

BOUND BROOK BOARD OF HEALTH
SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President J. Bailey at 6:00 P.M. with the following statement:

“This meeting held in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law in that the requirements of the Law have been met by the Meeting Notice being forwarded to the Courier News and posted in the Municipal Building on January 18, 2017.”

ROLL CALL:

The following members were present: Judy Bailey, Richard Eschle, Helen Goodrich, Barbara Lobman, Angela Robinson, Lisa Slater, and Alberto Torregroza.

The following were also present: Council Liaison Gomez, Administrator Herrera, and Kevin G. Sumner, Health Officer.

OATH OF OFFICE

K. Sumner administered the oath of office to B. Lobman.

PUBLIC SESSION:

No public was present. Public portion of meeting closed.

OLD BUSINESS:

The special meeting was called to address concerns regarding the Board’s approved 2017 budget. H. Herrera stated that based on the 2016 budget and activities he believes 20% of the time of the Registered Environmental Health Specialist was spent on property maintenance. Since he has determined this process is not viable under the current structure he believes the Board of Health budget can be reduced. K. Sumner explained the agreement that was made at the time of increasing to full time. In 2015, the Board expressed a desire to return to full time REHS services. As part of this services it was explained to the prior Administrator and Construction official that since the REHS would be in town for significantly more time she would be able to help identify property maintenance issues and report them to the Code Enforcer. Many of the property maintenance concerns are both code enforcement and public health concerns so her increased hours would reduce duplication of inspections. There was never an intent for the health inspector to provide or supplant code enforcement, only to supplement and assist. Councilman Gomez pointed out language in a November 5, 2015 letter to Administrator Strathearn that he believed states the health department will provide for code enforcement.

Mr. Eschle attempted to explain the Board's position on the need to maintain health services for the town, even if code enforcement is not part of the responsibilities. He also expressed concern about the tone of the conversation and the interpretation of the referenced letter. A. Robinson explained her history with the Board of Health and the long-standing relationship with the Commission. She expressed the Board's extreme satisfaction with the quality of services received and stated the Board did not want to see that change. L. Slater stated she has concerns about reducing the services, particularly as it relates to food service. Bound Brook is seeing an increase in food establishments and the nature of the businesses can make food safety a challenge. J. Bailey described the time commitments needed to provide health services, especially activities such as food inspections and lead assessment and abatement. She has concerns about reducing the amount of services as well. A. Torregroza expressed that he feels the Board needs to do a better job of explaining public health, its activities, and the benefits. He feels most do not understand the value.

In order to appease the Administrator and Council Liaison the Board members agreed that they would revisit the budget with an eye on reducing it by removing the property maintenance activities. They directed the Health Officer to reevaluate and to provide input to the Board. Input will be in the form of providing further data to the Board about mandated activities, priorities and how property maintenance activities overlap with public health activities and requirements. For example, how many of the property maintenance activities would also have to be done for public health compliance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Board, A. Robinson moved to adjourn at 7:30 P.M. Seconded by R. Eschle; All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin G. Sumner
Health Officer