

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Members present: E. Anderson (Andover), R. Aylesworth (Mansfield - Virtual), M. Capriola (Mansfield – Virtual), J. Elsesser (Coventry), B. Foley (Tolland - Virtual), C. Silver-Smith (Ashford – Virtual), D. Walsh (Coventry), M. Walter (Columbia - Virtual)

Staff present: Director of Health R. Miller, Director of Finance A. Backhaus (Virtual), Medical Advisor Dr. K. Dardick, Office Manager M. Brosseau

J. Elsesser called the meeting to order at 4:34pm

Minutes

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by M. Capriola to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting as presented. MOTION PASSED with C. Silver-Smith abstaining.

Public Comments

Outreach was done per Executive order. No comments were received.

Strategic Planning – Process and Timeline to Update Plan

R. Miller outlined the rationale for updating the plan and the timeline.

J. Elsesser requested that R. Miller send out an email inviting Board members to participate in the strategic planning committee.

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to establish the Eastern Highlands Health District Strategic Planning Committee. Such members can be appointed by the Board Chair in consultation with the Director of Health, and may comprise board members, staff, or other interested parties. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

M. Walter joined the meeting

Finance Committee – Financial Report period ending 12/31/23

R. Miller presented an overview of the financial report for the period ending 12/31/2023 and noted the salient features.

E. Anderson made a Motion, seconded by R. Aylesworth to accept the financial report as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Medical Advisor Report

Dr. Dardick reported there is nothing unusual in the community and noted the following:

- Ticks are out
- Respiratory infections are declining but still around
- Allergies are increasing

Dr. Dardick relayed an anecdote about a lead poisoning case that was difficult to determine the source of the lead. R. Miller noted that with the lowering of the blood level thresholds that trigger action by the

health department, staff is engaged with more cases and the exposure path is not always obvious during the investigative process.

J. Elsesser initiated discussion about the involvement of EHHD with the PFAS issue.

Town Reports

Tolland B. Foley reported on the sodium chloride issue of concern in Tolland. He expressed thanks to EHHD for their involvement.

Mansfield R. Aylesworth reported that Mansfield is in the final stages of getting approval for the new drinking water treatment system for the elementary school

Ashford C. Silver-Smith reported that they are making progress on the issues at the Senior Center. She expressed thanks to Lynette for her support.

Andover E. Anderson reported that the Community Center/Senior Center is nearing completion. E. Anderson informed the board that with e-bikes will be purchased for the community to use. Funds are from a DOT micro grant.

Coventry D. Walsh informed the board that Lakeview Restaurant is open. J. Elsesser reported that the study on the sewer treatment plant has been completed. The results are that the town will build a new system rather than tie into Willimantic. In addition, slow progress is being made on extending into the Bolton sewer system. J. Elsesser noted that a water tower will be built. This will provide extra water to the other side of the lake and allow hydrants to be installed in the village area. J. Elsesser informed the board that there are salt & well issues in Coventry as well. R. Miller noted that a public meeting was held to present information from a consultant study. There is a schedule in place for the project to extend the waterline.

D. Walsh inquired about remediation being done at the former "Dip & Strip". J. Elsesser addressed concerns.

Columbia M. Walter reported that the Hunt Road culvert project is completed. M. Walter informed the board on a recent random test from OSHA where there were multiple items. M. Walter recommended that towns invite OSHA in for a voluntary consultation, if violations are found, there will be fines.

Directors Report

Auditor Appointment

R. Miller informed the board that the auditor appointment will be delayed. The town of Mansfield is going out to bid for an auditor. Once the town chooses an auditor, the executive committee will need to reconvene on the issue.

CADH Legislative Session Report

R. Miller reported that CADH submitted testimony to increase the per capita grant.

R. Miller reported that the CADH is proposing modifications to the bill that makes private well data confidential. CADH has support from Senator Gordon and Representative Nuccio. Either an amendment to the floor this session or a separate bill next session will be introduced.

Sodium Chloride groundwater contamination letter to residents & other mitigation activities – update

R. Miller noted that a letter was sent to 150 residents informing them of the new electronic reporting system for homeowners to report damage caused by sodium chloride.

As part of efforts to educate the public, the workflow for reviewing water treatment wastewater systems by EHHD will be modified. A recent water test will be required with the submission of the application. This will be reviewed to determine if the water quality supports the system being installed. If it does not, educational material on water treatment options will be sent. In addition, the EHHD website will be upgraded to include additional educational materials.

Cosmetology Program Implementation Update – Second report

R. Miller provided an update on the cosmetology program. He noted that the second annual permitting cycle has been completed. 81 of 85 businesses are in complete compliance. The 4 that are not have timelines established to come into compliance.

R. Miller noted that the program is reasonably well received. No changes in the program are recommended at this time.

Health District Staffing Update- Job opening

R. Miller updated that board on the Public Health Nurse vacancy. Interviews will be held next week with anticipation of hiring someone within the next month.

Quarterly Activity Reports – 12/31/23

R. Miller reported that the Community Health and Wellness program has coordinated 3 harm reduction events. Additional grant money is expected from North Central District Health Department to allow EHHD to continue providing these events.

Communications

J. Elsesser initiated discussion about food contaminant issues seeming to be on the rise.

Adjournment

D. Walsh made a MOTION, seconded by E. Anderson to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:42 pm. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Next Board Meeting – June 20, 2024, 4:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Miller
Secretary