



TOWN OF VERNON

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Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor

Michael J. Purcaro
Town Administrator

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Assistant Town Administrator

DRAFT MINUTES

Town of Vernon Recovery and Reopening Advisory Committee

Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 11:00AM

Via Zoom Audio Teleconference

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Julie Clay, Town Council Member, James Kenny, Chief of Police; Shaun Gately, Economic Development Coordinator and Recovery Officer; George McGregor, Town Planner; William Meier, Vernon Police Lieutenant, & Public Information Officer; David Owens, Communications Specialist; Steven Prattson, Building Official; Michael Purcaro, Town Administrator and Emergency Management Director; Pauline Schaefer, Town Council Member; Lou Spadaccini, Town Attorney; Patrice Sulik, Director of North Central District Health Department and Daniel Wasilewski, Fire Marshal.

Members Absent: Bruce Klotter, President of Swiss Cleaners Andrew Marchese, Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Additional: Cassandra Santoro, Recording Secretary and Milton Jackson, owner of Jamaica Kitchen and various Subway restaurants.

Roll call was performed at 11:05 AM by Cassandra Santoro.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. COVID-19 Incident Command Update

Michael Purcaro updated the committee on the following items:

- 302,022 COVID cases have been reported since the beginning of the pandemic. Up 1,457 cases since Tuesday, which resulted in a positivity rate of 4.3%
- Hospitalizations are up by 9 on Wednesday, which is a total of 412 hospitalizations at this time.
- The current test numbers are 7,453,663.
- Town of Vernon has shifted some of its operations to the sharing lessons learned and helping other communities with their grass roots vaccination programs. We have been contacted by the Town of Woodbridge CT, in addition to Dallas TX Fire and Rescue and Suffolk County NY. We

continue to share our guidance and advice on how we are handling vaccinating our community. The Town of Vernon is sharing all aspects of our experiences. Good, Bad and the Ugly – things we have done well and things we would have done differently to be more efficient.

- The Town was contacted by Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) to do a 3 hour webinar entitled How to Organize and Operate a Safe and Effective Municipal Vaccination Clinic: Vaccinating Vulnerable and At-Risk Communities on Monday, March 29, 2021. This webinar is being presented in partnership with Town Departments, the Board of Education and North Central District Health Department.
- More vaccine is coming into the State – The Town has established a working partnership with the North Central District Health Department and Priority Urgent Care so that all of our vaccine requests have been centralized through the NCDHD. We have received hundreds of Moderna and a few of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine this week.
- The Town is reserving Johnson and Johnson vaccines primarily for our homebound residents in need of vaccination due to it being a single dose and do not need to return for the second shot.
- The Town of Vernon will be in the vaccination business from a government standpoint as long as we can, however, the availability of the vaccine is going to be more accessible and our demand from the Town and Health District to do mass vaccination will likely decline. We are continuing to ramp up our efforts until we meet that threshold.
- We anticipate that with the Governor updating the age requirements we may see a higher demand in the next few weeks.
- We continue to get a lot of calls requesting certain vaccines. We are never sure what exactly we are going to get – we always request all Johnson and Johnson, Moderna and Pfizer.
- The Town of Vernon Regional Call Center is continuing to work on getting our vaccination clinics full.

Dr. Joseph Macary spoke and thanked the Town of Vernon, Emergency and Risk Management Director and the North Central District Health Department for helping with vaccinating staff. The Board of Education was able to vaccinate 445 staff on March 4, 2021 and the second shot being scheduled for April 1, 2021. Vaccination will help with our schools operations. April 26th the Board of Education is working on changing schedules for Middle School and High Schools to be full time in school. Dr. Macary again thanked the Town of Vernon and the North Central District Health Department.

Lt. William Meier explained that our efforts are also working with homebound residents and the Call Center is tracking the homebound residents. This is a very time intensive process, with registration, administering the shot and the wait time to observe after the vaccine is administered. Dr. Rampal is currently working on training visiting nurses so that we can utilize more individuals to administer the homebound residents. The visiting nurses are also going to assist with getting the vaccine out to everyone that needs and wants it. He further explained that the Town has adjusted clinic hours during the week from 4PM – 8PM to accommodate individuals who are working. The Call center has been a great partnership with 6 towns that are also assisting with staffing the Call Center. We are currently working on an online scheduling system to assist the call center.

Patrice Sulik explained that they are aggressively ordering vaccine every week. We are receiving calls from the State, which is giving us the opportunity to share in the partnership between the Town of Vernon, North Central District Health Department and Priority Urgent Care. We are working hard and have been told that we might have more vaccine than we do appointments but will make sure to use that entire allotment. Further, this is a time to continue to keep your guard up – we are seeing a bit of an

uptick, specifically in sports exposures and family exposures as everyone is starting to think we are in the clear- Keep the mitigating strategies in place.

4. Current Guidance and Orders

Shaun Gately explained two (2) new executive orders have been released since our last meeting: 10C and 10D. Mr. Gately summarized the new executive orders.

Mr. Gately explained that businesses are still being encouraged to continue to log employees for contact tracing purposes and to work from home if possible. He also explained that businesses still have the ability to refuse customers with no masks and enforce the six feet markers and one way arrow markers/signage.

5. Local Recovery and Reopening Strategy

Steve Prattson explained that with the nice weather coming in businesses have shown interest in outdoor dining. We are looking into permanently doing outdoor dining for our business. He further explained that building is ramping up; multiple town businesses are opening soon. Commercial and residential is ahead of last year and moving right long.

Daniel Wasilewski updated the committee on the Fire Marshal's office. Currently doing all Fire Marshal work as well as being a part of the administrative aspect of the COVID clinics and assisting with making them run smoothly every week.

Mr. Purcaro thanked Mr. Wasilewski for everything the Fire Marshal's office is doing.

George McGregor updated the committee that the outdoor dining regulation is going to the planning Zoning commission on April 15 to allow outdoor dining on a permanent basis.

6. Next Steps

The Local Recovery and Reopening Advisory Committee will continue to meet weekly.

7. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2021.

Daniel Wasilewski made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2021 meeting. Shaun Gately seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment

Pauline Schaefer made a motion to adjourn at 11:28AM. Steve Prattson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra Santoro,
Recording Secretary