



# Northeast District Department of Health

**69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT 06234**  
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NDDH Board of Health Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday – January 6, 2022

Location: NDDH, 69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT

Attendees: David A. Griffiths, Robert Kelleher, Elaine Lippke, Lana Salisbury, Susan Starkey, Paulina Martinez

Guests: Linda Colangelo, Orla McKiernan-Raftery

1. Call to Order – meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m.
2. Citizen Participation – Linda Colangelo

L. Colangelo advised that she was in receipt of the memo from the Board, but believed it was from the Executive Committee as the issue had not gone before the Board. She received copies of the policy on Remote Work, Telecommuting and Flextime, the Telecommuting Application form, and the Telecommuting Agreement. She stated struggles she had in the past and how she had stayed silent but had now decided to stand up for herself. She continued by saying that she while respects S. Starkey, she doesn't like how S. Starkey has treated her at times. The two tried to work things out but seeing no improvement, she asked the Executive Committee to intervene. L. Colangelo asked for reparation of her 90 hours of sick time and assurance that she could continue to telecommute. She recommended S. Starkey take professional trainings, maybe some sensitivity training that might make her more aware of her behavior and managerial style and suggested the Board survey NDDH employees to get a better read on the working environment. She did not anticipate answering an interrogation in the form of a 26-question document. She was disheartened by the legal response that she found to be "stark and sterile, just words on a page meant to protect liability." She said that she would not risk her reputation on an unbiased claim and hoped that the new reporting structure at NDDH would serve everyone well.
3. Review of Minutes
  - a. January 3, 2022 DRAFT minutes. L. Salisbury motioned to accept the January 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes. E. Lippke seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0).
4. Report from Personnel Committee

L. Salisbury introduced three documents that the Personnel Committee had been working on: Remote Work, Telecommuting & Flextime, Telecommuting Application and

Telecommuting Agreement. She advised that revisions have been made and they have been reviewed by legal counsel. She requested that the Executive Committee review and agree to present these documents to the Board.

Executive Committee discussed an item that L. Colangelo pointed out regarding “employees reporting to work within an hour.” Discussion ensued whether to change that time, or the wording so that employees would *deploy* for work within an hour of being notified to come in. Another suggestion, and one the Committee all agreed on, was that the wording be changed to “an employee make every effort to report to work within 90 minutes.” This will be changed on the Remote Work, Telecommuting and Flextime document which will be added to the Telecommuting section in the Employee Manual. Further discussion on this document was hours of work and flexibility. S. Starkey advised the Committee that the work hours of NDDH are listed in the Employee Manual however, the work hours for telecommuting would be determined by the employee and their supervisor. If an employee wanted to change their schedule, they must notify their supervisor requesting flex time and get approval for the same. The following change will be made under Definitions, Telecommuting sentence number one: *Work outside the NDDH office or field assignment on an approved schedule such that telecommuters are available to staff and customers.*

The Application was discussed. The application would indicate what telecommuting schedule an employee was requesting. Employee would be required to initial specific points. Per the above paragraph, the fifth line requiring initials will be changed to read “*if directed to come to the office I will make every effort to do so within 90 minutes of notification.*”

The Agreement would state specifics: when the agreement begins and ends. This would be completed by the employee and the Human Resources Professional.

It was determined that the Personnel Committee did not have to run changes to the manual or to introduce new forms via the Executive Committee. If every committee started to do so, people would be doing twice the amount of work. It was deemed unnecessary.

R. Kelleher motioned to move the Confidentiality Agreement before the Personnel Issue on the agenda. E. Lippke seconded. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0)

## 5. Confidentiality Agreement

E. Lippke noted that she has been on the Board for 22 years and has never had to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and does not have access to some of the items on the same. R. Kelleher recalls signing one when he became a Board member. The Confidentiality Pledge is what is currently in place and which has been signed by many Board members in the past. S. Starkey notes that the Pledge is not truly sufficient as there are other things besides public health reports of confidential information. The proposal to adopt the Confidentiality Agreement would be something that applies to Board members, volunteers, and employees. The Executive Committee thought the Agreement was overkill for the volunteers and Board. S. Starkey is to take the Agreement back, simplify it and bring it back before the Executive Committee. R. Kelleher motioned to table the Agreement. E. Lippke seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0)

## 6. Personnel Issue

Before the Committee went into Executive Session, L. Colangelo requested that if there was an outcome that involved her or impacted her or that she needed to respond to, someone let her know so that she could respond in a timely manner.

R. Kelleher advised that when an Executive Session is called because of a personnel matter, the person that is the subject of that has the right to say, "I don't want to be in Executive Session, I want it to be public". He advised that the individual could not go into Executive Session unless specifically invited to do so. L. Colangelo requested to keep the meeting public.

There was some discussion regarding Freedom of Information in Executive Session. It was determined that the Executive Committee could invite an aggrieved party into Executive Session. They could also ask a member of the Executive Committee to abstain or remove themselves from Executive Session if they were one of the parties involved.

R. Kelleher stated that he would have been more comfortable if they had asked S. Starkey to excuse herself from Executive Committee meetings because the situation involved her. He said he would prefer if L. Colangelo would allow the Executive Committee to go into Executive Session and that S. Starkey excuse herself so that the Committee could have a discussion without having one of the parties there and not the other one. He has been uncomfortable with this the last couple of meetings. He thinks it is very difficult to discuss the situation when one of the parties is in the Executive Session and believes it somewhat stifles the conversation. O. McKiernan-Raftery thinks that all the Executive Sessions should have included both parties.

L. Colangelo stated that since the beginning of the meetings, she has never been afforded the opportunity to have a discussion with the Executive Committee. S. Starkey had always been there. S. Starkey and L. Colangelo have had to say some uncomfortable things in front of each other. L. Colangelo was not allowed to participate in Monday's meeting. She was told specifically that the meeting was to discuss a legal memorandum and that she would be invited to future meetings. She asked when she would get the courtesy of either being asked some questions or someone exchanging some information about whether the Committee is at a standoff, if they are finished, or if there are recommendations. She would like to be notified. She said it is awful to be in limbo. She goes to work every day, completes her work but wonders about her future.

R. Kelleher asked L. Colangelo to withdraw her request for the session to be public and asked Sue to excuse herself so that the four members of the Executive Committee could have a frank discussion about the dispute that involved both parties. S. Starkey said she would excuse herself, but she wanted to remind the Committee that she put in complaints of harassment from May. This is why both parties were part of the first meeting. L. Colangelo stated that if the Executive Committee was going into Executive Session, she would like to go into Executive Session as well. R. Kelleher noted that she may not go into Executive Session as they did not invite her. L. Colangelo asked them to invite her into

Executive Session to have a frank discussion and be able to ask her any questions that they may have been wanting to ask.

R. Kelleher again asked if L. Colangelo was willing to withdraw her request for a public session. S. Starkey was willing to excuse herself. The Executive Committee wanted to have a discussion among the four of them. R. Kelleher advised L. Colangelo that if should they feel it necessary for her to address them, they would let her know. L. Colangelo agreed to allow the Committee to go into Executive Session minus herself and S. Starkey.

R. Kelleher moved to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issues involving the Director of Health and the Communications Coordinator. Those invited into Executive Session were: E. Lippke, L. Salisbury, D. A. Griffiths, R. Kelleher, and O. McKiernan-Raftery (Board member). L. Salisbury seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0).

Executive Session ended and meeting resumed at 4:52 p.m.

R. Kelleher motioned that the Executive Committee recommended that the following steps be taken as resolution to the situation:

- 45 hours of sick time be restored.
- Telecommuting agreement would not exceed six months at a time but would be renewable every six months. He asked L. Colangelo if she had signed the new agreement. She had not yet. It expires January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The Committee recommended that her Telecommuting Agreement continue effective February 1<sup>st</sup>, but it would need to be under the new Telecommuting Agreement discussed today. The Committee would expect her to sign the new agreement and determine her work hours with her supervisor, the Public Health Programs Manager. It is not the Board's function to set hours for employees.
- R. Kelleher noted that L. Colangelo submitted a response to her evaluation which went in her file.

Seconded by E. Lippke. All in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0).

L. Colangelo was asked if she understood the recommendations. She ascertained that she did but noted that they were no different than what was originally offered to her on November 15, 2021. She said a month-and-a-half have passed and we are exactly where we were then.

R. Kelleher asked if she was not accepting the recommendation. L. Colangelo said that she would give her answer on Monday.

R. Kelleher said that he expected her to get back to the Committee on Monday with either a yes or a no. Period.

L. Colangelo confirmed that she would. R. Kelleher asked her to get back to D. A. Griffiths on Monday with a yes or a no. They do not have to bring this to the full Board.

D. A. Griffiths closed by stating that both L. Colangelo and S. Starkey are excellent people who do a great job. The Executive Committee needs to stay on top of what's going on to

work on these differences so that the agency can move forward, and staff can feel comfortable working at NDDH. If there are continued difficulties, the Committee doesn't want to wait six months to straighten them out.

7. Adjournment\*

R. Kelleher motioned to adjourn. E. Lippke seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Buisson*  
Administrative Assistant  
NDDH