



# New Hampshire Health Officers Association

- *Executive Board Minutes*
  - November 19, 2024
  - **9:30 am –11:00 am**
  - Zoom Meeting Format
  
- Call to Order - Wayne Whitford, President
  
- Attendance
  - Wayne Whitford, President – present
  - Brian Lockard, VP & Chair for Advocacy Subcommittee – present
  - Rene Beaudoin, Treasurer Pro Tempore; Chair for Data Subcommittee – present
  - Liam Ehrenzweig, Secretary; Chair for Communication/Marketing Subcommittee – present
  - Courtney Bogaert – absent
  - Lisa Bechok - present
  - Nancy Kilbride, Events Your Way – absent
  - Sophia Johnson, DPHS Health Officer Liaison Unit – absent
  - Joanne Cotton, DHHS staff – absent
  - Madison Bailey, -- absent
  - Heidi Peek-Kukulka -- present
  - Beverly Drouin, NH DHHS – present
  - Brian Santiago, Concord, NH Health Officer -- present
  
- Approval of September 17 and October 8 minutes
  - The minutes were approved.
  
- Health Officer Liaison Updates – Beverly Drouin
  - All of the 2024 Scholarship money (\$30,000) has been allocated. 41 health officers received money to attend conferences ( NHHOA, NH EHC) and complete college level courses in public health. Additionally, the money has been used to develop comprehensive lead training for health officers and enable 20 health officers to attend training to become a licensed septic evaluator.
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  - As part of the 2024-2025 block grant requirements, the HOLU program will be conducting a **demographic and needs assessment survey for health officers**. This comprehensive survey was last executed in 2022. Joanne and Sophia are developing a schedule of when this survey will go out to health officers. There will be opportunity for NHHOA to comment on survey questions.

- Also as part of the 2024-2025 block grant requirements, the HOLU program is in the process of developing a plan to execute 3 regional meetings in the Spring: North Country, Monadnock, and Carroll County area.
- The NH DES Subsurface Program would like to partner with us on these meetings to provide training and discuss septic related case studies.
- In terms of legislation, we have been made aware that the sponsor who submitted the bill last year to adjust health officer authority in RSA 147 has returned with another bill. We haven't received the text of that bill yet, but our legislative team will let us know as soon as the text is available.
  - Brian stated that he had taken the DHHS sponsored Licensed Septic Evaluator training and appreciated the content, but had concerns the \$8,000 cost for those who had to pay for the training would be prohibitive to health officers' budgets and hoped it was possible for the training to be modified for health officers.
  - Ren asked about cost to take the Licensing exam to become a septic evaluator. Brian responded the exam cost would be the responsibility of the health officers who received the sponsored training, but taking the exam would be optional for them.
  - Beverly stated it would be beneficial if the training could be available on Cornerstone platform, and she would mention it to Sophia.
  - Wayne asked if all Regional Health Networks had been visited. He said the North Country had been visited once before, and that it would be good if all regional health networks were visited at least once. Beverly responded that Sophia did attempt that, but for reasons perhaps related to scheduling or interest that was unable to be achieved. Lisa noted a lack of access to NHHOA conferences contributed to the increased interest by the North Country in HOLU visits, and they were happy to get that attention.
- Readiness Report – Wayne Whitford
  - Wayne stated that Sophia had sent a summary of the required Readiness Report in October. He said the legislature is satisfied with the information provided in the report, and they were happy with the work we are doing.
  - Brian asked how the meeting was arranged with the legislative committee that reviewed the report, and Wayne answered the committee requested to schedule the meeting.
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- Treasurer's Report – Rene Beaudoin
  - Ren noted the previous spreadsheet sent by Nancy had been amended by her and the current balance was \$20993.17, which is an above average sum and could be attributed to state funding contribution.
  - Wayne stated the current membership of 199 members in NHHOA was pretty good.
  - Wayne asked if a motion would be made to move some funds to a money market account, and that was approved. Wayne will ask Nancy to do that.
- Fall Conference Survey Results – Board Comments
  - Ren noted attendees want to see more case studies. Attendance total was normal but fewer NHHOA members were offset by Public Health Lab personnel in attendance.

- Beverly was happy with the conference and relieved somewhat because she had really gone out on a limb to initiate PHL participation and budgeting. She shared notes of the Communication and Marketing Subcommittee about the conference:

#### **Conference Recap**

- Good attendance – Nancy reported 60-70 people, which was less attendance than normal.
- Great engagement
- Great learning opportunity.
- People liked the shorter sessions
- Sponsor was very happy
- Subcommittee pre-reviewed slides/content prior to conference which help
- Food was great
- We need more exhibitors
- Business meeting needed a bit more structure
- Subcommittee to make ‘talking point’ slide(s) for next conference to assist the Executive Board.
- NHHOA table – Subcommittee needs to develop more table materials.

#### **Conference Recommendations back to Executive Board –**

- Based on financial situation of NHHOA, Subcommittee recommends one Spring conference annually.
- Subcommittee recommends NHHOA consider a virtual attendance option to reach the north country.
  - Brian suggested we send out information prior to the next Fall Conference regarding the election of officers.
  - Wayne stated he was unsure how to get more exhibitors. Beverly said she shared an exhibitor list from the recent Environmental Health Conference with Nancy, and the Communication and Marketing Subcommittee could perhaps assist.
  - Wayne noted our conferences could focus more on health officers as presenters, perhaps in a roundtable format.
  - Liam mentioned a remote option for conference attendance, and suggested maybe subcontracting audio/visual responsibilities to a contractor. If the cost for remote broadcast could be offset by increased attendance, especially from the those health officers who live north of Concord, it would be worth it to break even.
  - Ren observed the NHHOA by-laws require a Fall meeting. Wayne said perhaps we could do a half-day conference to restrain costs. Ren noted the by-laws could be changed. Beverly responded the strategic plan was for the executive committee to review the by-laws.
  - Wayne asked for any additional comments. Heidi thought the conference went very well, that she had concerns ahead of time but the conference exceeded expectations. Brian thought the survey comments that expressed confusion about state control of the conference were unfair. Wayne thought bringing Public Health Laboratory personnel was very informative to health officers about PHL roles, which health officers rely upon.
- Membership 2025
  - Wayne asked for comments about adjusting the 2025 membership fee. Beverly asked if any comparison had been made to fees by other organizations, such as the Building Officials Association? Brian didn’t think the comparison was apt, because so many health officers are part-time. Wayne noted the fee had been raised recently, and an increase was not needed at this time.

- Beverly informed Nancy and Courtney were searching for a membership list for the purpose of acknowledging long-term members and welcoming new members. Wayne suggested a review of membership to examine what municipalities had not joined and determine if there was some factors we are missing in our appeal such as small town budgets.
  - Ren reported other similar organizations charge \$75. Beverly said our current \$45 is a low price that is not restrictive. She thought the current fee was not at a tipping point and could be increased without losing members. Ren noted some organizations charge on a sliding scale based on population. Wayne thought that was something to consider. Brian asked if non-health officers could become members. Wayne said maybe we could do more to include others such as fire chiefs.
  - Wayne suggested delaying membership renewal mailings until after the holidays.
  - Wayne asked the Board for suggestions to incentivize new membership to the Board. He was encouraged Brian Santiago was able to attend a portion of the meeting. Brian hoped Angela from Berlin would join. Beverly suggested reminding potential participants in subcommittees that the time commitment would be only 4-5 remote meetings per year.
- Committee Reports
    - Legislative Subcommittee – Did not meet but Brian noted the legislative bill to limit health officer authority had be re-introduced. Ren said HB1685 was presently in legislative committee, and noted this pertains to artisan food and the bill in current form would not recognize the authority of self-inspecting municipalities. Brian noted that Natch Grey from NHMA will be leaving his position and consequently there would likely be changes to NHHOA’s relationship with NHMA. Wayne recognized Natch for being a great resource and assistance. Ren suggested maybe not renewing our contract with NHMA for legislative updates until NHMA had settled on a comparable replacement for Natch, and said sometimes positions are not re-filled when a person leaves that position.
    - Communication and Marketing Subcommittee – Liam noted that Bevely had shared comments from the subcommittee from the previous November 6 meeting. Liam stated the Board had previously approved providing access to the NHHOA website to a C&M member, and noted Courtney was interested in that role. Wayne supported giving her access to the website, and Ren and Brian agreed. Beverly asked if a message from the President had been provided to Courtney for the winter newsletter, and Wayne stated he had provide it.
- New Business
    - Liam suggested a monthly solicitation to NHHOA members for case studies, and provision of a membership list by Nancy was necessary to send that solicitation in response to recent conference survey comments requesting case study presentations at conferences. Wayne agreed with the idea of sending solicitations by email. Beverly noted there was a branding issue with NHHOA emails sometimes because the emails were not directed from an NHHOA website. Ren responded the data subcommittee had previously established an email and would share that information.
  - Next virtual meeting is to be held in-person if there are those interested. Brian noted he appreciates the annual December in-person meeting, and he plans to attend. An email will be sent to coordinate that event.
  - Adjournment – Wayne Whitford, President, 10:40 am.

