



Northeast District Department of Health

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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 1/26/23

Start Time: 3:00 p.m.

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

Absent Excused: Orla McKiernan-Raftery

Absent: Robert Kelleher

The meeting commenced at 3:00 p.m.

No public participation.

Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2022

Motion made by R. Kerr to approve the minutes of December 15, 2022, as presented. Seconded by L. Thurlow. E. Lippke, N. Swift, and R. Kerr in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0).

YTD FY23 – Financial Report (YTD December 2022)

NDDH has completed the first six months of the FY23, revenue is at 65% and expenses are at 48% of the FY 2023 Budget.

We have \$10K in the budget for overtime. We are currently at \$8,200. Overtime may only be performed based on the director's authorization. S. Starkey advised that there is an open overtime authorization for our registered sanitarian and any EHS staff providing food service inspections.

The STIFF account (State of Connecticut funding program) interest earnings have increased from FY22 to FY23. The earnings drop significantly during FY22. NDDH is anticipating an additional \$4,300 to FY23 budget line.

YTD FY23 – Grant Report

The grant report shows how all funding sources are spent by the account line item and fund classification. Elaine asked if there would be other grant funding to apply for, the Director advised that at present, we do not have the staff to fulfill the obligations of additional grants.

The FY23 Block Grant funding goes to public health departments. There has been discussion that in the future, the Commissioner wants to make Block funding competitive and open to other agencies. The program NDDH implemented using Block Grant funds has been such a success that it is a model for the state. L. Colangelo has presented the program to the state legislators. We will apply for the grant again in the future.

YTD FY23 – Changes in Budget

- Town Per Capita Estimate Letter – Update
The letter was mailed on January 13th the day after the Board meeting.

S. Starkey was asked to attend a NECOGG meeting to discuss the per Capita increase.

- Overtime / Vacation Caps / Payouts
NDDH budgeted overtime for \$10K and current has spent \$8K. We spent approximately \$18,000 last year.

M. Nichols mentioned a discussion about vacation caps and the possibility of payout. Current vacation policy is based on a “use it or lose it” policy. Regular non-union employee maximum vacation balances range from 120-160 capped hours. A Union employee can accrue up to 1.5 their annual accrual rate (max 240). It was noted that employees are so dedicated that they do not take time off knowing there is work to be done. Union negotiations will be soon and the maximum accrual rate per contract may be discussed. NDDH has \$25K in the vacation reserve. A policy change may be necessary.

A YTD Budget Update (Dec 22) document was distributed to the Finance Committee. The document shows gains/loss from policy consideration to operational changes. We continue to look for the \$46K new income on the FY23 Budget.

Expenditures were compared against the budget. Salary/fringe liability was reduced due to staff changes: an HR vacancy and Senior Sanitarian vacancy (Jan-Jun 2023). The Cafeteria Plan (section 125) can reduce the employee’s liability on Federal, State and Local Medicare and social security taxes. It also reduces the liabilities for the employer.

FY 2024 1st Draft Budget Estimates

- Fees / Income Sources / Reserves / Salary & Benefits / Expenses

The Finance Committee compared the FY23 to FY24 fee schedule estimated increases. An individual permit fee may increase from 1.6% to 16.5%. Fees are based on the time it takes and what it costs people to do the work. Technically, the people that get the most money do the most work. We do need to keep in mind that our fees are some of the highest. We have often had higher fees and lower per Capita. Our plan to maintain a fund balance of 25% is going to get skewed because we have increased the budget so much that 25% of the budget is now a bigger number and we do not have the money in savings unless we increase the per Capita so much that we can increase the reserve. Perhaps Finance needs to suggest to the Board that a 20% reserve is sufficient. Towns often have a 10% reserve.

Income: State Per Capita, Town Per Capita, Permit Fees, Grants and Contracts

This budget anticipated income at \$2.2M, and expenses are at \$2.17M. There is a \$69K difference. \$8K will be added to the Technology line item. This estimate is based on the plan to have two full-time Registered Sanitarians (RS), the ability for two Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) to become RS and to increase a secretarial position to full-time. There have been changes in the salary/benefit estimates since the December 15th discussion at the Finance Committee Meeting.

NDDH can attempt to make any changes to the budget per the Finance Committee suggestions. Health benefits were reviewed and discussed including deductible information.

N. Swift suggested that we need to knock the estimated per Capita rate increase down even though we have already decreased it from the original \$4.01 increase to a \$3.75 increase.

Union Negotiations Update

No dates have been set. The current contract is good until the end of this fiscal year.

Unfinished Business - none

Other Business – none

Next meeting: Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion made by R. Kerr to adjourn. N. Swift seconded the motion. E. Lippke, R. Kerr, and L. Thurlow in favor. Motion carried (4-0-0).

Adjournment: 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Violette Buisson,
Administrative Assistant