

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday November 19th, 2020 - 9:00am-10:00am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Jim Ross - Chair, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rivkin, Diane Johnson, Tom Holleman, Joe Anastasi. Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault, Michelle Bottone, Deirdre Ekholdt
Guests/Audience Who choose to identify: Jane Tarsy, Howard Lipper, Susan Pfister (people need not identify themselves on the line.)

Guest Speakers - Mark Cooper & Loren Pace - Westport Weston Health District

9:05 - Call to Order

Review of October Minutes - Jim Ross: Election/polling went well, and reach out if anyone struggles with food insecurity - many programs available.

Diane J. 1st, Tom H. - 2nd - All on Favor

Mark Cooper - Presentation on Covid-19.

Infection rates in increase

Virus not being transmitting in schools, schools doing good job.

Most infected folks are Asymptomatic

High transmission around: Youth sports, social activities, sharing air, not touch, standing on sidelines, home - high transmission, all breathing same air.

Daily summaries posted on their website

Rate Map slide (Yellow, Orange, Red)

Chart for opening - Phase comparison charts

of COVID - hitting all age groups

Comparisons COVID vs. Seasonal Flu slides

CT Flu Surveillance- comparison of past two years

Note: 246,232 COVID deaths vs 22,000 Flu deaths

Trusted sites: www.wwhd.org, www.ct.gov, www.cdc.gov

Loren Pace: Used to see five cases a day now 20-30

Restaurants (3 positive employees) going up

Contact tracing seems to be containing spread

Need to be more vigilant at home, even masks at home

"The Case" individual - can shed for 10 days, then may test positive for months

CDC doesn't require negative test to return to employment

Heath district is working on getting new testing site in Town since increased demand

State of CT needs to approve site & need valid company.

PCR - better test

Antigen Test - not accurate

This is a respiratory transmission

Quarantine - not as strict as the person who is a contagion; Isolation - strict for a "case" keep from all people stay safe in room

Note: even a person in isolation is allowed to get essential business - if you live alone, need prescriptions, food, etc., it is not against the law to take care of essential business, so long as you are doing all other safeguards.

Howard Lipper - Since Disability population is disproportionately impacted, is there discussion to allow vaccination to this population administered earlier, like first with essential workers.

No details released yet.

Now, concern is building facilities to store the drug- needs negative 20 and negative 80 degrees storage.

The vaccine advisory group is working through this in the Governor's office.

There is no newsletter going to the population from WWHD - only to groups: I.e., restaurants, cosmetology.

Joe A: Questions the mental health piece. There is burnout in health care, people losing jobs, home visits on hold since March.

A: also as part of contact tracing comes the questions, are you safe home, have food?

Elaine D: Human Services update:

Deirdre Ekholdt & Michelle Bottone - here to help with Mental Health, isolation, fear, anxiety, security. Lots of support groups around. Many quick assessments around, Positive directions, tel-a-health, many new groups accepting Husky, Medicaid, Medicare, crisis hotlines, new counselor in the High School.

There is a list of resources on the Human Services website

Deirdre has been helping get adults with disabilities lined up with their insurance, so they can get phone calls, check ins, etc. Hello Neighbor - calls, and check-ins, is another.

Additionally: Energy assistance is available

Food programs - feeding 100 people a week

Church Thanksgiving dinner - different this year - giving of gift cards, delivering meals (Saugatuck Church & Rotary)

Town received Million \$ grant:

two parts \$500,000 - Homeless Diversionary Grant

\$500,000 - Cares Act Funding: \$250,000 - to reconstruct Gillespie Center

\$250,000 - rent & Mtg assistance thru COVID