

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
JUNE 23, 2020
MEETING HELD REMOTELY

Present: Councilmembers Litten, Kepple, Rader

Also Present: Councilmember Bullock, Mayor George, Fire Chief Dunphy, Health & Human Services Director Gelsomino, Deputy Clerk Lascu, Clerk Bach taking minutes, members of the public

Call to Order: 6:02 p.m.

COVID-19 Situation Briefing

Mayor George described the City's Coronavirus Task Force, which began meeting daily in March and now meets weekly. The Task Force will meet more often if needed. She reviewed some main points from the recent Task Force Situation report, including various recent statewide openings. Playgrounds were re-opened by the State in June 10th. Lakewood opened its playgrounds by the end of the day on June 10th and installed signage basically stating that you must play at your own risk. The responsible restart protocols call for playgrounds to be disinfected after each use, which is not possible for the City. The City will however clean the playgrounds as much as possible.

Mayor George reviewed recent updates on the City's Coronavirus resource page such as data from the state regarding number of cases, deaths, and hospitalizations. She stated that Ohio is seeing an overall decline but there is an uptick in southwest Ohio. The state is arranging for pop-up testing, with Elyria being the nearest location. She stated that the City will generally follow the Governor's directives though it may be more conservative.

Chief Dunphy provided an update on the Fire Department's approach. Members continue to wear masks, gloves, and goggles on calls. Dispatch has been screening callers for COVID symptoms. The Department is stocking up on PPE to ensure it has enough for the fall.

Director Gelsomino spoke about plans to bring COVID testing to senior congregate living in Lakewood such as the Westerly, Lakeshore Towers, and others. The City is working through the logistics with Metro and Cleveland Clinic this week and is planning to roll out the testing a week or so after that. In response to questions from Council, Director Gelsomino clarified that the testing will be voluntary for residents and staff of the building only. These are the City's populations that are most vulnerable to COVID and financially vulnerable.

The Committee and the administration discussed continuing questions around antibody testing. Director Gelsomino stated that ideally, the public needs a test that is quick and reliable, but we are not there yet. Chief Dunphy remarked that the County Board of Health has held off on endorsing antibody tests for these reasons. Mayor George added that the significance of a positive antibody test is still unknown. Scientists do not know how long antibodies can protect someone from COVID.

Councilmember Rader inquired about any community-wide testing.

Director Gelsomino responded that she would prefer for the Board of Health to provide that information.

Director Gelsomino discussed the various initiatives to deliver food to seniors during the crisis including weekly delivery of frozen meals and deliveries of fresh produce and dairy. Director Gelsomino also discussed efforts to provide food to the broader community, noting that many families have been impacted by job loss and job reduction. On June 30th at LHS there will be a community-wide food distribution. All Human Services staff and volunteers will work to distribute 240 boxes. There is no screening or eligibility criteria. Recipients must arrive in a vehicle and the box will be placed in the trunk. They are hoping to continue these events every two weeks throughout the summer. For students in the free and reduced-price lunch program, a mobile food van will be distributing packaged lunches to go at Garfield Middle School.

Clerk Bach asked how the City and the public will stay updated on case counts now that the County Board of Health has taken a break from its weekly press conferences.

Mayor George stated that she will follow up with the Board of Health but that the Board also provides a daily list of addresses to dispatch where there is a COVID case daily to dispatch so that extra precautions can be taken.

Councilmember Kepple stated that residents have complained to her that police officers have been seen not wearing masks.

Mayor George responded that officers are required to wear masks on any call that is not an emergency. Officers are not required to wear masks in cars by themselves. Vehicles are being sanitized on a regular schedule.

Mayor George mentioned that she would be formally communicating with Council an update on the CDBG CARES Act funds. The administration is proposing to redistribute the funds in order to help support Lakewood Alive. Lakewood Alive will be taking a financial hit due to the cancellation of many fundraising events.

Approval of the minutes of the May 18, 2020 Health & Human Services Committee.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Health & Human Services Committee meeting held May 18, 2020.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas: Litten, Kepple, Rader

Nays: none

Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Health & Human Services Committee adjourned at 6:57 p.m.