



Northeast District Department of Health

69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT 06234
860-774-7350 / Fax 860-774-1308 www.nddh.org

NDDH Board of Directors Meeting Notes
Date: June 10, 2021 – 3:00 PM

Location: 69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Conference Room and Zoom Video/Phone Conference

A. Commencement/Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm by Board Chair David A. Griffiths.

Present: Bob Kelleher, Brooklyn; Luther Thurlow, Canterbury; Elaine Lippke, Danielson; Paul Torcellini, Eastford; Heidi Clifford, Killingly; David A. Griffiths, Killingly; Rob Kerr, Plainfield; Jorge Martinez, Pomfret alternate; Lana Salisbury, Sterling; Orla McKiernan-Rafertry, Thompson; Nathan Swift, Union; Sue Starkey, Director of Health

Robert Grindle, Hampton; Don Gladding, Plainfield; Joseph Nash, Putnam; and Gail Dickinson, Woodstock were not in attendance.

NDDH Staff: Linda Violette Buisson, Administrative Assistant

B. Citizen's Participation

Tyra Bergstrom from the Access Agency attended with a brief presentation to make NDDH aware of their efforts to assist families that have been financially impacted by COVID-19. They will assist people with paying their rent and utilities and will help with completing applications. She left some business cards and asked people to feel free to pass them along to anyone needing assistance.

C. Minutes: April 8, 2021

Motion was made by H. Clifford to approve the April 8, 2021 minutes. Seconded by L. Thurlow. E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, L. Thurlow, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, L. Salisbury, O. McKiernan-Rafertry and N. Swift voted in favor. B. Kelleher and J. Martinez abstained. Result: 9-0-2. Motion carried.

D. Communications

Thompson First Selectman sent a letter reappointing Orla McKiernan-Rafertry as Board representative and Delpha Very as their alternate.

Thompson Superintendent of Schools, Melinda A. Smith, sent a letter thanking NDDH for bringing the COVID-19 vaccine to the school district.

E. Reports

1. Executive Committee. There was no meeting. Nothing to report.
2. Board of Health Member Updates. No one had any updates to share.
3. Director of Health

The Grant and Strategic Plan are available on our website and the link was provided in the Board packet along with the NDDH Activities report and the quarterly Environmental Health Services report. There were no questions or discussion on either. S. Starkey praised the NDDH workforce for all their hard work.

S. Starkey reported that we received a \$334,000 Grant. This funding must be used over a four month period to bring vaccines to the community. We have hired new staff to help us with our outreach. Amanda Sanelli has been promoted to Public Health Program Specialist. We have hired a Health Informatics Specialist as well as additional Contact Tracers. There is a very strict budget and guidelines for spending.

Two individuals from the DPH recently visited with S. Starkey. Previously, L. Colangelo provided a public health presentation. S. Starkey showed them what we do and how the EHS team has been impacted due to COVID-19. She expressed our need for money for public health infrastructure.

S. Starkey advised the Board that part of our HVAC system has stopped working. A technician came in to look at the problem. One of our four compressors seized after 17 years of use. According to our lease, the Town of Brooklyn is responsible for costs of repair or replacement of the compressor and must provide the same within 15 days. It is expected that this will be done.

D.A. Griffiths asked how often we were having staff meetings. S. Starkey said that the meetings are held on an as needed basis. We are having them more often now using both Zoom and in-person gatherings.

D.A. Griffiths inquired if there have been any problems since reopening. He was glad the plexiglass was in place at the front reception desk. He thanked M. Nichols and her husband for their work in getting it put up. S. Starkey said that most staff are back in the office and masks are no longer required of people who are vaccinated.

H. Clifford queried whether letters would be going out to the towns about new funding. S. Starkey said that we are awaiting more information in order to assess the need for such funds. The state advises the public health will get more money. O. McKiernan-Raferly

stated that the federal government has plans for expenditures to towns. Half the money will be provided one year and half the money will be provided the following year. They are waiting for the breakdown on where the money may be spent. This should include funding to public health separate from town funding, but all towns are awaiting further details. States have until the end of June to determine how to spend the money.

4. Finance Committee

a. Appropriation Funds for MRC Event

E. Lippke reported that the Finance Committee had a discussion regarding a request for a thank you event for the MRC volunteers. There was much debate about whether it was appropriate to use public funding for this or not. Our auditor said that it was difficult to predict public response. He said that no grant funding could be used and no gift cards distributed. E. Lippke remained uncertain about spending public funds for a thank you event and suggested that the Board might possibly do some fundraising.

S. Starkey advised that we had over 140 MRC volunteers and some of them worked hundreds of hours. Typically, a vaccinator would make approximately \$30 an hour so a budget of \$3000 would be equivalent to paying 100 people for one hour of work. We would like to invite them in to discuss the event, socialize, have a bite to eat and thank them. They saved us a lot of money and helped a lot of people by volunteering. L. Salisbury concurred. She and A. Hinchman worked at some of the vaccination clinics and could not believe how many people volunteered their time and expertise. She thinks it would be remiss not to thank them.

J. Martinez suggested this be done as training or a training conference wherein debriefing would occur, discussions about what worked well in the process, what did not work as well as anticipated. Following the conference there could be food and socialization.

D.A. Griffiths said that he thinks we all agree that we would like to thank the MRC volunteers. We simply need to decide whether to use public funds to do so. E. Lippke noted that we needed to be careful as we would be using taxpayer money.

E. Lippke said that COVID is not over so she did not think it was necessary for us to do something right away. She also discussed that there could be an emergency meeting by telephone if need be. This could be done before the September Board meeting.

J. Martinez suggested that having the thank you might be best in September as many people may be going on vacation this summer. No one has traveled in a while since COVID so a lot of people are planning to get away this year.

O. McKiernan-Rafertry said that she thinks we are reaching the end of the vaccination period. MRC volunteers are close in everyone's mind right now. She said there were many hot washes after H1N1 vaccines. She does not believe it is necessary to meet with towns as the Board represents the towns.

E. Lippke requested a Motion not to exceed \$3000 for a hot wash conference event with all MRC volunteers invited. P. Torcellini seconded the motion. L. Salisbury suggested that thank you should be included in the name of the conference. If someone has an issue, we can explain how much money the volunteers saved us. B. Kelleher concurs. J. Martinez pointed out that volunteers do not do the work for the money.

H. Clifford suggested we amend the motion to budget up to \$3000 to recognize and improve COVID 19 efforts through the use of the Medical Reserve Corp. R. Kerr seconded the Motion. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Martinez, L. Salisbury, O. McKiernan-Rafertry, and N. Swift all voted in favor. 11-0-0. Motion carried.

D.A. Griffiths asked if any Board members were interested in participating or planning the event. S. Starkey asked that anyone who is interested, reach out to her.

b. Bank Signature Authorization

E. Lippke suggested we add Maureen Marcoux and Linda Buisson as signatories on checks. We need two signatures on all checks from NDDH but are looking to add two additional signatories as they are usually in the office and available to sign when other individuals may not be. M. Nichols may not sign as she processes the checks. E. Lippke reminded Board that a Board member signature is necessary for any check over \$5000.

E. Lippke motioned to authorize the addition of Maureen Marcoux and Linda Violette Buisson as signatories on checks. N. Swift seconded. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Martinez, N. Swift, L. Salisbury, and O. McKiernan-Rafertry all voted in favor. 11-0-0. Motion carried.

S. Starkey noted that a new Board Chair would be elected in September. We can wait and make the addition of the signatories at that time or do it now. E. Lippke said that the Bank of American in Danielson has not yet reopened.

c. 2021 Year-End Reserve Funds

E. Lippke reviewed the report of fund balances. She motioned to move the fund reserve balance to the FY22 budget. H. Clifford seconded. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Martinez, N. Swift, L. Salisbury, and O. McKiernan-Rafertry all voted in favor. 11-0-0. Motion carried.

5. Personnel Committee

a. Staff Appreciation

L. Salisbury noted that on May 3, 2021, there was a brief staff appreciation event held at NDDH. She thanked those members of the Board that attended and contributed to the cost. Staff received a letter of appreciation, plants, and a COVID medallion as they were recognized for their hard work during the pandemic. S. Starkey said that the staff appreciated the Board's thoughtfulness.

b. Employee Manual Update

L. Salisbury said that she and A. Hinchman were able to cut the manual down from 56 pages to 26 pages. They and D. Gladding attended a webinar to capture the correct legal language. As the committee did not have time to go through the entire manual at the May 25th Personnel meeting, they have scheduled a June meeting to continue the process. They hope to have the final manual ready to present to the Board for vote in September.

F. Unfinished Business - No unfinished business to revisit.

G. New Business

1. Nominating Committee Appointment

S. Starkey noted that a nominating committee needs to be comprised and must meet before the September Board meeting. This committee will have to nominate Board members to fill the spots of Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of Finance for the next three years.

People were asked to volunteer to be part of the nominating committee. L. Thurlow, N. Swift and L. Salisbury volunteered. L. Salisbury will be the chair of the committee. They will meet in person or by phone and will need to provide a slate no later than August 8, 2021.

N. Swift motioned that the Board should return to in-person meetings in the future. L. Thurlow seconded. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Martinez, L. Salisbury, O. McKiernan-Rafoery, and N. Swift all voted in favor. 11-0-0. Motion carried.

H. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 4:28 p.m. by D. A. Griffiths. H. Clifford seconded. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Martinez, L. Salisbury, O. McKiernan-Rafoery, and N. Swift all voted in favor. 11-0-0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Violette Buisson
Administrative Assistant
NDDH