



Northeast District Department of Health

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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 5/26/22

Start Time: 3:05 p.m.

Attendance: Elaine Lippke (Finance Chair), Robert Kelleher, Luther Thurlow, Nate Swift, Susan Starkey, and Melissa Nichols.

Absent: Dr. Gail Dickinson

No public participation.

Meeting Minutes-March 31, 2022

Motion made by L. Thurlow to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2022 meeting as presented. Seconded by N. Swift. R. Kelleher abstained. All in favor. Motion carried (3-0-1).

3:10 p.m. Orla McKiernan-Raftery joined meeting by ZOOM.

YTD Financial Report-April 2022

NDDH is ten months (83%) into FY22 budget and Permit income is at 91.3% of the budget. Overall income is at 116% of budget, with Grants/Contract in Special Funds. Spring (permit) billing was due April 15, 2022. We are at 94% with food, the rest will most likely be temporary events that take place. YTD expenses are at 99%. The Employee Benefits-Health & Life Assurance expense is 82% of the budget. This line item may be used to balance the budget at year end.

Year End/Line-Item Transfers

S. Starkey discussed transferring \$500 from the Board expense line item to Seminars/Education expense. The Board has no plans to use the funds in FY22. NDDH did an employee satisfaction survey. The funds would be to bring in consultants for staff team development. The plan is to do a COVID debriefing followed by a team-building event related to staff survey results.

N. Swift motioned to recommend that Finance transfer the Board expense funds (\$500) to training seminars/education line item. Seconded by R. Kelleher. All in favor. Motion carried (5-0-0).

S. Starkey advised that we still need (\$500) to purchase our membership to NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officials). The organization provides background, leadership, and insight especially in response to COVID and similar things. NDDH purchased some human resource subscriptions/training that we did not have previously. These were not in our anticipated budget. There may be additional funds available that were budgeted but not spent. These expenses include healthcare insurance, workmen's comp, business owner's insurance and the certified food protection program. The committee agreed that funds may be transferred, not to exceed budget limits.

3:43 p.m. Orla McKiernan-Raftery left the meeting.

Banking

Bank of America is not reopening in our area. Several of our Grants/Contracts are directly deposited into our Bank of America account. We'll contact the vendors and switch deposits to Jewett City Savings Bank. S. Starkey reminded the Committee that when the new Executive Committee is voted on in September, elected members will need to get their signatures registered with the banks.

Unemployment

NDDH received a zero balance on our last invoice. Total spent will be applied to FY22. We have \$5,000 in a reserve account eligible to transfer at year end.

Auditor/Reserve Accounts

The auditor is scheduled to review Grants/Contracts and general financials prior to year-end on June 16, 2022. The FY22 audit is scheduled for September 20th and 21st.

The Reserve Account Balances are available for possible year-end transfers in the amount of \$43,160.

ARPA Funds

The Borough of Danielson said no to our request for ARPA funds. The Town of Thompson used all their money. Applications were sent to four towns that had a reasonable application process. Towns have until 2025 to spend funds. NDDH will apply if funds become available.

Unfinished Business

- a. Conference Room Windows/Rug – windows have been approved. Window repair company plans to come in June. NDDH requested all construction be done after the June 9th Board Meeting. This will also give NDDH staff time to plan space for vaccinations. Once the windows are completed, carpeting installation will be scheduled. The town already paid for carpeting, but flooring would be easier to clean.

One of our HVAC machines malfunctioned. The fire department responded and shut down the furnace. The town made the repair.

- b. Vehicle Purchase Update –Ford Motor Company has suspended vehicle production. NDDH will review the contract and request a refund for the deposit if we identify an alternative vehicle.
- c. Food Service Inspections – S. Starkey reported that we got a survey out to CADH to find out what the shortages were for staffing to see what kind of message we could send to the DPH Commissioner. She spoke to the State Food Service Protection people and they advised that they have only two people on their waiting list and would add us on whenever we are ready. Two other health departments agreed to host our employees so they can learn how to do food service inspections, at no cost to us. It's NDDH staff shortages that are causing delays.

S. Starkey noted that the State said they only had a couple people on their waiting list, but the surveys coming back from health directors show that a lot of people are waiting. There is a disconnect. S. Starkey knows everyone is doing their best and no one knows what the best answer is.

S. Starkey reminded the committee that while the new staff are not out doing food inspections, they are doing complaints, inspections on swimming pools, campgrounds, salons, etc. What we really need to do is find the money to hire extra people, even if they are new people in environmental health, so that we may start getting them trained. R. Kelleher noted that we should have the money because we collected fees based on an estimate of the cost. S. Starkey explained that we balance the budget by using money from the state, towns, and fees and we still

do not have enough money to pay for people to do food service inspections. People are busy doing the training, inspecting salons, and other environmental health work. The Board did not allocate sufficient local per capita into the budget to pay for enough people to do all the work.

Per the statute, all food establishments must register with their local health department. Our Food Service Fee is for the permit, not just the inspection.

S. Starkey reported that in all the years she has been at NDDH, we have never done 100% in food service inspections because we've never had enough people to do all the work. We've never gotten the soils and septic done within seven to ten days. There aren't enough people to do it. Permit fees don't cover costs. There are a lot of things not covered in the permit fees, for example: all the training, the paperwork, and the staff meetings. No one is paying for it except the town per capita and, because every year we say we can't afford to ask the towns for more money, we must live with what we have: too few staff.

E. Lippke noted that we train people but are unable to retain them for a long period of time. S. Starkey explained that some of the survey results from twenty health departments showed that only one completed all food inspections. When asked why, she received the following responses: staff turnover; inability to recruit; training; and waiting for state certifications.

R. Kelleher stated that the issues sounded bureaucratic and that we should reach out to our representatives. S. Starkey reminded him that at the Board meeting she was asked to do a survey to find out what the issues are and the magnitude of the same. D. A. Griffiths will then write a letter to the Commissioner with suggestions for things that they could do. R. Kelleher thinks the problem may be with the DPH and thinks it is time to go to the politicians and let them know that there are problems. S. Starkey advised that the letter would include suggestions such as requesting reciprocity across different states for food service inspectors.

Other Business

Next meeting: Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 3 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion made by N. Swift to adjourn. Second by L. Thurlow. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0).

Adjournment: 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Violette Buisson
Administrative Assistant