



Northeast District Department of Health

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NDDH Board of Health Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday – October 24, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Attendees: Lana Salisbury, Board Chair; Robert Kelleher Board Vice-Chair; Ann Hinchman, Personnel Chair; and Elaine Lippke, Finance Chair; Susan Starkey, Director of Health

Guests: Mary Calorio (Killingly Town Manager); Kevin Cunningham (Plainfield First Selectman); Patti George (Killingly Town Council Representative); David A. Griffiths (Board Representative, Killingly); Maureen Nicholson (Pomfret First Selectman); Ray Wood (Killingly Town Council Representative)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

A. Hinchman motioned to amend the agenda by adding possible changes to the Employee Manual. E. Lippke seconded. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0)

Review of Minutes - September 29, 2023, DRAFT

E. Lippke motioned to accept the minutes as presented. A. Hinchman seconded the motion. Vote taken. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0)

Communications

L. Salisbury gave a brief recap of letters received from Killingly, Pomfret, Putnam and NECOGG and advised that all individuals who sent letters were invited to attend today's meeting.

The Executive Committee was notified that there was another letter from B. Seney (Putnam Mayor) posted on the WINY website. NDDH is not in receipt of the same. P. George read a letter from the Killingly Town Council. M. Nicholson read and provided the Executive Committee with an additional letter from the Town of Pomfret. It was requested that copies of all the letters should be placed in the Director's personnel file.

Citizen Participation

M. Calorio, K. Cunningham, P. George, M. Nicholson, D.A. Griffiths, and R. Wood all shared their concerns. They unanimously agreed that the Board should have taken immediate action following receipt of correspondence for a vote of “no confidence” regarding the Director and believe that changes to the agency are necessary. Two specific requests were for the removal of the Director and the engagement of a public health management consultant to review the agency. Town leaders reiterated the need for changes to be made soon as they consider whether they will remain a part of NDDH. Their decision to stay or leave needs to be determined by December 31, 2023.

K. Cunningham advised that Plainfield was submitting a letter of intent today, ending its relationship with the Northeast District of Health at the end of this fiscal year – June 30, 2024.

In response to an inquiry, it was mentioned that S. Starkey’s current contract runs through the end of January 2024. L. Salisbury expressed concern that the reputation of the agency, its ability to function, the morale of other employees and the ability to attract another director may be further damaged by implementing an abrupt termination of the director during a time when other key employees may be out on leave. Striving for a smooth transition will best serve our towns and employees.

R. Wood stressed that the impact on employees must be considered in all decisions.

R. Kelleher motioned that the Executive Committee recommend to the Board that they make a finding of no confidence in the Director. Discussion ensued. R. Kelleher reminded everyone that among S. Starkey’s rights is the right to a public hearing.

R. Kelleher requested to amend his motion. He motioned that the Executive Committee recommend that the Board vote for a finding of no confidence in the Director, based on communications from member towns. Further, the Executive Committee will recommend that the Board vote not to renew her contract. A. Hinchman seconded. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0).

Per the request of town leaders for immediate action, there will be a Special Board meeting on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. There will be no Zoom option provided. The agenda will be brief and should go out later this week.

Update on Legal Document

E. Lippke motioned to go into Executive Session with committee members. A. Hinchman seconded. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0). Committee members R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippe, and L. Salisbury, entered executive session at 4:18 p.m. S. Starkey was not included in the Executive Session.

At 4:42 p.m., R. Kelleher motioned to come out of Executive Session. A. Hinchman seconded. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0).

R. Kelleher motioned to send a legal document with revisions to the necessary party. E. Lippke seconded. R. Kelleher, A. Hinchman, E. Lippke, and L. Salisbury in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0).

2024 Committee Member SLATE

A draft of the 2024 committee SLATE was reviewed. Committee members asked that Chris Lippke and John Murdock be added to the SLATE as possible members of the finance committee. The SLATE will be presented at the November 9, 2024 Board meeting. Before the vote, there will be a brief discussion to determine if anyone is interested in moving to another committee or declines being on a committee.

Executive Committee Meeting Schedule for 2024

A draft of the 2024 Executive Committee meeting schedule was reviewed. There were five meetings on the schedule approximately two weeks before each Board meeting. Committee members requested that the schedule be revised so that meetings would be on the calendar the first Tuesday of every single month at 3:00 p.m. If a meeting is unnecessary, an email will be sent cancelling the meeting.

New Business

A. Hinchman provided updates to the Employee Manual that she will be presenting at the Board meeting. Changes are minor and are to vacation approval, tuition reimbursement, conflict resolution and the addition of parental leave. These will be shared with the Board in the meeting packet prior to the meeting for votes of approval.

Next Meeting

The next Executive Committee meeting will be December 19, 2023.

Adjournment

R. Kelleher motioned to adjourn. A. Hinchman seconded. R. Kelleher, L. Salisbury, A. Hinchman, and E. Lippke in favor. Motion carried. (4-0-0)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Buisson
NDDH Administrative Assistant