

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING FOR THE NEWTOWN DISTRICT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021, NEWTOWN
COMMUNITY CENTER, MULTIPURPOSE ROOM 2, 8 SIMPSON STREET,
NEWTOWN, CT 06470

PRESENT: Board members: Curtis Read, Bernie Meehan, Dr. William Begg, Dr. Robert Bazuro. Staff: Dr. Draper via telephone and Donna M. Culbert – Director of Health. Guest: Patrick Roy – First Selectman, Roxbury

Public Participation: No public participation.

Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion was made by Bernie Meehan to accept the minutes from the BOH meeting on November 9, 2018. Seconded by Curtis Read. Motion approved.

Reports of Officers and Director of Health

Staffing Update

Ms. Culbert shared with Board member the Organizational Chart identifying staffing changes/updates.

Ms. Culbert stated that Mike Carey, Senior Sanitarian, retired, Ed Knapik was promoted to Senior Sanitarian and has since retired. Laurel Shaw was hired to replace Ed Knapik as Assistant Sanitarian and upon Mr. Knapik's retirement she was promoted to Senior Sanitarian. Keith Vaughn, Assistant Sanitarian has since been terminated. Zach Drzal has been hired as Assistant Sanitarian. Before his employment with the Newtown HD he was a Sanitarian with the Danbury Health Department. Zach was raised in the Roxbury/Bridgewater communities. Ms. Culbert noted that there is an additional Assistant Sanitarian position that remains unfilled.

Ms. Culbert informed the Board members that throughout the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and to date, District staff have been present daily. Regular business detail was and continues to be taken care of and is a busy part of the Health District schedule. Suzette LeBlanc, Food Service Inspector, essentially became our Covid Compliance Officer.

Ms. Culbert further added that the District was involved in coordinating many Covid-19 vaccination clinics within the Newtown Health District, utilizing District staff, volunteers and community partners, i.e., Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association.

Ms. Culbert shared that booster vaccines are now being offered by the Health District and that our senior population is over 75 percent vaccinated.

There was discussion amongst the Board members regarding mandates and challenges in the fight against Covid-19. Ms. Culbert reviewed the difficulty mandates present with regard to compliance and enforcement.

Discussion among Board members turned to the changes in Board membership. Dr. Grossman has stepped down from the Board and has been named Chairman Emeritus by First Selectman Dan Rosenthal. Herb Rosenthal has also stepped down from the Board. Jocelyn Taweh moved out of the Borough and has stepped down from the Board. Dr. Rob Bazuro joined the Board as a Newtown representative. Dr. Bill Begg

was re-appointed in July and remains on the Board. Curtis Read remains on the Board as Bridgewater's representative and Bernie Meehan remains on the Board as Roxbury's representative.

Dr. Begg wanted to acknowledge both Herb Rosenthal's and Dr. Grossman's contribution and dedication to the Board. Mr. Meehan suggested that a plaque be presented to both Mr. Rosenthal and Dr. Grossman acknowledging their volunteer efforts to the Board and community. Ms. Culbert agreed and stated that she would facilitate that effort.

New BUSINESS

NHDEA CONTRACT

Ms. Culbert shared with the Board members that the Newtown Health District Employees Association 3-year contract needs to be negotiated again and that technically it expired June 30, 2021, but holds valid until it is renegotiated.

Bernie Meehan made a motion to move forward the NHDEA contract negotiations. Mr. Meehan volunteered to be part of the negotiating team along with Curtis Read. Motion seconded by Curtis Read. Motion approved.

It was suggested that Dan Rosenthal and Patrick Roy could act as ex-officio members and offer their assistance if necessary. Ms. Culbert added that Patrice Fahey, Newtown Human Resources Director is available to provide assistance/information with regard to employee benefits and would be available to sit in on negotiations if necessary.

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

Motion made by Bernie Meehan to appoint Donna Culbert as the Director of Health. Seconded by Curtis Read. Motion approved.

Board Meeting Schedule

Ms. Culbert explained to the Board members that according to state statutes, the BOH should be meeting quarterly or more often if necessary. Ms. Culbert offered that Zoom meetings might be an option, but an option for those without technology would have to be afforded for them to view it in a public setting. Board members agreed that they would meet quarterly and decide the timing and format at a later date.

Newtown Board of Health Officers

Bernie Meehan made a motion to nominate Dr. William Begg as Chairman of the Board. Curtis Read seconded the motion. Having no other nominations, the motion was approved. Curtis Read made a motion to nominate Bernie Meehan as Vice Chairman. Nomination seconded by Rob Bazuro. Having no other nominations, motion approved.

FY 2021-2022 Budget

Ms. Culbert presented the 2021-2022 Budget Proposal to the Board members. Ms. Culbert explained that due to the fact that the employee contract has expired and requires negotiation that monies have been held in the Contingency Line Item to accommodate salary increases and associated costs for when the contract negotiations

are completed. Bernie Meehan made a motion to accept the budget. Motion seconded by Dr. Begg. Motion approved.

FY 2022-2023 BUDGET

Ms. Culbert explained that without a negotiated contract with the NHDEA, the Contingency Line Item is proposed larger for this budget. Ms. Culbert shared that the Newtown Finance Department requests preliminary budget plans from the various Town Departments for review and approval which are then presented to the Legislative Council for final approval and ultimately Town approval.

Ms. Culbert was asked by Mr. Read about the status of the current budget and whether or not it was in line with her proposed budget. Ms. Culbert explained that the budget is seeing a surplus due to an unfilled Assistant Sanitarian position, employee contract negotiations have not been approved and operating expenses have not risen.

Ms. Culbert noted that the big ticket items for District budget are salary and health insurance. The Defined contribution is fairly fixed. Pension numbers change, but only Ms. Culbert and Ms. Schaedler participate in this line item.

Mr. Read asked if they could table the discussion on the proposed budget and could move to Executive Session and return to the proposed FY 2022-203 Budget for review and/or approval.

Bernie Meehan made a motion to go into Executive Session. Motion seconded by Curtis Read. Motion approved. Board went into Executive Session.

Executive Session

Board members came out of Executive Session at 6:15 P.M.

Bernie Meehan made a motion to increase the DOH salary to \$112,447 effective July 1, 2022. Motion seconded by Rob Bazuro. Motion approved.

Curtis Read made a motion to take \$5,000 from the 2021/22 budget Contingency Line Item to give to the DOH as a bonus for handling Covid-19. Seconded by Bernie Meehan. Motion approved.

Signing Checks

Bernie Meehan made a motion to authorize Rob Bazuro as an additional signer for Health District checks. Seconded by Curtis Read. Motion approved.

Any Other Business That May Properly Come Before the Board of Health

There was no other business that came before the Board of Health.

Adjournment

Dr. Begg made a motion to adjourn the BOH meeting. Seconded by Bernie Meehan. Motion approved and Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by

Maureen C. Schaedler
Administrative Assistant