



Northeast District Department of Health

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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 3/10/22

Start Time: 3:05 p.m.

Attendance: Elaine Lippke (Finance Chair), Robert Kelleher, Luther Thurlow, Nate Swift, Susan Starkey and Melissa Nichols. Orla McKiernan-Raftery joined the meeting at 3:52 p.m.
Absent: Dr. Gail Dickenson

No Public participation.

Meeting Minutes-February 17, 2022

Motion made by N. Swift to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2022 meeting. Seconded by L. Thurlow. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0).

Other Business

S. Starkey addressed questions and concerns from the last meeting.

- Food Service: S. Starkey was asked why we charge fees for food service inspections if we aren't going out and performing them. We currently have only two environmental health employees authorized to do food inspections therefore, it will take time for us to catch up on necessary inspections. Inspections were placed on hold during COVID. We will reprioritize and focus on food inspections. R. Kelleher requested that administration present a plan to the Board as to how we will correct our food inspection deficits and a timeline for the same.
- Unemployment: E. Lippke asked if unemployment compensation could be an expense in the Grant application. It cannot. It was asked who would be responsible to pay unemployment compensation for those employees with grant-funded positions. S. Starkey explained that employees accepted their jobs knowing that they were grant-funded positions. Employees tend to transition into new grants or into new and better jobs as they become qualified to do so.
- American Rescue Funds: S. Starkey explained that the reason the salary estimate was high for the secretary/receptionist was because it was for three years. The individual may eventually transition into an environmental health position if someone leaves the department. The list for ARPA funds is a *wish list*. Deadlines to submit ARPA applications are coming up.
- HR Software: We requested software to get more functionality to assist with timekeeping and strategic planning initiatives for staff trainings. We discovered that the company we currently have has the necessary functionality. We are now up and running with no additional costs.

FY 2022-23 Budget – Draft

M. Nichols explained that page eight of the meeting packet is the proposed budget in the amount of \$2.1M. Everything that is on the income side is manageable. It includes state funding, per capita, permits, and \$675K in grants. To make the budget work, we are looking for an additional \$58K in new grants or contracts. S. Starkey notes that as COVID transitions out, there will be more money coming in to deal with behavioral health, mental health, suicide, and public health informatics to get information systems and build up workforce to do those things. We will continue to look for new funding opportunities.

O. McKiernan-Raftery joined the meeting at 3:52 p.m. by ZOOM and L. Thurlow exited the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

The Committee reviewed , including payroll and benefits. M. Nichols pointed out that we put \$8K in our deductible for medical and we have \$7,300 in the reserve. We have more people on the plan than we used to and while most of it is being paid by grant funding, the deductible exposure may get higher. We have estimated what we anticipate spending. There are some pieces of equipment that we need to upgrade such as the time stamp machine, the check scanner, etc.

Bank of America will not be reopening any of its local branches. M. Nichols has started to explore other local banking institutions. She will be speaking with local credit unions, Jewett City Savings and Berkshire as possible options for deposits. To change over from Bank of America, there are several things that need to be considered. All state funding goes directly into Bank of America. We would have to go through the list of who pays us, how they pay us, and make certain they have our new account information. That will take a little bit of time. We do want to explore other bank options for grant funding amounts that will be FDIC protected.

R. Kelleher asked if we'd received any pushback regarding the \$7.50 per capita amount. M. Nichols said she hasn't heard anything. R. Kelleher asked if we were comfortable with the state's \$2.60 per individual. M. Nichols explained the rate increased from \$1.85 to \$2.60 per individual. S. Starkey said the Appropriations Committee is asking for a \$0.50 increase over and above what they funded last year and a 2% increase each year after that. The next request going in is for the governor, who wants us to focus on lead poisoning prevention. During COVID, children were at home more resulting in increased lead cases. Lead investigations take a lot of time. The state does not pay us anything for them. CADH is after them to have regular meetings and to keep the Commissioner informed.

It was noted that the FY23 budget only has 19% of unassigned funds. We are willing to go lower than our usual 25% because we feel comfortable knowing that we will have extra reserve funds that we can transfer if necessary. Our FY24 and FY25 unassigned funds are expected to return to 25%.

E. Lippke inquired if we could take the \$26K in compensation, salary and benefits and reallocate it for use in unemployment compensation. M. Nichols explained the fund balance can be changed by bringing a request to the Board for a vote. The vote can be done at any time deemed necessary.

Unfinished Business

- a. Conference Room Windows/Rug. The company inspected the window again prior to ordering their supplies and found two more panes of glass that failed. The company informed us they will contact the Brooklyn's First Selectman on the matter.
- b. Vehicle Purchase Update. The Cargo Van was ordered.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 31, 2022, Finance Committee meeting will start at 3:00 pm. Board members will be getting invitations to the Town Leader reception on the April 7th from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion made by R. Kelleher to adjourn. Second by N. Swift. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0). Adjournment: 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Violette Buisson
Administrative Assistant