



# Northeast District Department of Health

---

69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT 06234  
860-774-7350 / Fax 860-774-1308 [www.nddh.org](http://www.nddh.org)

NDDH Board of Directors Meeting Minutes                      Date: November 10, 2022 – 3:00 pm  
Location: NDDH, 69 South Main Street, Conference Room / Zoom

## 1. Commencement & Attendance

Meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Board Chair R. Kelleher

### Attendance:

Present: Robert Kelleher, Brooklyn; Luther Thurlow, Canterbury; Elaine Lippke, Danielson; Paul Torcellini, Eastford; David A. Griffiths, Killingly; Don Gladding, Plainfield; Robert Kerr, Plainfield; Ann Hinchman, Pomfret; Lana Salisbury, Sterling; Carla Jordan, (Sterling alternate); Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Thompson; Nate Swift, Union; Gail Dickinson, Woodstock; Sue Starkey, (Director of Health); Melissa Nichols (Finance Manager); Amanda Gonzalez (Public Health Programs Manager); Isaac Combs (Public Health Programs Specialist); Odalys Reyes Morales (EHS); Kim Stafko (EHS); Katie Broccoli (Administration); Stephanie Hynes (Public Health Assistant); Linda Violette Buisson (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Robert Grindle, Hampton; Joseph Nash, Putnam

## 2. Citizen Participation – none

## 3. FY22 Draft Audit Review

Jason Cote from Hoyt, Filippetti & Malaghan LLC joined the Board to review FY22 audit. He advised that it was a clean, unmodified audit with no disclaimers. He reviewed various aspects of the audit, explaining items along the way including any recent changes to the auditing process.

P. Torcellini motioned to approve the auditor’s report. D. Gladding seconded the motion. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Raftery and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

## 4. Approval of Minutes – September 8, 2022

E. Lippke motioned to accept the September 8, 2022 minutes. D. Gladding seconded the motion. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Raftery and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

## 5. Communications

Board Reappointments: R. Kelleher, Brooklyn representative; E. Lippke, Danielson Borough representative; A. Hinchman, Pomfret representative; and J. Martinez, Pomfret alternate representative have all been reappointed to the Board until 2025.

P. Martinez (HR) and D. Moe (EHS) resigned from NDDH. J. Warner (EHS) will start on 11.15.22. J. Odle (HR) will start in December.

## 6. Reports

### a. Executive Committee

- Itinerant Licensing – the State finalized their plan for Itinerant Licensing Reciprocal Permits. NDDH is in the process of completing a letter to all town officials to let them know and inquire if they local ordinances that may apply. The plan is to sign on to the memorandum.
- Staff Meeting Recordings – NDDH will record staff meetings they are available to Board members who are interested. Recordings will be held for two weeks.
- FOI Training – On Friday noon, January 20, 2023, Tom Hennick, Public Relations Officer for FOI will come to NDDH and do an FOI training for staff and Board members. The presentation will take approximately 90 minutes and T. Hennick will be answering questions.
- Board Attendance Follow Up – R. Kelleher and E. Lippke reported their plan to visit two towns / selectmen because Board representatives have not been attending meetings. This is a dilemma for the towns not being represented as no one is voting on the budget or participating in the town contributions. NDDH noted that a letter is sent to selectmen of any town whose representative does not attend meetings. It was suggested that perhaps a letter should be sent from the Board.
- Workforce Satisfaction Priority List from Leadership Team – E. Lippke motioned to move this item to the bottom of the agenda. D.A. Griffiths seconded the motion. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Rafertry and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

### b. Finance Committee

- YTD Financial Report – At the completion of our first quarter, NDDH's income is above 25% and expenses are at 25%. We outsourced our FITO training. The expense for FITO shows up as a consulting fee. We have put \$800 aside for FITO training.
- Ford Transit – Paperwork for this new vehicle was done inappropriately by the dealership and has the Director listed as the co-owner of the loan making her liable for the loan payment. The Finance Committee recommended using \$28,000 in surplus funds to pay off the loan thereby getting S. Starkey's name off the loan payment. G. Dickinson motioned to approve that we pay off the \$28,000 loan. L. Thurlow seconded the motion. No further discussion. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding,

R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Rafoery and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

c. Personnel Committee

- DoH Evaluation Announcement – Upon review of the evaluation form, the Personnel Committee agreed to use the same form as last year with the addition of *Don't Know* as a response. S. Starkey noted that she is always happy to assist and answer questions the Board might have. The new evaluation form was included in the packet. The evaluation needs to be completed and returned to L. Buisson no later than Thursday, December 1, 2022. A fillable evaluation form will be sent to the Board soon.
- Staffing Needs – The Personnel Committee advised that NDDH needs two more EHS employees. The Director explained that NDDH has a new EHS employee starting next week with a plan in place to get her trained. Current EHS employees agreed that they are only comfortable with training one new employee at this time. We can discuss budget for staff as it becomes necessary.
- EAP – Personnel reported that P. Martinez had investigated EAP for employees and found two companies with a disparity in both services and costs. Upon further investigation, it was found that Union employees have EAP and non-Union employees have a mental health rider on their insurance. It is uncertain if EAP would benefit employees or not. This was tabled due to time constraints.
- Outside Employment – at an Executive Committee meeting, Personnel was asked to update the Outside Employment policy. A revision was written and reviewed at the Personnel meeting but not yet approved due to time constraints and the discussion halted. It remains on their agenda in December. A. Hinchman advised that the part of the policy that referred to the Director may remain as is. She is no longer working outside of NDDH.

d. Director of Health Report

- Administrative Team Presentation – K. Broccoli is our newest part-time secretary receptionist in the front office. She informed the Board what some of the daily tasks are including phone calls re inspection status, vaccines, inspection appointments, general and permit questions and accepting payments. The front office is the first step when complaints come in. She noted she likes the rapidly changing pace of the office and the variety of work available.

It was asked whether NDDH was up to date in having everything computerized, particularly the backlog of documents. It was explained that some information remains on paper. The backlog from November 2017 has been placed on the system. We went back for three years and scanned them. If someone calls us and the information is not in Logical Docs, the file is pulled, information given, and then scanned into Logical Docs. If the customer needs the information again, they will be able to find it. That is our process for regularly getting old documents into the system.

- Workforce Satisfaction Update – this was deferred to the end of the meeting.

- Water Test Confidentiality – the Attorney General recently decided that all water tests for private wells and small public water systems are confidential. We may not tell a property owner or a well driller what the results are. They need to get their own copy. We had to change some of our systems to make certain to protect the information, much in the same manner we use with communicable disease information.
- Itinerant Vendor – this was discussed earlier.

## 7. Unfinished Business

### a. Conference Room Windows/Rug

No updates at this time though it was suggested we wash the rug rather than replace it.

### b. Virtual Meeting Vote

Out of 21 Board representatives, eight responded to the survey (38%). Five voted to continue with virtual meetings; 3 voted to discontinue. We will continue having shared virtual and in-person meetings.

## 8. New Business

### a. Committee Member SLATE 2022-2023

Before voting commenced, there were some requested changes. D. Very (Thompson alternate) asked to be taken off the By-Laws Committee. B. Andrews (Woodstock alternate) asked to be put on the By-Laws Committee. L. Salisbury motioned to accept the SLATE with changes. N. Swift seconded the motion. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Raferly and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

### b. Board Meeting Schedule 2023

The board reviewed the schedule. No vote necessary.

## 9. Other

### a. Workforce Satisfaction Update

The REAL consulting report was shared with all Board members. The feedback was shared with the Leadership Team on September 20 and the staff on September 22. The following day, results were discussed at a staff meeting. The Executive Committee met and discussed the report with the Leadership Team on September 29. They asked that Leadership prepare a list of bullet points listing those items deemed most important by staff. Over the next several weeks, Leadership met with their employees to do a deep dig and get more information. Leadership subsequently met with each other and then the Director to share the findings. The top priorities that were determined include:

- Communication – for common understanding
- Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations
- Confidence and Trust

Leadership, working with the Director, plans to focus on root causes of issues and possible solutions. Updates will be provided to the staff and the Board.

L. Salisbury advised that she and A. Hinchman plan to attend the November 18 staff meeting to advise staff how Board members are selected and what their roles are.

The Director noted that the Finance Committee offered to speak with the staff at their December 15 meeting to explain the budget and why we have limitations in per capita and funding.

The Board thanked Leadership for its efforts. It was pointed out that the employee survey that was done earlier in the year had more positive results than the REAL report. The Board questioned whether some of the results in their report were generalizations or something said by one individual. Leadership reported that they initially felt the same way and asked HR if they could sit down with the REAL consultants to discuss the results. That would cost us more money. Leadership decided the best way to work on it would be to talk to their employees to get more context to the responses.

The report summary was disturbing as, based on comments, NDDH could have a significant turnover if employee concerns were not addressed.

Leadership will report back with what is or is not working at the January meeting.

b. DPH Commissioner Letter

The Board was disturbed that there was no reply or acknowledgement from the DPH Commissioner to the letter we sent in September. It was suggested that the Board might want to reach out to local politicians about our issues. They undoubtedly would not be happy to know that food inspections are not being done because the state is dragging its feet.

D.A. Griffiths had a councilman ask him why a local restaurant had not been inspected. He explained that we did not have enough staff to do the inspections. He was told not to ask for more per capita money if we can't do the job. He asked the Director if she could go out and do food service inspections. The Director is authorized to do inspections and stated she might be able to do one a week however, she had her own work priorities to complete. We've brought in more employees who are being trained. D.A. Griffiths continued by stating that we are charging people for work that we are not completing. If someone gets sick at a restaurant and it hasn't been inspected, it's going to be a problem. The Director stated that we all want the same thing but there is a limited workforce. Further, while the Commissioner has not addressed the letter she has been working on the issue.

L. Salisbury reminded the Board that NDDH cannot hire more people because the employees who are working do not have time to train new people. D.A. Griffiths stated that in the past, we've sent employees to other health departments for training. The Board Chair suggested that we go to local representatives and tell them that we're struggling. Towns feel they are being overcharged for per capita but there is not enough money to get requirements completed.

The Board suggested that the Commissioner be invited to a meeting and politicians advising them that officials are angry that they are paying per capita dollars and we are not doing the necessary inspections. The Director explained that there are state funds and per capita funds.

The state is regularly making increased demands. Local per capita is how get money to hire enough people. Right now, there is a workforce shortage across the state and the nation. The Commissioner has set up a public health workforce section of the department that meets with the CT Association of Directors to come up with ideas on how to train people and put them in the trenches. Recruiting and retaining employees is a huge problem. Credentialing is one of the reasons people cannot be hired. It is extremely difficult to find credentialed workers.

The Board inquired if the Housing Board was still open and what we were doing to cooperate with them. The Director advised that the person that was the Housing Prosecutor left. The new person is brand new and we've been working closely with her.

The Board suggested that NDDH had no support from the state level and that it may be up to the Board to push for assistance.

S. Starkey said that the Connecticut Directors of Public Health has a lobbyist who will convene the health directors so they can meet with legislators. The Chair of the Appropriations Committee is the next person they plan to speak to because they need to send a meaningful message to tell them that they need to increase the per capita from the state and increase the per capita for social services.

G. Dickinson mentioned that Jeff Gordon used to be a member of the Board and was just elected as a senator. She suggested that we invite him to the next Board meeting so that we can discuss our challenges. It was suggested that it might be appropriate to hold a Special Meeting to tell him what the challenges are. We are receiving complaints about not getting things done but cannot get funding from our towns. More discussion ensued regarding exactly who should be invited to the special meeting, perhaps the Commissioner and/or Dick Blumenthal. The Board Chair suggested that the Executive Committee meet and invite our state representatives.

The Board Chair asked the committee to consider adding an individual to the Executive Committee. It is currently made up of the Board Chair, Board Vice-Chair, Personnel Chair and Finance Chair. It was suggested that the By-Laws Chair could join. R. Kelleher asked if the By-Laws Committee would be willing to draft something up that would include an additional member of the Executive Committee team.

#### 10. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 5:01 p.m. by D.A. Griffiths. O. McKiernan-Raferly seconded. R. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, A. Hinchman, L. Salisbury, N. Swift, O. McKiernan-Raferly and G. Dickinson in favor. None against. Motion carried (12-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Buisson*  
NDDH Administrative Assistant