

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING FOR THE NEWTOWN
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2023,
NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER, 8 SIMPSON STREET, NEWTOWN, CT 06470**

PRESENT: Board members: Dr. William Begg, Curtis Read, Maureen Singer, Anne Dalton
and Director of Health Donna Culbert

Public Participation: No public participation.

Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A Motion was made by Dr. Begg and seconded by Curtis Read to accept the BOH meeting minutes from March 22, 2023. Hearing no objections, motion approved.

Reports of officers and Director of Health

1. Update on District Activities

- Ms. Culbert introduced the newest Board member, Anne Dalton, R.N., Newtown Public School District Coordinator of Health and Wellness
- Ms. Culbert shared with the BOH members that Assistant Sanitarian, Zach Drzal, R.S., has left the Newtown Health District as a full-time employee to work at another local health department. Ms. Culbert added that Zach continues to work for NHD on a part-time basis on Friday afternoons.
- Ms. Culbert referred the BOH members to the attachment she produced detailing the District's activities for the last five fiscal years before, during and after the Pandemic. The District has been busy in all three towns overseeing wells, septic systems, complaints (sewage, housing/landlord/tenant), food service, community events, Senior Centers, Social Services. Ms. Culbert added that these graphics capture the activities of the District with regard to soil testing, septic plan reviews and building permit application reviews, and their seasonal fluctuation. Ms. Culbert noted that the District reviews most building permits.

Dr. Begg asked about field work. Ms. Culbert stated that the vast majority of it falls on Laurel Shaw, Director of Environmental Health. Ms. Culbert added that efforts have been made to recruit more staff, however, there is a limited pool of Sanitarians and many Health Districts/Departments are looking for staff as well. The pseudo-bidding process to acquire a new employee is a challenge, driving up the cost of salaries. Ms. Culbert noted, that to date, submitted applications and resumes have revealed people who were underqualified or whose references did not check out. Ms. Culbert added that a potential candidate will have to be trained and will likely not lighten the work load at first.

- Ms. Culbert informed the BOH members that the NHD hosted a Training on the CT DPH Subsurface Sewage Technical Standards Updates. NHD staff did a great job organizing and promoting that effort. Area health department staff and contractors were in attendance at the session at the Newtown Community Center.

- Ms. Culbert informed the Board members that NHD staff have attended trainings on the new FDA Food Code. Suzette Leblanc has been working diligently with our local food service establishments in helping to bring them up to speed and it has gone well. Suzette LeBlanc and Laurel Shaw visited Central CT Health District to see their on-line inspection program. They utilize an electronic inspection format that is less labor intensive and has other software programming availabilities for other types of inspections, i.e., salons, pools, etc. Ms. Culbert added that additional staff training has included Lead, IT Security, and DEI – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Ms. Culbert shared that Flu Vaccination efforts are on-going. The NHD is working with various community agencies such as CVS and HVHD, Kevin's Community Center and Bridgeport Community Pharmacy, who have been and are providing Flu Shots at our senior centers, schools, and the Health Fair. The RVNA vaccinated children at this year's Health Fair. Ms. Culbert stated that Anne Dalton has been instrumental in coordinating flu vaccine clinics in the schools. Ms. Culbert added that residents are finding their way to flu vaccine clinics. Dr. Begg shared that the incidence of flu related illness is relatively low to date.
- Ms. Culbert informed the Board that the NHD is applying to become a vaccinator through the CT Vaccine Program. She noted that the NHD is not there yet, that it is a somewhat lengthy process and the billing has to be figured out. Ms. Culbert noted that there is a gap in flu vaccination services and the District would like to fill that gap.

Old Business

1. Newtown Health District Codes and Regulations

Ms. Culbert stated that since the last BOH meeting in March, NHD staff have met in-house to review the Sanitary Code, Food Code, Pool Regulations, and Salon Code. They have tuned them up and they have been submitted to legal counsel for review.

Dr. Begg asked when these codes were last reviewed and updated. Ms. Culbert replied 1994. Ms. Culbert added that in 1994 a lot went into that effort, as the CT Public Health Code was not as robust then. The CT Public Health Code has been updated many times since 1994, and much of the material has become obsolete or redundant. Dr. Begg suggested that a timetable for the review and update of local codes become a topic of discussion at the next BOH Meeting.

Curtis Read asked if every Health Department/District followed the same set of codes. Ms. Culbert replied that all Health Department/Health Districts follow the State Health Code; what it doesn't do is give specific direction for enforcement besides the District's ability to issue orders. However through local sanitary codes, issues such as setbacks and procedures are managed by individual Health Districts/Health Departments. The question was asked about how many items are discretionary at the local level. Ms. Culbert answered that the NHD basically follows the State Health Code with a few exceptions, such as separation distances to watercourses, and well locations. The same specifics regarding enforcement and licensing applies for Food Service.

Ms. Culbert shared that the District is poised to publish a public notice and hold a public hearing for the updated codes. The draft regulations will be posted on our website and we will send links to all the businesses and contractors we know to initiate review.

2. Board Meetings Schedule

Ms. Culbert apologized for the lack of a scheduled meeting in June. Ms. Culbert anticipates scheduling a BOH Meeting in December, with a Zoom availability, for those members who may not be able to attend in person. The purpose of this meeting is to present a proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. Ms. Culbert added that the Finance Director for the Town of Newtown expects a proposed budget by the end of December each year.

New Business

FY 2024-2025 Budget timeline

Ms. Culbert stated that the proposed budget needs to be submitted to the Newtown Finance Director by the end of December. Ms. Culbert asked Ms. Read what Bridgewater's timeline was and he stated that Bridgewater is flexible. Ms. Culbert stated that she will have to ask Patrick Roy, First Selectman, about Roxbury's timeline.

NHDEA Contract

Ms. Culbert shared that the NHDEA Contract will have to be opened up sometime within the first six months of 2024. Curtis Read agreed to be lead for the BOH.

Medical Advisor

Dr. Begg asked who the current Medical Advisor was. Ms. Culbert answered Dr. Ana Paula Machado has agreed to temporarily fill this position on an as-needed basis, but the District will have to find a permanent replacement. Dr. Begg added that compensation should be considered for this position when preparing the budget.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Dr. Begg to go into Executive Session, seconded by Maureen Singer at 5:36 P.M. Motion approved. Executive Session ended at 6:12 P.M.

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

Ms. Culbert asked the BOH members for any other business. Board members replied none.

Adjournment

Having no further business, Curtis Read made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 P.M. Motion seconded by Anne Dalton. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,



Maureen C. Schaedler
Administrative Assistant