

MINUTES OF MEETING

**COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD
HAVEN WELL CONTAMINATION**

**Portsmouth City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue
Conference Room A**

8:00 a.m.

November 3, 2015

ATTENDEES:

Community Advisory Board

Rich DiPentima, Chairman

James Heinz, Deputy Fire Chief - Portsmouth

Kim McNamara, Health Officer - Portsmouth

John Stowell, Health Officer - Newington

Andrea Amico, Resident - Portsmouth

Shelly Vetter, Owner - Discovery Child Enrichment Center

Stefany Shaheen – City Councilor

City Staff

Brian Goetz, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works – Portsmouth

Members Absent

Robert Lister, Mayor - Portsmouth

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rich DiPentima called the meeting to order at 8:00a.m and presented the agenda for the morning.

2. AGENDA OVERVIEW

Chairman DiPentima stated that there were two goals for the meeting following the discussion of the second round of blood testing results; compilation of a list of questions to present to ATSDR, and a discussion to review the future of the CAB.

3. SECOND ROUND OF BLOOD TESTING

A handout from the NH DHHS entitled “Pease PFC Testing Program Update and Key Messages” dated October 23, 2015 was passed around (see Appendix A). Concern was

expressed amongst CAB members that there were people that did not yet know about blood testing. Chairman DiPentima stated that he understood that concern and talked about the challenges of trying to disseminate information in a timely fashion, and have all businesses at Pease Tradeport get the word out to their employees. An avenue to offer individuals a way to get tested on their own is being looked in to. However, it would be expensive to the individual, whereas there is no cost to the individual for the current testing.

Ms. McNamara stated that if ATSDR conducts a study that it may be an opportunity for people to get tested in the future.

There was conversation around the Pease Development Authority (PDA) being absent from all discussions. Two International Construction also holds many leases at Pease Tradeport. Peggy Lamson and John Bohenko are members of the PDA Board of Directors. There are monthly board meetings. Chairman DiPentima may attend a Board meeting to discuss a method for contacting tenants of Pease Tradeport. Mr. Stowell will talk with Ms. Lamson and Chairman DiPentima will talk with Mr. Bohenko regarding this issue. Councilor Shaheen stated that she would be happy to attend a Board meeting as she is a tenant of Two International Construction.

Councilor Shaheen inquired if the AF could create a reimbursement method so that people that want to get tested could get tested and be reimbursed for the cost. There has been no attempt to contact people that have a historic connection to the base. Pease Tradeport is also a location for start-ups that last a couple of years and disappear.

Chairman DiPentima stated that it is the responsibility of the AF to at least notify those that lived on base when it was an active base.

Ms. McNamara stated that NH DHHS has done everything that has been asked of them. To begin a scientifically rigorous study, ATSDR has to design the study and construct the parameters. Certain individuals and groups will fit the parameters, and certain ones will not.

4. ATSDR MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Stefany Shaheen wondered whether there was an appropriate role for the CAB to advocate for Biomonitoring even though this may not be part of the ATSDR study.

Chairman DiPentima stated that ATSDR would like to hold another meeting with the CAB. As an outcome of today's meeting, he would like to provide 2-4 questions to ATSDR that the CAB would like to have answered.

Ms. McNamara stated that there are national research designs regarding Biomonitoring. It is an important consideration as everyone is exposed to a multitude of contaminants. If people could participate in Biomonitoring, it would be helpful.

Chairman DiPentima mentioned that the state just received a biomonitoring grant to study arsenic contamination in drinking water.

Ms. McNamara stated that at the Health Officer's meeting last month, there was a discussion around adding PFOS and PFOA to a research project. Originally, they were going to look at the gas additive MTBE. However, since the contaminant issue has arisen at Pease Tradeport, they've turned their consideration to looking at PFOS and PFOA. There may be more opportunities for a more global biomonitoring.

Ms. Amico stated that she found the ATSDR meeting very positive, and she was happy that ATSDR is sending the message that they want as much community participation as possible. However, she also felt that the meeting left some people concerned that ATSDR was looking to the community to steer the ship a bit too much. Some members of the community don't feel qualified to steer the ship. She wondered whether the CAB could provide some process education for the community on other communities that have been through a similar exposure situation. It would be helpful to be made aware of similar processes such as the C8 health study or Camp Lejeune to be able to know how to move forward with this process.

Chairman DiPentima stated that there is a health study for communities that are available. It can be found on the Portsmouth website. It is up to the CAB now to state what questions need to be answered. It is up to ATSDR to come up with the final design and how they would answer those questions. This may involve doing biomonitoring or relying on individuals to seek out their own medical care.

Chairman DiPentima would like two things to happen; set up date for a conversation with ATSDR to provide them with CAB research questions, and secondly, hold a discussion with them about the potential for a study and how can a study (similar to another study for exposed populations) be initiated.

Ms. McNamara suggested breaking down their concerns into groups because there are different concerns for different groups. Children, Fireman Air Force personnel, and adult workers that may have passed in and out of Pease Tradeport, are just a few of the groups that come to mind. Pointed questions could be asked about specific groups.

Councilor Shaheen stated that there are a number of steps that need to be taken to engage the community. There are questions of the tactical nature and questions that are process related, such as duration of the study.

Chairman DiPentima stated that the answers to these types of questions would be up to ATSDR. Looking at target groups would be helpful.

Ms. McNamara wondered whether specific questions could be captured in their recommendations to City Council to avoid losing or diluting them.

Councilor Shaheen posed the question as to whether the study was going to help address the long-term implications the community has concerns about.

Ms. McNamara stated that there is also a need to educate the populace about protection from chemical exposures in this day and age as much as possible. She hopes that somehow that can be captured among the recommendations.

Councilor Shaheen recorded concerns/questions from the CAB to present to ATSDR:

1. Adverse long-term health effects (cholesterol, cancer, thyroid/immune function)
2. The role of education/outreach to the general public, and others with a connection to Pease Tradeport
3. Developmental effects in children at Pease Tradeport as a result of exposure/How can children be monitored over time
4. The possibility for on-going communication in the future (will there be more solid recommendations with a better knowledge of effects) through a registry or database/recommendations for the future, such as screenings
5. Testing blood levels of contaminants over time
6. Testing nursing/pregnant women (and looking at them as a separate group)
7. Child care study for children who were at Pease 20+ years ago

Chairman DiPentima read an excerpt of what would fall into the category of a prospective cohort Study. It started by stating that a cohort study begins prior to any study participants being diagnosed with health outcomes. Outcomes may come years later, and that is one down side to this type of study. Refer to the studies on page 60 in “Is a Health Study the Answer for Your Community, A Guide for Making Informed Decisions”. This may be the most reasonable and reliable study for obtaining the answers that the CAB and the community are looking for.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz inquired if the CAB could have access to the Camp Lejeune study.

Mr. Goetz will email a link to the CAB for the Camp Lejeune site. It has quite a bit of information on the contaminant exposure there.

Councilor Shaheen pointed out that some of the questions are process questions and some are related to the substantive nature of what is to be evaluated. She wondered whether one of the responsibilities of the CAB was to further refine the questions and provide ATSDR with a history that is unique to the Pease Tradeport population. This could help direct the parameters of the study (or registry/database). The key question seems to be adverse long-term health effects; this can be separated into the groups of adults, children and pregnant and nursing women.

Ms. McNamara pointed out that the numbers in these groups may be too small to study.

Ms. Amico stated that the CAB has included the question regarding health effects, but she pointed out that those are only the health effects that are a known possibility at this point. She wondered about other possible health effects that are unknown at this point in time.

Ms. Vetter stated that low birth weight and hypertension during pregnancy (C8 study) were also noted as adverse health effects of these particular contaminants.

Councilor Shaheen asked Deputy Fire Chief Heinz if he would like to list specific cancers/health effects for firefighters.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated that he does not want the firefighter piece to dilute the bigger picture. Firefighters were exposed. Not all of them were tested. However, all firefighters that were tested had high blood levels. Unfortunately, workman's compensation claims were denied. He will research possible effects of concern for firefighters and will provide them to the group.

Ms. McNamara felt that firefighters were a group that should be considered.

The CAB discussed groups to be considered with regard to the questions:

1. Children
2. Pregnant/Nursing Women
3. Firefighters
4. Adult Workers
5. Families with a historic connection to Pease

Ms. Amico stated that it would help to include a group of local people that have not been exposed.

Ms. McNamara brought up the concern regarding the current PFCs being replaced with other PFC's that may have even greater effects. She wondered if there was a way to be reasonably assured that the new chemicals will not pose the danger that the current ones do.

Chairman DiPentima remarked that the AF stated they will not be training with these chemicals as they did previously. Only in an emergent situation will they use the chemicals.

Ms. McNamara stated that this begins to get at what public health has been trying to decipher for years; total body burden and how to mitigate it.

Ms. Amico inquired about ways to be diligent about potential health effects now, and the health of children. While she didn't want to put her children through unnecessary testing or treatment, she didn't want to just wait and hope that her children do not become ill.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz expressed frustration that DHHS has done exactly what has been asked of them, yet there are people that are disappointed and unhappy with what they are doing.

Ms. McNamara stated that it gets back to managing expectations. Some people may be disappointed because they went through testing, yet they may not fit the parameters of the

study. She is uncertain what to do about this frustration and agrees with Deputy Chief Heinz that DHHS has been very responsive.

Councilor Shaheen stated that DHHS is doing a tremendous amount given the resources they have. They are responsive, but they were also late coming to the table and there has been quite a bit of trouble getting the second round of testing completed. However, a debt of gratitude is owed them because the situation wouldn't be as far along without the tremendous effort they have put in.

Ms. McNamara stated that ATSDR will be taking over soon.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz wondered if the CAB should wait until all the results are in to compose the questions.

Chairman DiPentima stated that the questions would not be dramatically different. They would still be centered along the lines of what the long-term health effects are from these contaminants.

Chairman DiPentima will pull the questions together and will send them to the CAB.

Ms. Amico inquired about what the CAP, CAB and RAB roles will be going forward.

5. CAB FUTURE

Chairman DiPentima discussed a final report to the current City Council and Mayor sometime in December. After the meeting on November 17th, 2015, there will be a meeting to compile recommendations followed by a meeting with the City Council and Mayor to present the recommendations. He felt that a public Portsmouth presence was very important.

Ms. McNamara inquired as to whether the CAB foresees a government presence going forward.

Chairman DiPentima stated that he felt a government presence was needed for an ongoing commitment with ATSDR and to facilitate the communication of information to the public.

Councilor Shaheen inquired about the appointment process for RAB and whether perhaps Governor appointed members to the RAB makes sense. That could include an appointment from the PDA.

Ms. Amico inquired about the focus of RAB.

Chairman DiPentima stated that RAB would be focused on the environmental restoration process. NH DES may also be involved.

Councilor Shaheen stated that there are two issues now: restoration of wells and ongoing monitoring of those exposed. This would be best addressed by CAP.

Ms. McNamara stated that it is important to have a strong local voice represented on the committees/board because although there will be environmental recommendations/requirements, the community may need/want to go beyond what is recommended and a strong local voice in this case would be helpful. She stated that there are a couple of members of the community that sent in questions. Some of these people may be interested in serving on a committee.

Courtney Carignan was suggested as a possible member of the CAP.

It was suggested by several CAB members that Mr. Goetz, a representative of the PDA, a Pease Tenant, NH DES, and community advocates would be good members of the RAB.

Ms. McNamara was asked to put the call for members on the CAB website. She inquired about permission to add to that website.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz inquired if Ms. Carignan should have input into the questions.

Ms. McNamara stated that anybody could have input into the questions. She pointed out that Ms. Carignan's focus is on certain studies. The reduction of questions that naturally comes from a certain frame of reference will be a natural outcome of this process.

Chairman DiPentima will ask the ATSDR if they are available for the meeting on November 17, 2015.

Councilor Shaheen will speak with the Governor's office about the RAB.

Chairman DiPentima inquired if there were any firemen that could be on the RAB.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43am.

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The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 17th at 8:00am with ATSDR participating through a teleconference.
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Respectfully submitted,

Toni McLellan
Recording Clerk, City of Portsmouth

Appendix A.**NH Department of Health and Human Services****Pease PFC Testing Program Update and Key Messages****October 23, 2015**

- The deadline for people to call the Public Inquiry line and sign up to participate in the PFC blood testing program was on Friday, October 2nd. The deadline to have blood drawn was October 16th.
- The October 2nd deadline to sign up to participate in the blood testing program reflects the minimum of two weeks required to complete the process from sign up to blood draw. The process included participants receiving, filling out and returning the questionnaire to DHHS, receiving laboratory requisition forms in the mail, and getting blood drawn.
- DHHS requested the laboratory at Portsmouth Regional Hospital to accommodate participants who indicated interest in testing by October 2nd and who experienced delays in processing their requests by offering those participants to have their blood drawn by October 23rd. There was no extension to the testing program, but rather a desire to keep our commitment to participants who experienced a delay in processing.
- DHHS appreciates Portsmouth Regional Hospital's support for the blood testing program and its participation in drawing blood.
- DHHS has provided testing as a public service to the Pease Tradeport community in response to the well water contamination identified in 2014. The blood testing has been occurring since April. The PFC blood test is a highly specialized test performed by very few laboratories.
- Given the large volume of testing requests and this specialized type of testing, there is no single lab that can handle all of the sample testing. We are working with the CDC lab, and we are in process of establishing contracts with 2 additional labs to get all the specimens tested.
- The specific timeframe for results will be established once the contracts are in place and that information will be communicated to the Haven Well Community Advisory Board (CAB) and to the community.
- We understand that individuals who missed the deadline may still want to pursue testing and we are actively looking at options where individuals can get their blood tested for PFCs on their own.
- Once DHHS has identified options for individuals who wish to pursue testing on their own, that information will be shared with the CAB and posted to the DHHS website.
- Interested individuals can learn more about the PFC contamination at Pease on the DHHS website at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/investigation-pease.htm>.