

REGULAR WORK SESSION
& QUARTERLY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2021
5:30 P.M.

The Regular Work Session of the City Council of the City of Vineland was called to order by the President, Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur.

The following members were present at roll call:

Councilman David Acosta (*arrived at 5:34 p.m.*)
Councilman Ronald J. Franceschini, Jr.
Councilman Paul F. Spinelli (*left at 6:55 p.m.*)
Councilman Albert Vargas
President Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur

Also present were:

Richard P. Tonetta, Esq., City Solicitor
Robert E. Dickenson, Jr., Business Administrator
Edwin Alicea, Director of Public Safety
Macleod Carre, Director, Health Department
Robert Dickinson, Health Officer
Kathleen Hicks, Principal Planner

President Arthur led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Municipal Clerk stated Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given on December 8, 2020 by the City Clerk in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board in the lobby of the City Hall on;
2. Providing written notice to the offices of The Daily Journal and The Press of Atlantic City;
3. Filing written notice in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Vineland.

Department of Health Director Macleod Carre gave a brief update on Health Department personnel, noting retirements, departures, new hires and the fact that they remain short-staffed. A particular concern is with REHS certified personnel.

Health Officer Robert Dickinson reviewed the Covid-19 statistics for Vineland. So far Vineland has had 201 deaths, noting that the first three weeks of September had 9 deaths which is the highest amount since March 2021. There have been 6,895 total positive cases, noting that the first three weeks of September had 589 positive cases which is the highest amount since January 2021. Of the total number of positive cases, 3,000 of them were equally distributed across the age groups of teens, those in their 20s, and those in their 30s. He briefly touched on the newly announced Merck antiviral pill, which is another good tool shown to be effective in preventing deaths. However, he did note that the vaccines are the most effective in preventing transmission. He discussed the situation in Singapore, where, even though they have 80% of their eligible population vaccinated, positive cases are soaring. Singapore is no longer identifying every case, as they believe zero tolerance is impractical. They report deaths and severe cases. This is the transition of living in a pandemic to an endemic. Flu vaccinations have begun and Covid-19 vaccination clinics are continuing. So far 72% of Vineland's 12+ population has had at least one dose. 61% will be fully vaccinated within two weeks. He summarized the Live Healthy Vineland Community HUB initiative, including the 3rd annual back to school bash at the YMCA where they distributed 479 backpacks filled with school supplies. A diaper drive is underway with our partner, Gateway Community Action Partnership. Rabies clinics are planned on October 23, for dogs in the parking lot behind the City Hall annex from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and for cats at the Carl Arthur Center from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The library is identified as a suitable location to resume food safety courses. Health Officer Dickinson defended the Health Department as a hard-working, dedicated staff, strained from the Covid-19 issues, excessive overtime (some of which is donated time), and factors involved in their regulatory authority.

President Arthur asked if anyone from the public would like to comment.

Edwin Alicea, Director of Public Safety, reported that training will be starting soon for the drones. The Street Crimes Unit recently was successful in confiscating weapons and drugs. The Civilian Police Academy will be conducted on Monday evenings. There are now over 110 banners honoring veterans installed on Landis Avenue light posts.

Councilman Vargas noted a Vineland Police family fun day on October 26 at Gittone Stadium. Boxing will be on October 29 at the Landis Administration building. Sports fields are closed and getting a fall seeding. The Frisbee golf baskets are being replaced after being in use for approximately 25 years. And progress continues at the Gold Star Mother's Garden at Landis Park.

Councilman Acosta expressed concern about the trash pick-up issues. Administrator Dickenson explained that a staffing shortage by the ACUA has negatively impacted the prompt collection. Councilman Franceschini suggested that we transition to a once-per-week collection schedule, and save some money if we can.

Solicitor Tonetta invited Planner Kathleen Hicks to discuss provisions of the proposed ordinance to allow chickens in residential areas. Mr. Tonetta reviewed a list of proposed provisions and asked council members to weigh in on them before a final draft is prepared.

There being no one further to be heard, the Clerk reviewed the agenda.

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The President entertained a motion by Councilman Acosta, and seconded by Councilman Franceschini, to adjourn the meeting. The Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Acosta
Councilman Franceschini
Councilman Vargas
President Arthur

Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur
President of Council

ATTEST:

Keith Petrosky, RMC
Municipal Clerk