

**Skokie Board of Health
September 11, 2014**

Present

Mr. Abbasi	Dr. Prince
Dr. Drachler	Dr. Sood
Ms. Nickisch Duggan	Ms. Jones Thorne
Dr. Gaynes	Ms. Urbanus
Dr. Luka	Dr. Usman
Mr. Nidetz	Dr. Usman
Mr. Pandya	Dr. Veis
Dr. Polin	Dr. Williams

Absent

Ms. Varma

Excused

Ms. Langguth
Dr. Topouzian

Dr. Catherine Counard, Director of Health
Mr. Bruce Jones, Staff

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Dr. Drachler, Chairman

Approval of Minutes - The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Presentation - Mary Carroll, Community Education Specialist: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC).

Ms. Carroll spoke about the MWRDGC history and background: the presentation included an overview of MWRDGC. Ms. Carroll distributed flyers and brochures to the board during the meeting.

The District was originally organized as the Sanitary District of Chicago in 1889 under an act of the Illinois General Assembly which has been modified from time to time to increase the District's authority and jurisdiction. The enabling act in 1889 was in direct response to a long standing problem with contamination of the water supply and nuisance conditions of the rivers. The District reversed the flow of the Chicago and Calumet River Systems to stop the discharge of sewage to Lake Michigan and instead, discharge it to the Des Plaines River, where it could be diluted as it flowed into the Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River.

Ms. Carroll showed a MWRDGC movie "Before the Faucet – After the Flush" which can be viewed on-line at:

https://www.mwrdd.org/irj/go/km/docs/documents/MWRD/internet/News%26Media/Newsroom/Media/Audio_Video/Videos/Before_the_Faucet_After_The_Flush.swf

Dr. Polin asked is the deep tunnel project related to what she presented today. Ms. Carroll explained that the deep tunnel project started in 1976 and took 30 years to construct 109 miles of tunnels that serve 3 reservoirs at O'Hare, Stickney and Thornton and is designed to accept excess water from towns that have combined sewer systems that collect both storm water and sewage.

Dr. Gaynes asked about the odors coming from the MWRDGC plant. Ms. Carroll spoke about several issues that could contribute from the exhaust vents with sediment and organic materials.

Ms. Carroll also mentioned that of their 7 plants, currently 4 utilize tertiary treatment, 2 more will have tertiary treatment by 2015 and the last plant plans to use ultraviolet rays as a means of disinfection. Ms. Carroll explained that primary treatment basically involves sedimentation, secondary treatment includes the addition of oxygen and good bacteria and tertiary finishes with filtration and treating with chlorine. By products created during the beginning processes are cooked in digesters which produce methane gas which is siphoned off and used to heat a portion of the plant.

Pat Urbanus asked what type of security they have at the plants. Ms. Carroll stated that plants have MWRD police on-site and that to tour a facility you must register one month in advance in order to have background checks done. Dr. Counard asked about security at the water cribs. Ms. Carroll replied that they are no longer staffed but they do have security cameras both above and below water level.

Mr. Pandya questioned about sewer work being done by Skokie. A short discussion followed about what type of sewers Skokie has and why the streets flood and some homes continue to flood. Dr. Counard said she could schedule someone from Public Works Engineering come to present on what Skokie has done to help alleviate flooding in Skokie.

Dr. Counard asked if there are any thought about reusing/returning the waste water to this region rather than sending it to the Gulf of Mexico. Ms. Carroll replied they are looking at potential ways to reuse the waste water at Industrial settings but anything would require some substantial infrastructure changes.

Dr. Drachler also spoke to the larger issue of all the water being wasted and not being sent back into the Lake Michigan and mentioned San Diego is building the largest desalination plants along with two others in California being built desalination plants due to the excessive droughts. We live next to 20% of the available fresh water on earth and we take 1 billion gallons out and none is place back and he believes the next battles maybe fought over the lack of fresh water in many countries.

Ms. Carroll mentioned a book Water Wars by Peter Annin which doesn't talk about true wars but does address issues involving the private sector, governments and environmental problems in the Great Lakes region.

Dr. Drachler mentioned that the locks are opened when the deep tunnel is full resulting in sewage being directly released into the environment but this is not happening as much anymore so this indicates that the deep tunnel project has helped the flooding problems in some instances.

Chair's Report

Dr. Drachler acknowledged Mr. Pandya for all his work on the summer Board of Health dinner which everyone enjoyed – a job well done!

Dr. Drachler mentioned that Dr. Herwitz has accepted a new position at William & Mary Naval Base and thus will be resigning from the Board of Health.

Dr. Drachler mentioned two letters from the Mayor Van Dusen to Dr. Plotkin thanking him for his service and a letter of commendation.

Dr. Drachler mentioned Dr. Williams's article "Time for a tobacco-free military" that was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Personal Statements

None

Director's Monthly Report

Dr. Counard presented the August monthly report (attached). The highlights included:

- Emergency Community Shelter Plan Facilitated Discussion – Public Safety Consortium
During the August Public Safety Consortium meeting, a multidisciplinary team from Health, Human Services and Fire held an informational session to review the plans for setting up an Emergency Community Shelter. The next steps will be a tabletop exercise, currently planned for December, with a full scale exercise likely in the spring.
- Memorandum of Agreement with Oakton Community College School of Nursing Renewed
The Memorandum of Agreement with the OCC School of Nursing was renewed at the August 18 Board of Trustees meeting. The agreement, which allows OCC nursing faculty and students to assist the Department during the annual community flu shot clinics and other activities, has been in place for five years.
- Food and Drug Administration Retail Food Protection Grant
The Department is applying for a grant from the Food and Drug Administration, which will assist with ensuring that our food safety program meets national standards. The Department food safety program currently meets all Illinois Department of Public Health standards; however, the IDPH standards are less rigorous than the national standards. If we are successful, the funds will cover an intern to assist with the project, training and a mentorship program.
- Childhood Obesity Project – all Skokie Public School Districts on board
Establishing obesity rates for Skokie children is an important priority of the Community Health Plan. To achieve this goal, the Department is collecting existing obesity data from school health records and creating an aggregate report for the Village. Further actions will be based upon the results of this important study. It is highly preferable to have local data, rather than relying on state or national data.

Community Health Plan Initiatives Updates

- Access to Healthcare – Dr. Drachler asked if we could have Asian Human Services, a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC) speak to the Board. Dr. Counard mentioned that she is planning to schedule them for the December 2014 meeting.
- Obesity Prevention – Dr. Drachler mentioned that the September edition of JAMA was devoted to the issue of weight; including weight loss, dieting and obesity.
- Tobacco Use Prevention – Dr. Drachler discussed an article addressing the issue of smoking in city parks. The Mayor and Board of Trustees will be addressing the issue of strengthening our code to regulate the use of e-cigarettes as any other tobacco products.
- Healthy Environment – The Board still needs to promote all the continued plans for more bike paths in Skokie, as presented at the June meeting.

Old Business

Dr. Drachler asked about the results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Dr. Williams mentioned that it could be some time before all of the results are compiled and released.

New Business

Dr. Drachler asked what was known about the cases of enterovirus (EV-D68). Dr. Counard gave a quick update. This strain of the virus was first identified in 1962, so it is not new but it is typically less commonly in circulation in the United States than other strains.

No confirmed cases have been identified in Skokie, any neighboring communities, or in northern Illinois, beyond the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital, which sent tests from ill children in August to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that recently returned positive. As is true for many infectious diseases, most of the children admitted to the children's hospital had underlying health conditions that made them more susceptible to the virus.

Dr. Drachler announced that he will not be at the next meeting on November 13 and that Dr. Williams will chair the meeting.

Dr. Drachler reminded the Board they were invited to the Talking Farm "Hullabaloo" event on September 20th between 2-6 pm at 3701 Howard Street in Skokie.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.