

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
Coventry Town Hall Annex
Thursday, October 20, 2022

Members present:

In Person E. Anderson (Andover), J. Elsesser (Coventry), J. Rupert (Bolton) D. Walsh (Coventry), E. Wiczenski (Willington)

Virtual R. Aylesworth (Mansfield), B. Foley (Tolland), T. Nuccio (Tolland), M. Walter (Columbia)

Staff present: R. Miller, M. Brosseau, K. Dardick (virtual)

J. Elsesser opened the meeting at 4:36 PM.

Personnel Committee Report

Executive Session

J. Rupert made a MOTION, seconded by E. Wiczenski to enter Executive Session at 4:37 PM to discuss personnel matters in accordance with GCS 1-200(6)(a), Director of Health Performance Review. Executive session ended at 5:00 PM.

Regular meeting resumed at 5:00 PM.

R. Aylesworth made a MOTION, seconded by J. Rupert that the Eastern Highlands Health District Board of Directors authorize a 2.9% increase in Robert Miller's base pay, retroactive to July 1, 2022, in reflection of merit and cost of living. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

E Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Public Comments

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

Proposed 2023 Regular Meeting Schedule

E. Wiczenski made a MOTION, seconded by E. Anderson to adopt the Eastern Highlands Health District Board of Directors 2023 regular meeting schedule as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Finance Committee – Proposed FY 2022/2023 Budget Changes

R. Miller provided an overview of the changes and noted that the Finance Committee met on October 12, 2022 to review and recommend the changes. E. Wiczenski made a MOTION, seconded by J. Rupert that the full board approve the changes to the FY 22/23 operating budget as presented October 12, 2022 with total authorized spending of \$927,862. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Town Reports

Bolton J. Rupert informed the Board that there was no blue-green algae bloom at Bolton Lake this year. He also noted that the town has received a STEAP grant to install a community septic system to serve the town buildings. The town has received a commitment letter from DOT for a Connectivity Grant. J. Rupert reported that the Board of Selectmen at their October meeting, offered him the position of Town Administrator and they are currently in negotiations.

Andover E. Anderson reported that it has been a busy year. Road work continues. He informed the board that an RFP is out for the design and building of a Community Center. He noted that the Board of Selectmen has decided to utilize all ARPA funds for the construction of the Community Center. E. Anderson reported that the town has received a STEAP grant that will be utilized to tear down the old fire department and senior center and build a parking garage for senior transportation. He also reported that the majority of construction has been done on a connectivity grant that addresses safety issues for crossing route 6.

Willington E. Wiczenski informed the board that Flat Pennies Restaurant has opened. The town has received the STEAP grant for a septic system at the Town Hall. She also informed the board that the school building project is moving forward.

Tolland B. Foley reported that the salt in private wells continues to be a problem. The hiring of a consultant is under review. B. Foley informed the board that suicide in youth and elderly is of concern, as is the opioid issue. B. Foley reported that the town has received a grant that will be used to prevent vaping. He further noted that the Harvest Fest was a successful event.

Columbia M. Walter expressed that he would like to see the health district weigh in on the police bill. M. Walter reported that the STEAP grant they have been pursuing is still not approved. A bridge will be replaced on the Hop River trail. M. Walter informed the board that the town will have a Celebration of Rec park on Saturday, October 22; Everyone is invited.

Mansfield

R. Aylesworth reported that following a delay due to staff shortages, the affordable housing committee will begin convening this fall. R. Aylesworth noted that work continues on the new consolidated elementary school. He further reported that the town is moving onto Phase 2 of the Mansfield facilities needs assessment study which will include public engagement and community outreach. R. Aylesworth noted that many large scale multi-family housing projects are being proposed and reviewed.

Coventry J. Elsesser reported that salt contaminated wells continues to be an issue. The town has been awarded a water grant that will help with a \$5million project to extend public water to contaminated wells. A second grant is being pursued to tie in GH Robertson school with South Coventry Water system. E. Wiczenski asked if adjustments were being made in the products used for snow. J. Elsesser noted that they are considering using one route as a sample for a wood chip and salt product. In addition, all employees will be going to "salt training".

T. Nuccio expressed that this issue should be a group discussion and pursued at a larger level.

E. Wiczenski moved to virtual at 5:40 PM.

J. Elsesser noted that there are 2 empty restaurants in Coventry.

J. Elsesser noted that construction is underway at Dr. Jenkins office area. The first softball field has been graded. Seeding will be done in the spring. The school roof project has been completed. HVAC will be added to the High School.

J. Elsesser reported that the town is building a new transfer station.

J. Elsesser informed the board that he has been appointed to a State Wide School Air Committee.

J. Elsesser expressed desire to have a larger discussion about ambulance services for the towns.

J. Elsesser noted that work has been done on the trails near Laidlaw park.

J. Elsesser reported that there was a brief blue-green algae bloom at Coventry lake.

Directors Report

Changes to Private Well Testing Laws – CGS Sec. 19a-37

R. Miller informed the board of this new law. He noted that he has sent a list of questions to DPH looking for clarification on a number of items. He called attention to the section that makes well water reports received from labs confidential information, and noted that this will change health district operating procedures.

Implementing Overdose Prevention Strategies at the Local Level – NACCHO Grant

The North Central District Health department received this grant. Eastern Highlands Health District will partner with NCDHD. R. Miller reported that this grant will support the development of strategies to address the opioid overdose issue. A steering committee will be set up. R. Miller made reference to the Opioid Settlement notice. It was suggested that a workshop be set up or guidance provided on how to use the money.

Uganda Ebola Outbreak – Local health department response to travelers

R. Miller informed the board that local public health is charged with monitoring travelers. In particular, making contact and monitoring them. R. Miller noted that we had 2 travelers in 2014 that the department monitored.

Staffing update

R. Miller reported that the Environmental Health Inspector vacancy has been filled.

COVID-19 Response Activities Report - Update

R. Miller noted that the district is seeing a plateau in cases since June. He informed the board that Public Health is expecting an increase of cases this fall.

Dr. Dardick reported that the cases are exploding "in the trenches" and not being captured by the data used to report cases as they are cases that are using home tests. Dr. Dardick noted that the cases seem less severe and more contagious.

R. Miller noted that the data does show 2-3 deaths per month over the past 4 to 5 months.

J. Elsesser noted that the CVS minute clinic in Coventry is now closed on weekends.

E. Anderson initiated discussion about many people being sick for days before testing positive. Dr. Dardick feels this can be attributed to people being vaccinated. Even though a person is sick, the viral load is low enough that it will not trigger a positive test.

R. Miller reported that vaccinations by the EHHD staff continue at a brisk pace. Additionally, the district is seeing outbreaks in schools.

Dr. Dardick reported that his office saw the first case of influenza last week. R. Miller noted that the district has held flu vaccination clinics and at this point has administered approximately 150 flu vaccines.

R. Miller reported that district staff have been trained in QPR training – Question Persuade Refer. This is training to help recognize youth in trouble.

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by J. Rupert to adjourn at 6:11 PM. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Next Board Meeting – December 8, 2022, 4:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Miller
Secretary