

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 15, 2023

Members present: E. Anderson (Andover), J. Elsesser (Coventry), H. Evans (Mansfield – Virtual), M. Capriola (Mansfield – Virtual), S. Powers (Scotland-Virtual), D. Walsh (Coventry), M. Walter (Columbia - Virtual), E. Wiecenski (Willington-Virtual)

Staff present: R. Miller, M. Brosseau, K. Dardick, A. Backhaus

M. Walter called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

R. Miller introduced Amanda Backhaus, Director of Finance for the Town of Mansfield. Everyone welcomed her.

Approval of Minutes

M. Walter made a MOTION, seconded by S. Powers to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

J. Elsesser joined the meeting at 4:35pm and assumed position of Chair

E. Anderson joined the meeting at 4:35pm

Preventive Health Strategies at Work in Connecticut Communities – Grant Proposal Authorization

R. Miller provided an overview of the grant and the change in the awarding of the grant.

D. Walsh inquired about a plan B if the district doesn't receive the grant. R. Miller noted that the grant would be funding some staff time. R. Miller also noted that while his office is applying for other grants those grants will have different initiatives, but will also be available to fund existing staff.

M. Walter made a MOTION, seconded by E. Anderson to authorize the Director of Health to (1) submit attached proposal for the Preventive Health Strategies at Work in CT Communities Grant as presented on June 15, 2023, and if awarded, (2) negotiate & execute the subsequent grant contract with the State of Connecticut. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Re-appointment of Director to CT Water Company, Water System Advisory Committee

R. Miller provided background on the Water System Advisory Committee.

D. Walsh made a MOTION, seconded by E. Wiecenski to appoint Director of Health, Robert Miller, to the Water System Advisory Committee for the term ending June 15, 2025, effective immediately. A friendly amendment was made to change the word appoint to reappoint. MOTION PASSED unanimously as amended.

EHHD and Ledge Light Health District, Memorandum of Agreement (Updated) – Reauthorization

R. Miller informed the board of the change in the policy for signing the MOU from being signed by only the Director to including the additional signature of the Board Chairperson.

E. Wiczenski made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to authorize both the Director, and the Board of Directors Chairman to execute the Acting Director of Health Services agreement by and between the Eastern Highlands Health District and any other Connecticut Local Health Department/District deemed qualified by the Director. A modest amendment was suggested to change the word Districts to District. MOTION PASSED unanimously with the amendment.

Town Reports

Andover – E. Anderson reported:

- The town is still working through the special permitting process for the Community Center.
- The town is seeing an increase in trail usage.
- The 175th Anniversary Celebration was a positive event for the community.
- He noted that school is out and is hoping to see traffic slow down.

Columbia – M. Walter noted that the Main Moose has applied to the town for a Farmers market at Main Moose and a structure in which one can "pan for gold".

Scotland – S. Powers reported:

- The Farmers market has made a successful transition to the new location at the Grange
- The town has applied for a \$1 million community development grant
- A town hall meeting is to be held regarding the \$700,000 grant awarded to the town previously
- S. Powers is working to add a Poet Laureate to the town

Mansfield – H. Evans reported:

- the Mansfield Elementary School has opened and things continue to improve, including the resolution of traffic concerns
- Many building projects in town are causing controversy for some individuals

Willington – E. Wiczenski reported:

- The school referendum failed
- The town is hoping to go to bid soon for the septic system at the town hall
- Opening of Halls Pond is planned for next week

Coventry – J. Elsesser reported:

- Dunkin Donuts has opened a 2 lane drive-thru, resolving a traffic problem of cars backing up on Rt 31. J. Elsesser also noted that their septic system has been repaired
- 4 Dads Pub has been officially licensed for food service as of 6/15/2023. Liquor license is pending
- The Farmers market is doing well
- Talks continue regarding the sewer project
- A water fire protection tower will be installed in the area of Rood Road
- July 1st is J. Elsesser's last official day as Town Manager. He will continue as Acting Town Manager on a contractual basis.
- Citizens are voicing concern over algae on the lake. That algae is not cyanobacteria algae

- The town has applied for a \$100,000 Food waste management grant to separate food waste in household garbage. Disposal bins will be set up for households; Agricycle will pick up these bins; waste will be brought to the anaerobic digester at Hytone farm

M. Capriola joined the meeting at 4:55pm. R. Miller introduced and welcomed Maria Capriola, Director of Shared Services at the Town of Mansfield. M. Capriola has been appointed as Chair of the EHHD Personnel Committee, by Chairman Elsesser.

Dr. Dardick joined the meeting at 5:00pm.

Financial Report for the period ending 3/31/23

R. Miller presented an overview of the report, highlighting the salient features. E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by E. Wiczenski to accept the financial report as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

J. Elsesser commented that it has been another successful year and reiterated the importance of a healthy fund balance.

Personnel Committee- Starting salary authorization for Sanitarian II

R. Miller reported that the Personnel Committee had a special meeting on 5/24/23 to authorize an increase in the starting salary offered to the candidate.

Directors Report

Dr. Dardick reported that his office is still seeing COVID cases although at a much lesser level. He noted that individuals eligible for the bivalent booster are opting to wait. There is speculation that the CDC will be releasing a new formula in the fall targeting only the Omnicron variant since that is the predominant variant of the virus being transmitted now. Dr. Dardick noted that it is unlikely that the flu and Covid vaccine will be combined into one shot in the fall.

Dr. Dardick stated that ticks are out there and biting.

He also noted that he is seeing an increase in people suffering from the pollen. Recommendations for those with asthma include the use of a household HEPA air filter and remaining indoors. N95 masks will help.

CADH Bill Tracking Report

R. Miller highlighted a few bills CADH is closely watching. These include:

- SB959: An Act concerning mold in residential housing and commercial buildings. This would create standards for mold in indoor environments. This would direct DPH to create standards to be used during inspections and enforcements.
- HB5902: An Act requiring food allergy awareness in restaurants. R. Miller noted that this is redundant as the FDA food code has provisions for food allergy awareness in place. However it would mean that local health would need to track which managers are trained and post inspection scores online.

- HB6733: An Act concerning the Department of Public Health's recommendations regarding various revisions to the public Health Statutes. R. Miller noted that this would charge health departments with creating an electronic record keeping system for property owners to report NaCl in water online. R. Miller further noted that test results for private wells remain confidential.
- HB5911: An Act concerning funding for reducing lead poisoning. This would provide funding to administer the lowered Blood lead level thresholds currently in place. This bill failed.

Canada Wild Fires – CT/EHHD air quality

R. Miller reported that the health district pushed out information to community partners and conferred with school systems regarding outdoor activities. He will continue to monitor this issue.

J. Elsesser suggested that policies need to be developed that include standards and guidelines for outdoor workers and outdoor activities such as summer camps.

Rural Health Care Summit

R. Miller reported that he attended the Comptroller Sean Scanlon Rural Health Care Summit. Comptroller Scanlon wants to create a workgroup to address challenges associated with rural health care.

EHHD staffing update

R. Miller reported that a new Sanitarian II has been hired to fill the vacancy left as Holly Hood retires. Christopher Buter comes to the district with 12 years of local public health experience. R. Miller informed that board that the Environmental Health Inspector, Andrew Abbagnaro is resigning. R. Miller noted that this is the third Environmental Health Inspector that the district has hired and trained for 12-24 months only to have them resign upon completion of the training.

Adjournment

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by S. Powers to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:50 pm. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Next Board Meeting – August 17, 2023, 4:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Miller

Secretary