

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
April 20, 2020
Online Broadcast Meeting

Present: Councilmembers Litten, Kepple, & Rader

Also Present: Councilmember Bullock, Mayor George, Terry Allan of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, IT Manager Coletta, Assistant Finance Director Schuster, Director Gelsomino, Clerk Bach, & members of the public

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m.

AGENDA

COVID-19 Situation Briefing

Terry Allan of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) gave an overview of the current COVID-19 situation in the county. He indicated that there will be a gradual reopening of the economy in the state on May 1st. Communities will have to continue social distancing. CCBH is seeing 80 new cases a day at peak in the county, but that pace has slowed. Testing capacity is expected to increase in the following weeks and months. A team of 50-60 staff has been assigned to contact tracing of those who have had the virus. They have been working on identifying cases and those at risk. Clustering of cases has occurred in hospice agencies, homeless shelters, etc. Further cluster identification and suppression is a priority for CCBH moving forward. 43%-58% of the cases of the virus are asymptomatic. Continued social distancing and remote work will be needed. The economic impact of the virus has been significant. The universal wearing of masks may be required in the future, as a viable vaccine is year away from being developed. There are 7 trials underway, but the data should take awhile to collect.

Mayor George thanked Mr. Allan for the information and his hard work.

Chairman Litten inquired about antibody tests. Mr. Allan said to expect to see a combination of testing methods, and highlighted the use of serology tests, of which provide a range of accuracy and create problems such as false negatives and positives.

Councilmember Bullock questioned what the timeline is for going back to normal and phasing out of lockdown if no vaccine is expected for a year. Mr. Allan indicated that the public health community will have to wait and see if there are flareups and how the virus will behave in the summer. It is possible to have social distancing until a vaccine is available. He noted that it could take several months to distribute a vaccine.

Councilmember Rader inquired about the county's role in informing the discussion and whether there was any trepidation about reopening of some businesses on May 1st. Mr. Allan indicated that local guidance needs to be developed for summer recreation programs

and what is appropriate. The state will be leading on this issue, along with local governments. More information should be forthcoming within the next few weeks.

Director Gelsomino indicated that her department has been making 700 phone calls to seniors per week. She expressed a desire to ensure seniors have proper information on testing and prevent them from being taken advantage of. Mr. Allan stated that tests are being marketed privately and not communicated to CCBH. There is a need to provide community guidance, along with needs for the CDC and FDA to weigh in on approving tests with lots of qualifiers.

Councilmember Kepple asked questions pertaining to PPE, specifically whether there is a shortage, whether we can reopen with a shortage, the use of N99 masks, and when will the community receive more PPE. Mr. Allan indicated that PPE pipelines are opening up and that equipment can now be sterilized. In regard to N99 masks, they are not recommended and cost more, but would still be protective.

Chairman Litten asked about the uptick in potential COVID-19 calls over the weekend and the increase in domestic violence calls as well. Chief Dunphy noted that Lakewood's Fire Dept. is way ahead of the curve in terms of preparation compared to other departments. He noted that the city has enough PPE and his department is monitoring inventory/usage rate. His team has arranged a connection with a sanitization company. The department has modified its procedures for efficiency and set up COVID-19 protocols, such as all members wearing full PPE on every call and operating under the assumption every patient encountered has it. Mayor George indicated that the Police Dept. is monitoring domestic violence levels since the first day of the stay at home order. She indicated that Chief Malley was surprised not to see the uptick sooner. Overall, police calls have been more than 40%.

Director Gelsomino indicated that the Human Services Department has been delivering 880-1000 meals per week. Over the past 2 weeks, 510 bags of groceries were put together and delivered using Healthy Lakewood Foundation funding. She noted anxiety is rising amongst the senior population, so her department is working with folks and making them aware of all services available, such as prescription drug delivery.

Mayor George briefly discussed rental support and how it will be addressed at a Housing Committee meeting the following day. HOME funds may potentially be used for this effort.

Approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2020 Health & Human Services Committee.

Chairman Litten made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Rader to approve the minutes from the committee's previous meeting.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas – Litten, Kepple, Rader

Nays – None

The motion passed. The minutes were approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.