

**WATCHUNG
BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
April 21, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER-

Vice President's Statement-

Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting has been posted and sent to the official newspapers.

ROLL CALL-

Robert Riedinger (A), William Nehls, Council Liaison (P); Harriet Stambaugh (P); Fran Ellis (P); Mary Mobus (P); George Pogosky (P); Bruce Ruck (P); John Sachariah (P); Peter Savulich (P)
Middlebrook-Kevin Sumner (P)

Also in attendance were: Mr. Michael Kerwin from the Somerset County Business Partnership and Greg Reilly of Warren and Vice President of the Commission.

CONSENT AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF February 17, 2010 MEETING

Fran Ellis moved to accept the minutes of February 17, 2010, seconded by Harriet Stambaugh, all in attendance were in favor.

Report of Vital Statistics for:

FEBRUARY

Births - Male- 3 Female- 1
Deaths- Male- 2 Female- 8
Marriages- 2
Domestic Partnerships – 0
Civil Unions - 1

MARCH

Births - Male- 0 Female- 0
Deaths- Male- 1 Female- 0
Marriages- 0
Domestic Partnerships – 0
Civil Unions - 0

HEALTH OFFICERS REPORT FOR - February/March (Kevin Sumner)

Question on deer in pool and how it is handled- Kevin said they call a wildlife specialist to “gently” remove it from the pool.

There was also a question of how much it costs the town to hold the rabies clinics. Kevin said the only cost would be to the VET. Watchung has about 100 animals vaccinated at the clinics. You do not have to have a license to get the vaccination because you need the vaccination prior to licensing.

Fran asked how the VNA amount on the budget was reduced. Kevin said they were able to reduce this because there were some educational items not being utilized and also moving things around. It was not reduced by much.

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At this time it was decided to have Mr. Kerwin of the Somerset County Business Partnership speak and answer any questions the Board might have.

Mr. Kerwin introduced himself and gave a short background on his career. He stated that at their annual meeting in December he declared “victory” in that there is no entity within Somerset County including the College, every single town, every single Board of Ed that does not have a shared services agreement in place. What has emerged based on that is the Business Partnership has moved on to another agenda, which is to lead an affordability campaign to make New Jersey more affordable. They have been successful in pushing their reform agenda, which is to reform the pension system, which is already happening, collective bargaining in the public sector and reduce the reliance on property tax. This brought a lot of attention Statewide because one of the things the Somerset County Business Partnership brings to the table is that they represent more than 600 businesses in the municipalities and some of the largest supporters in the State.

Two weeks ago the Somerset County Business Partnership met with Assembly Majority Leader Joe Cryan to advance their agenda and last week they met with Assembly Budget Chairman Lou Greenwald. April 30th the Lieutenant Governor is coming to discuss economic development and on May 7th, State Senate President Sweeney to Somerset County.

He said he was not part of the study he inherited it. He also said a lot of the criticism in our letter to him was probably true but he is not willing to acknowledge that. The only thing that really got him was our initial premise, which was that they should never have looked at boards of health to begin with. He commented that we all would have to agree the “world is changing” when you look at the number of school budgets that were defeated. These budgets are going to be looked at very closely. He said there would be reports coming from Somerset County looking at consolidation of every single Police Department, Court, Tax Assessor, and Tax Collector.

When he took over the Somerset County Business Partnership he examined everything and laid two people off. He said the fact that we had been a little under the microscope he said “get used to it”. It does not compare to what the Board of Education will be going through. He thinks we are a little out of the firing line because we are already regionalized. He said to try not to be on the offensive.

Bill commented that sometimes you take more than you can handle and he thinks that is one of the things towns should be looking at and the County should be up front about. At the meeting of the Somerset County Governing Officials meeting they talked about the Dispatchers and it was indicated they could take all of the towns – it would be too difficult to do that.

Bruce used the example of the Dispatchers. If the county was to take them over they would most likely have to go out and buy all new equipment and add more layers of middle management and the cost would be much higher.

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Bruce commented on the report. First issue he had with the report was that as far as he knows no one from the Somerset County Business Partnership contacted our Board of Health to find out how we work, what we do and what the role of the local board of health is. Kevin said they went to the Health Officers Association not the local board who are responsible, so to speak, of what goes on in the town. The second issue he had was the report made assumptions. It made assumptions that the Somerset Medical Center would do certain things. We have no proof of that; we don't know if they could handle it. There were assumptions that the Somerset County Health Department would do certain things.

Some of those assumptions were based on Grants the County receives. They have lost a lot of those grants over time. That money is gone. These assumptions were not documented or backed up. He needs to see the proof and a long range forecast, including the initial overhead, a five-year overhead and a ten-year projection not just short term. He has seen it many times where there are consolidations then it is realized it is costing more money. It then could cost much more to break it apart.

Mr. Kerwin stated that the Boards of Health will not be treated any differently than the schools, the courts, the municipal tax assessors, etc. and that is the way it is. He also asked Bruce if he viewed health services as a local thing, uniquely optional way they are delivered. Bruce responded that he views health services as what is best for the State.

Greg Reilly asked what agency/group requested the Somerset County Business Partnership to do this examination and was there any public health representative such as a Health Officer or other representative that participated in the preparation of this report. Mr. Kerwin responded that the Board of Directors decided to conduct the study and as far as input there. Johnson and Johnson paid for this report.

The response from Kevin was that Somerset County Business Partnership did meet with the County Health Officers Association. They worked closely with Peter Wright, the author of the report. What took the Association back were the findings and recommendations that we thought we agreed to at the table were not what ended up in the report. They did not sign off on the results of the report.

Kevin made a few comments to Mr. Kerwin:

First, in response to his comment that it is a "changed world" – he could not agree more. Public Health today is probably a hundred and fifty times greater than it was twenty years ago with all the responsibilities just around the emerging infections and terrorism. The demands on public health workforce far exceed what they were 20-25 years ago and the efforts to consolidate and reduce the workforce is diametrically opposed to the public's best interest.

Second, the Health Officers got upset not necessarily with the report but also with them looking at the public health department, which has been looked at more than any other service in the State of New Jersey. So much so that it is the only service in New Jersey that has Statutory language revolving around shared services. Look elsewhere – we have done the consolidation already. In the last 40 plus years we went from 700 plus health departments to under 100.

At this point the discussion came to a close. The Board thanked Mr. Kerwin for attending our meeting and both Mr. Kerwin and Mr. Reilly left.

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It was decided by the Board to view the JIF Training Video at this time. Following the viewing there was no discussion on it and the meeting was continued.

There were comments on the discussion with Mr. Kerwin.

Bruce felt he did not come here to back up the report, and did not know enough about the report or couldn't care less about the report.

He also thought the only problem that we as a Board of Health, will have to look at in the near future is if other members of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission pull out it may not be economically feasible to stay alone. This would be a decision down the line.

Bill said the County could not take on every town. Franklin Township is finding out that they are not getting the service they thought they were going to get by going to the County. This is what would happen if other towns go to the County.

The County took over Franklin, Somerville, Raritan, Manville, Peapack-Gladstone, Far Hills, and North Plainfield but they don't have the manpower to handle all of these towns.

Bill questioned how Mr. Kerwin has seen our resolutions? They went to the Freeholders not the Somerset County Business Partnership.

REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO MIDDLE BROOK – February/March (Bill Nehls)

There was no report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

2/22/10 – Letter to Mayor & Council from Watchung Board of Health, re: Animal Control Ordinance suggestions.

3/22/10 – Memo to Lauren Fellin from Kevin Sumner-Middle-Brook, re: Annual Budget Reduction

3/30/10 – Memo to Watchung Board of Health-Kevin Sumner, re: Proposed Resolution amending Commission By-Laws.

The only comments on the above correspondence were on the letter to Mayor and Council regarding the Animal Control Ordinance and the Resolution to Change the By-Laws of the commission. Bill said the Laws and Ordinance Committee has taken up the issue on the Animal Control Ordinance and Kevin said the proposed resolution amending the Commission by-laws had been tabled at their last meeting.

MIDDLE BROOK

Items for discussion – attached list

No discussion.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Resolution Authorizing execution of a One year, 10 Month agreement expiring on December 31, 2011 with Roxdane Kennels for Animal control services.

Article from My Central Jersey.Com regarding plant to sell cigars at golf courses. This has been dropped – they are not going forward with it.

Bill introduced February 11, 2010, Assembly, No. 2089, 214th Legislature:

Establishes the “Safe Drop Off of Drugs Program” for collection & disposal of unused prescription drugs & other medicines; and authorizes use of recycling tax revenues for program:

Sponsored by: Assemblywoman Joan M. Quigley and Assemblyman Herb Conaway, Jr.

Co-Sponsored by: Assemblyman McKeon

The State DEA will only do a drop off once a year. We cannot do it without the State DEA. It will be held in the fall (October, November).

VOUCHERS SUBMITTED FOR PAYMENT-

Moore Wallace North America – Registrar Safety Paper	-	\$ 133.16
Middle Brook Regional Health-1 st quarter	-	\$19,775.00

Fran Ellis moved to approve the payment of the vouchers; seconded by Harriet Stambaugh

Vice President Ruck requested a roll call:

Ellis, Mobus, Nehls, Pogosky, Sachariah, Savulich Stambaugh and Ruck.

All members in attendance approved the payments.

PUBLIC PORTION:

There were two students in attendance from Rutgers. They were there to meet with Kevin.

ADJOURNMENT-

Being no further business Vice President Ruck asked for a motion to adjourn.

George Pogosky made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Harriet Stambaugh.

All were in favor.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on June 16, 2010 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall, 15 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, NJ 07069

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance