hospitalizations, but few deaths; severity seems less. Influenza is high as expected in January. Some hospitals are implementing full or partial mask requirements.
 - b) Arbovirus activity is low.
 - c) R. Panofsky asked if anything special might need to be done if cases spike before our next meeting. Current communications seem appropriate about cautions and best practices. It remains difficult to get RSV vaccine. The existing COA policy is ready to be implemented if needed. An emergency meeting could be convened if necessary.
4. Review of interdisciplinary issues from member boards and agencies.
 - a) Board of Health. No report.
 - b) Council on Aging. B. Bixenman reported that activities and meals numbers are going well; 110 meals were served for New Years. The hurricane interrupted things but everyone coped. Discussion turned to the power outages and the need for a generator. Sue Pimental has verified that a generator for the building is in procurement. A service panel has been installed already, so when the new machine arrives it should be ready to go.
 - c) Rehoboth School Department. The new Narcan and Service Animal policies are in a “first reading” in the School Committee. Covid test kits are on hand; nurses cannot administer them but give them out with instructions. R. Lambe mentioned a new US government program offering free tests to every household; this will be posted on Rehoboth public TV.
 - d) Human Services Department. E. Doyle reported that budget season is starting up. The project in the Human Services building is waiting receipt of an electrical push-bar door system; then a new ramp will be done. The My Senior Center log-in system is expanding to the Human Services building and being improved in both locations; it is managed by the Office Administrator. Programs for elders keep expanding, with new fitness and exercise opportunities.
 - e) Rehoboth Community. K. Ciociola had no issues to cite.
 - f) Board of Selectmen Representative. R. Panofsky reported the Board Chair Skip Vadnais is urging quick action on smoking policy for the Senior Center. R. Panofsky reported that Town Counsel has been slow to respond; he will speed things up by drafting our policy. E. Doyle showed that the building is already posting no smoking signs and alerts about users of oxygen.
5. Old business.
 - a) Opioid settlement funds. New policies from the state are very promising. They give spending control to selectmen and offer detailed guidance on uses and the procedures. Money is already in

Approved February 8, 2024

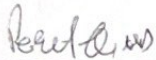
our town budget, and the spreadsheets show ongoing revenues for many years. Our Board is asked to collect information on behalf of all town interests and prepare plans for the Selectmen. Our focus groups will give input on needs; there is a need to hurry the process forward. E. Doyle discussed a project that has been ramping up, for a multi-counties human services effort involving shared resources. Some counties are using their Settlement funds in this project. Our plans should be aware of multiple resources and projects. We cannot use the money in the schools directly; we can explore if Rehoboth and Dighton could create a joint project.

- b) Smoking policy. Covered above, 4f.
 - c) Emergency Preparedness. Specific details are moving forward; the larger planning for town needs is ongoing. E. Doyle reported on creating evacuation and safety plans with the Fire Department.
6. New Business. Generator. Covered above, 4b.

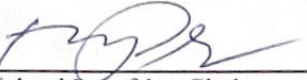
Next meeting will be February 8, 2024.

At 8:00 pm E. Doyle moved adjournment, P. Panofsky seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Panofsky, Clerk



Robert Lambe, Chair



Richard Panofsky, Clerk