

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
Coventry Town Hall Annex
Thursday, December 14, 2023

Members present: E. Anderson (Andover), M. Capriola (Mansfield – Virtual), J. Elsesser (Coventry), H. Evans (Mansfield – Virtual), B. Foley (Tolland – Virtual), J. Rupert (Bolton), C. Silver-Smith (Ashford- Virtual), D. Walsh (Coventry)

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

J. Elsesser called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm.

Election of Board Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Assistant Treasurer)

J. Elsesser called for nominations.

M. Walter made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to nominate and elect the incumbent Chair, J. Elsesser, and incumbent Assistant Treasurer, E. Anderson. D. Walsh modified the MOTION to nominate and elect incumbent Vice Chair, M. Walter. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Introductions

R. Miller introduced and welcomed Cathryn Silver-Smith, First Selectman for Ashford. R. Miller also noted another new member, Katherine Stargardter, representing Tolland.

Approval of minutes

E. Anderson made a MOTION seconded by J. Rupert to approve the minutes of the 10/19/2023 meeting as presented. MOTION PASSED with C. Silver-Smith abstaining.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Operating Budget, and CNR Budget – set public hearing date

J. Elsesser reported that the finance committee met November 20, 2023 to review the budget. At that time they approved a motion to forward the budget to the full board, as presented.

R. Miller presented an overview of the 2024/2025 operating budget and CNR budget, noting the salient features of the budget. These included:

- \$1,010,076 Total spending which is a 1.8% increase
- Increase in member town contribution rate to \$5.95; a 2.5% increase
- No changes in fees
- No changes in service levels
- CNR budget total spending of \$54,000

E. Anderson questioned whether a cash flow analysis has been done. A. Backhaus offered to prepare one for the next finance committee meeting to see if it is worthwhile to move money into STIF.

J. Rupert noted that when the Finance Committee met to review the budget, recommendations were made by the committee and incorporated into the budget.

E. Anderson made a MOTION seconded by D. Walsh to set public hearing date of Thursday, January 18, 2023 at 4:30 PM to receive the public's comments regarding the Eastern Highlands Health District Proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Operating Budget, Capital non-recurring budget, as presented on December 14, 2023. MOTION modified to include the location of Coventry Town Hall Annex, 1712 Main Street, Coventry, Connecticut. Modified MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Town Reports

Andover E. Anderson reported that work on the Community Center is underway. An expected move in date will be sometime in May. E. Anderson noted that they are working towards additional grants to make the town more accessible to residents. E. Anderson reported that the work on the Senior Transportation garage is delayed due to an issue regarding prevailing wages.

Bolton J. Rupert reported that an annex building has been set up near the town hall. Staff will move from the town hall to the new temporary structure. J. Rupert noted that drainage work has been done for the connectivity trail that will create multiuse paths to connect Notch Road to Bolton Town hall and eventually Heritage Farm and the High School. The goal is to great a multiuse path to enable people to go through the center of town.

Ashford: C. Silver-Smith reported that senior housing has a long term plan to put in more senior housing. In addition high speed internet will be deployed in the town. A survey will be done to identify unserved areas of the town. C. Silver-Smith noted that she is hoping to hire a grant writer for the town. E. Anderson suggested she consider a part-time planner instead. C. Silver-Smith informed the board that there is an RSV case in the town offices. C. Silver-Smith noted that a new school roof will be installed thanks to J. Rupert's efforts.

Mansfield H. Evans reported that there are a number of new businesses in Storrs Center and additional construction underway throughout the town. M. Capriola added that the town is pursuing a school HVAC grant to install air conditioning at MMS. M. Capriola informed the board that a Community Investment fund grant to be used to do a facilities study of the Town Hall, Community Center and senior center. M. Capriola expressed gratitude to R. Miller and staff for the responsiveness and guidance regarding roof and septic issues at the Mansfield Middle School.

Coventry J. Elsesser reported that the High School HVAC project, which he will be overseeing, is moving forward. J. Elsesser noted that Lakeview is closed and hoping to reopen in the spring. In addition, Dimitri's has new ownership. J. Elsesser informed the board that the sewer project is still underway, and the water tower project is still pending. The Patriot's Park project is progressing.

Medical Director Dr. Dardick informed the board that there is still ongoing COVID activity; They have seen only 1 case of RSV in his office and a couple cases of the flu. They are seeing cases of COVID where one person in the family gets it and no one else does. There was discussion about the

requirements for reporting positive COVID cases. Dr. Dardick reminded the board that labs are required to report and Hospital and ER visits are tracked.

E. Anderson asked about a Lyme vaccine. Dr. Dardick reported that one is still in development, currently phase 3 trials, but not yet released.

Subcommittee Reports

Finance Committee – Financial Report for the period ending 9/30/2023

R. Miller informed the board that the finance committee met in November where they reviewed the report and passes a motion to accept the report as presented.

Director's Report

Quarterly Activity Report period ending 9/30/2023

R. Miller reported that although the report reflects that the health district is behind on mandated food service inspections, he has hired 2 sub-contracted inspectors and the district is now caught up.

R. Miller reported that approximately 5,000 COVID-19 test kits have been distributed to municipal town halls, school and daycares. Additional kits are on order to be distributed to the general public from the main office and as needed to school, daycares or municipal offices.

R. Miller informed the board that two contract grants have been executed: a Workforce development grant and an immunization grant. The terms of a blood pressure monitoring and hypertension grant are still under negotiation.

R. Miller noted that 11 harm reduction events have been hosted, at which 297 narcan kits were distributed. He is hopeful that this will continue. There will be partnering with NCDHD.

R. Miller informed the board that he has been appointed to the Governor's Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC). J. Elsesser expressed his congratulations and inquired about the engagement with the health district. He suggested the development of a menu of services and costs. These would be specific ways the health district could help those who are given the grant money. Discussion ensued about the role of this OSAC.

Communications

Auditors communication to the board. R. Miller noted that this is the required annual notice.

The Big Question: How to spend \$600M in CT opioid settlement funds. E. Anderson initiated discussion about the program being done in Hartford focusing on individuals coming out of jail. He questioned whether there was something similar that could be done in Eastern Connecticut.

CT Mirror re: Windham Hospital Ok'd to end labor, delivery services. J. Elsesser as an editorial note asked if we should invite the Vice President of Hartford Healthcare to a future board meeting.

Adjournment

MOTION made by J. Rupert, seconded by D. Walsh to adjourn at 6:16 pm. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Miller', written in a cursive style.

Robert Miller
Secretary