



Kevin A. Elak, MPH  
Director of Health

## City of Middletown

Department of Health  
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### Middletown Board of Health Minutes from February 14, 2023 Meeting

**Present:** Reverend Robyn Anderson, Patricia DiStefano, Kevin Elak, Yvonne Joy, Stan Opalacz, Linda Salafia,

**Absent:** Brian Gartner Jr., Anthony Mangiafico

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#### Call To Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Patricia DiStefano.

#### Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes for January 10, 2023. Motion by Stan Opalacz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Yvonne Joy. Minutes approved. Motion Passes.

#### Public Hearing for Agenda Items:

- None

#### Directors Report:

- Director of Health
  - Director Elak provided an update on the rates of RSV, influenza and covid cases in the community.
  - It was recently announced that the public health emergency at the federal level will end on May 11, 2023. It is unclear about what this means for services that were offered for free during the pandemic. Vaccines, COVID-19 tests and therapeutics

- that received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the FDA will not lose their status when the public health emergency ends.
- The Connecticut Department of Public Health recently announced that the regulations to implement the FDA Food Code are set for a hearing in front of the Legislative Regulations Review Committee on 1/24/2023. Once the regulations pass implementation of the Food Code could soon follow.
  - Division Report
    - Report given by Director Elak. The health department experienced one of the busiest number of after-hour emergency calls in recent memory. Between February 4-5, health department staff responded to 10 emergency calls. The extreme cold weather caused water and sprinkler pipes to freeze. The pipes began to burst once the weather started to rise above freezing. Thankfully, we did not have to relocate any tenants or condemn units. A small grocery store had to close to due a burst sprinkler line.

#### **Old Business:**

- Draft changes to Middletown Code of Ordinances Chapter 107 (Animals)
  - No further discussion. This will be kept under Old Business for the foreseeable future.

#### **New Business:**

- Draft revisions to the Middletown Code of Ordinances, Chapter 106: Food and Food Products
  - Director Elak presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the commissioners, highlighting the changes to the ordinance.
    - Most proposed changes are to align the ordinance with changes to the CT General Statutes, Regulations and the new FDA Food Code
    - A change in the license fee structure was also proposed. Current food license fees have not changed since 1998. Middletown's fees are significantly lower compared to fees that other health departments in the state charge food establishments.
  - Chairwoman DiStefano asked if the ordinance change would affect sports snack bars located at schools, such as booster clubs. Director Elak stated that they would still not have to pay a license fee if they are a non-profit or civic organization.
  - Yvonne Joy stated that the itinerant food vendor increase is still a bargain, especially since Middletown is participating in the reciprocal licensing MOU.
  - Linda Salafia asked for the approximate number of food establishments that are licensed by the health department. Director Elak replied that it was about 250, but not all of those pay a fee.



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- Linda Salafia asked about people who bake cakes or make other foods out of their home. Director Elak said that the people are allowed to prepare certain food products out of their home under a Cottage Food program that is administered by the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection. The Middletown Health Department does not issue a license to a Cottage Food operation.
- Pat DiStefano made a motion to approve the proposed ordinances changes. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yvonne Joy. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passes.

### Other

- Pat DiStefano started a discussion about adding a permanent part-time public health nurse to the health department staff. Director Elak said that the health department currently employ 1 temporary part-time nurse, and 1 is hired under contract. A portion of the funding comes from the \$18000 “disease surveillance” line in the health department budget. The rest of the funding currently comes from a grant from the CT Department of Public Health. That grant is set to end in February 2024. The 2 nurses provide essential services to the community including vaccinations, blood pressure clinics, disease surveillance, case management of childhood lead poisoning cases, and COVID-19 case investigation. The health department will lose these 2 positions if a new funding source is not identified.
  - Reverend Anderson asked if American Rescue Plan funding could be used to fund the nursing positions. Director Elak mentioned that he could ask the Mayor.
  - Linda Salafia made a motion that the Board of Health Commissioners draft a letter of support for adding a permanent part-time nurse to the health department staff, which could be presented to the Mayor and majority and minority leaders. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Reverend Anderson. Discussion: the letter will be drafted by Director Elak and Chairwoman Pat DiStefano. Then reviewed and signed by the Commissioners. All in favor. Motion passes.

## Adjournment

Yvonne Joy made a motion to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Pat DiStefano. All in favor. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:04PM

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Elak". The signature is stylized and cursive.

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