



# Northeast District Department of Health

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NDDH Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Date: September 9, 2021 – 3:00 PM

Location: Quinebaug Valley Senior Center, 69 South Main Street, Conference Room

## A. Commencement/Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Board Chair David A. Griffiths.

Present: Bob Kelleher, Brooklyn; Luther Thurlow, Canterbury; Elaine Lippke, Danielson; Heidi Clifford, Killingly; David A. Griffiths, Killingly; Rob Kerr, Plainfield; Joe Nash, Putnam; Lana Salisbury, Sterling; Carla Jordan, Sterling alternate; Nathan Swift, Union; Gail Dickinson, Woodstock; Sue Starkey, Director of Health

3:09 Arrival of Don Gladding, Plainfield  
3:11 Arrival of Gail Dickinson, Woodstock  
3:12 Arrival of Paul Torcellini, Eastford (via phone)

Robert Grindle, Hampton; Ann Hinchman, Pomfret and Orla McKiernan-Raftery, Thompson were not in attendance.

NDDH Staff: Paulina Martinez (Human Resources); Amanda Sanelli (Public Health Programs Specialist); Linda Violette Buisson (Administrative Assistant); Melissa Nichols (Finance Manager); Stephanie Hynes (COVID Assistant); Odalys Reyes-Morales (Environmental Health Services); and Kimberly Stafko (Environmental Health Services)

## B. Citizen's Participation – None

1. S. Starkey introduced new staff members that were in attendance: Paulina Martinez, Human Resources; Stephanie Hynes, COVID Assistant; Odalys Reyes-Morales, EHS; and Kim Stafko, EHS

## C. Minutes: June 10, 2021

Motion was made by H. Clifford to approve the June 10, 2021 minutes. Seconded by B. Kelleher. H. Clifford requested the following two revisions: Page 2, under Director of Health, second paragraph change Contract Tracers to Contact Tracers and Page 4, paragraph

one, change H1S1 to H1N1. Motion amended to approval of June 10, 2021 minutes with revisions. B. Kelleher, E. Lippke, L. Thurlow, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson voted in favor. Motion carried (10-0-0).

#### D. Communications

1. On August 2, 2021, NDDH received a letter from the Town of Sterling regarding the appointment of Carla Jordan as an alternate member of the Board of Health.
2. We received notification from the Town of Union regarding the reappointment of Nathan Swift as Board of Health representative and David Heck as alternate representative.
3. NDDH is one of the 2020 Healthcare Digital Marketing Merit Award winners for Outstanding Work in the COVID Response category for the Creation of Norm, the COVID-19 community watchdog. The company recognizes best websites, digital content, electronic communications, mobile media, and social media.
4. Loos & Company donated \$500 to NDDH. Director of Corporate Marketing, Robert Davis said, "This donation is another one of our efforts to engage and help the community at large. We're donating to groups that advance the health and overall wellness of the areas in which we live and work."

#### E. Reports

1. Executive Committee.
  - a. Mutual Aid: Acting Director of Health Agreement with Eastern Highlands Health District. NDDH has had mutual aid agreements with three other health departments. This year, the State Department of Public Health requested that Eastern Highlands District formalize their contract with us and have the Board of Health vote on it. D. Gladding motioned for NDDH to sign the Agreement, seconded by R. Kerr. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson in favor. Motion carried (11-0-0)
  - b. Subcommittee elections in November, volunteers needed. Subcommittee descriptions are in the NDDH By-Laws. L. Buisson will send out a list of Board member responsibilities associated with the different positions over the next few days. If interested in being on a committee, please let the Executive Committee know as soon as possible.
2. Board of Health Member Updates. None.
3. Director of Health
  - a. COVID Updates. S. Starkey distributed a spreadsheet indicating vaccination rates by town and age. A. Sanelli, Public Health Programs Specialist, distributed a report regarding the Vaccine Equity Partnership Funding and the NDDH Equity Team. Report showed vaccine clinics by town as well as education campaigns in the community promoting vaccinations and where vaccination clinics are held.

The Board requested to see final numbers on the Equity Grant (for \$334,000).

S. Starkey stated that a progress report is required and updated monthly. It is available at any time. NDDH and other places throughout the state did not spend all the money and the Grant funding time period has been extended through the end of December. We will be doing a smaller number of events, but we will do something each month to justify continued funding. Monthly reports can be available to the Board at any time. If the Board would like to wait and see the final numbers, it is anticipated that we will have those by mid-January or February.

S. Starkey discussed the issue of vaccines and vaccine mandates. NDDH and the Board will need to consider vaccine mandates as they are the most protective public health effort however, we would like to wait for approval of the Janssen vaccine so people have a choice and a vaccine that they may be more comfortable with.

4. Finance Committee

- a. 3-Year Audit Proposal Bid. E. Lippke advised that we only received one bid from an auditing firm, and it was the firm we are currently using: Hoyt, Filippetti and Malaghan. Fees for the next three years would be \$13,500 for years one and two and \$13,750 for year three. E. Lippke motioned to accept the bid and continue with Hoyt, Filippetti and Malaghan. Seconded by B. Kelleher. B. Kelleher, L. Thurlow, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson all voted in favor. Motion carried. (12-0-0)

5. By-Laws Committee. R. Kerr noted that the By-Laws Committee planned to meet on Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at the new Putnam Town Hall. Time to be determined.

6. Personnel Committee – L. Salisbury reminded the Board that the committee was comprised of D. Gladding, H. Clifford, A. Hinchman, S. Starkey, and herself.

- a. An Employee Manual is given to prospective new employees for review before they accept a position with NDDH. It is a guide to fair treatment for all employees based on established standards. There is a bit of a balancing act between encouraging and informing the employees and providing NDDH with the legal protection required as a Board and as employers. The proposed 2021 version has been trimmed down to 22 pages from the 57-page original.

L. Salisbury motioned to accept the Employee Manual with the one revision. Delete the word *actually* in red on page 8, under Overtime and Compensatory Time.

H. Clifford seconded.

N. Swift wished to discuss why Volunteer First Responder Leave is unpaid. This issue was identified for future consideration of paid time for firefighter and EMT volunteers.

FMLA: Employees are not eligible due to the low number of NDDH employees (under 50). We do have an accumulation of sick time that equals the same number of weeks allowed by family leave. B. Kelleher noted that there is also a family leave provision in CT. S. Starkey advised that we are under the impression that we are not required to be part of that due to our government status. Currently, we have no clear answers and the state hasn't gotten back to us.

L. Thurlow exited the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

D. Gladding motioned to amend the Motion to accept the Manual by deleting bullet point 6 under Standards of Conduct / Unacceptable Activities regarding carrying dangerous weapons. G. Dickinson noted that gun injuries are epidemic, probably more of a pandemic than COVID. She would prefer a workplace that is free of weapons. Statistically, an individual is 37 times more likely to be injured when having a weapon for self-defense than if not having a weapon. L. Salisbury pointed out that NDDH has a code enforcement officer who is a former prison warden. We might see whether he thinks we would ever need that kind of protection. S. Starkey said that the responsibility of training staff how to use a weapon, when to use a weapon, and how to keep it safe from others, adds a level of responsibility that is above and beyond what NDDH can reasonably do to keep people safe. While individuals have a right to choose what they want, the Constitution recognizes a business as an individual, to choose whether to allow their employees to carry guns, the same way a business can choose whether to require employees to get vaccinated. D. Gladding noted that for people to have a concealed carry permit, they must undergo training. It would not be NDDH's responsibility to train people. B. Kelleher noted that this was something that required a thoughtful decision and didn't think today was the day to do so. He suggested this be further discussed at a Board meeting where everyone is aware and prepared for the conversation.

D. Gladding repeated the Motion to strike the 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point under Standards of Conduct / Unacceptable Activities regarding weapons. Seconded by H. Clifford. H. Clifford and D. Gladding voted in favor. B. Kelleher, D.A. Griffiths, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickenson were against. E. Lippke and P. Torcellini abstained. Motion failed (2-7-2).

Overtime is defined as work over 40 hours in a work week.

Marijuana is in the smoke-free, tobacco-free, and marijuana-free workplace paragraph as well as under the drug-free workplace policy because CT law and the American Drug-Free Workplace Policy are different. This is also something we may consider at a future meeting.

L. Salisbury reminded the Board that the Manual is a living document. The Committee will still be meeting and any change they choose to make will be brought to the Board.

Political Activity: an employee shall not engage in any activity, etc. during operational hours. P. Torcellini asked how operational hours are defined and why it is a limitation. Per S. Starkey, hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The interpretation could include any time that we are operating NDDH services or doing the business of NDDH.

B. Kelleher thanked the Personnel Committee and said that the revised Manual was much better than what it was previously. He had some additional questions; however, he didn't think anything was important enough to hold up the adoption of the revised Manual.

L. Salisbury motioned to accept the Employee Manual with the revision on page 8. H. Clifford seconded. B. Kelleher, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson voted in favor. P. Torcellini voted against. E. Lippke abstained. Motion carried. (9-1-1).

F. Unfinished Business - None

G. New Business

The Nominating Committee consists of L. Salisbury, L. Thurlow and N. Swift. They recommended the following Slate of Officers: D.A. Griffiths, Board Chair; B. Kelleher, Board Vice-Chair; E. Lippke, Finance Chair. L. Salisbury motioned to accept Slate, seconded by D. Gladding. B. Kelleher, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson all voted in favor. Motion carried. (11-0-0).

H. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 4:20 p.m. by E. Lippke. H. Clifford seconded. B. Kelleher, E. Lippke, P. Torcellini, D.A. Griffiths, H. Clifford, D. Gladding, R. Kerr, J. Nash, L. Salisbury, N. Swift and G. Dickinson all voted in favor. Motion carried. (11-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Violette Buisson*  
Administrative Assistant  
NDDH