

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Coventry Town Hall Annex
Thursday, February 16, 2018

Members present: J. Carrington (Mansfield), R. DeVito (Ashford), J. Elsesser (Coventry), J. Higgins (Andover), T. Nuccio (Tolland), E. Paterson (Mansfield), P. Schur (Willington), J. Stille (Bolton), D. Walsh (Coventry), M. Walter (Columbia)

Staff present: R. Miller, J. Polhemus, M. Brosseau

E. Paterson called the meeting to order at 4:31pm.

Approval of minutes

J. Stille made a MOTION seconded by J. Elsesser to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2018 meeting as presented. MOTION PASSED with P. Schur abstaining.

New Business

Agreement for Local Public Health Emergency Preparedness Services By and Between Eastern Highlands Health District and the Northeast District Department of Health

R. Miller presented a brief overview of the agreement that has come about in light of the upcoming retirement of J. Degnan the current Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. T. Nuccio made a MOTION seconded by J. Elsesser to authorize the director to negotiate final terms, and execute the "Agreement for Local Public Health Emergency Preparedness Services by and between the Eastern Highlands Health District and the Northeast District Department of Health as presented on February 15, 2018. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

J. Elsesser questioned how this impacted the budget. R. Miller noted that the budget impact remains the same.

Town Reports

No significant information from any town to report.

Director's Report

Evaluation of Changes to Environmental Health Field Staff Assignments

R. Miller reported out on the results of the survey and evaluation noting that the evaluation consisted of a survey of field staff, a survey of town staff and activity numbers.

Discussion ensued regarding the survey and evaluation.

R. DeVito questioned the effectiveness of the survey. R. Miller acknowledge that it is anecdotal feedback and that the timeframe was a very short amount of time.

J. Elsesser noted that the survey results suggest that the perception of those who responded that things took a little longer, but there was no decline in quality of service.

S. Werbner suggested that the information should be reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

J. Elsesser made a MOTION, seconded by J. Stille to refer the report to the Personnel Committee for discussion and to make recommendation if there is additional work needed.

R. Devito expressed concern regarding the quality of field work in light of a reduced staff. R. Miller noted that the total FTEs has not changed in 8 years. He clarified that a Sanitarian II vacancy was filled with a Sanitarian I with the goal of sustaining environmental health services at a lower cost. R. Miller noted that he feels that goal has been achieved, especially with respect to Food Service Inspections. But there is still work to be done to address the concerns of some towns and to fully meet the goal of equitability delivering services to each of the towns.

D. Walsh, as Chair of the Personnel Committee, requested clarification from the board as to the expectation of the Personnel Committee in reviewing the information.

R. Miller noted that feedback from the Personnel Committee is welcome. He noted further that his office is charged with day to day operations; that staff assignments are made by his office.

S. Werbner noted that the current report states that additional staff assignment changes will be made to address the concerns associated with delays in permit reviews, with such changes occurring by July 1, 2018.

After further discussion it was agreed to wait until 6 months after the agency is fully staffed and staff is fully trained.

J. Elsesser and J. Stille WITHDREW THE MOTION.

DPH State Wide Flu Clinic Initiative

R. Miller reported that flu is widespread. Commissioner of Public Health has been mobilizing local health departments to support additional flu clinics around the state. EHHD held a clinic at which 180 people were vaccinating. An additional clinic will be hosted by EHHD February 17, 2018. The statewide initiative has resulted in about 2000 people being vaccinated.

R. Miller read Dr. Dardick's report: Mansfield Family Practice has now diagnosed close to 50 cases of flu, mostly Flu A, about 10% Flu B. No question this is the worst year in recent memory. Last really big year was 1977 or 1978.

R. Miller referred to the graphic on page 3 of 11 on item number 6 showing the prevalence of flu.

Quarterly Activity Report period ending 12/31/17

R. Miller offered to answer any questions on the quarterly activity report.

Strategic Plan Progress – Online permit application/tracking system

R. Miller reported that there is a tentative Go Live date of March 19th for the online permitting program. Original date pushed back as staff is training on the program and uncovering additional bugs. This will be an ongoing project.

R. Miller reported that the DPH Commissioner recently participating in a conference call for Local Health Departments, stated that there will likely be a delay in implementing the FDA Food Code.

D. Walsh inquired as to who deals with the issue of litter. R. Miller stated that if it constitutes a nuisance it is a public health issue and that such a determination is made by staff as part of a field assessment. J. Elsesser noted that blight is defined differently in each town depending on the ordinances.

P. Schur made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to adjourn at 5:14 pm. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Miller
Secretary