



New Hampshire Health Officers Association

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday July 19, 2022

Via Zoom Video Meeting Platform

I. Call to Order

Wayne Whitford, President called the meeting to order at 9:17AM

II. Attendance

Wayne Whitford – President
Brian Lockard
Sophia Johnson
Nancy Kilbride – Treasurer
Denise DeBlois
Matthew Cahillane
Gwen Williams – Secretary
Rene Beaudoin
Heidi Peek-Kulkulka
Beverly Drouin
Patricia Tilley

Absent:

Ron Eisenhart
Ron Beard
Arthur Capello
James Murray

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from June 21, 2022, were approved. Moved by Brian Lockard – approved by Rene Beaudoin

IV. Treasurer's Report- Reported by Nancy Kilbride

Total in Checking account and Money market is \$14,816.33. Expenses this month totaled \$0. Revenue was \$225.00 from membership fees. Currently we have up to 165 members. Treasurer's report accepted. Moved by Brian Lockard – Seconded by Gwen Williams

V. Guest: Trish Tilley, Director DHHS Public Health Services

Matthew Cahillane – Requests rather than questions are more poignant

It's important for Board to have an idea of what we're going to ask of Patricia. Opportunity to learn about more funding for the program, need to advocate for funding to come to our program. We want to be in the room when public health decisions and policies are made.

Rene Beaudoin - Has there been any funding to fill Matt's role, or is funding and time being lost for the Health Officer unit? Matt says – Yes, capacity is dropping due to staff time limitations. As a board, we need to discuss this gap. Matt's funding was originally funded from a climate CDC grant, and Matt was able to support the Health Officers as that funding source lapses. The Health Officers unit has not lost funding discretely. The department hasn't yet found alternative funding to bridge this gap.

Brian Lockard - Can we ask for this program to be part of regular funding? Matt & Sophia - 3 years ago, this was requested to be a full-time position but was not approved at that time. How can we fill in this gap? Sophia's position mostly intends to meet block grant deliverables.

Wayne Whitford – the Commissioner is leaving (by December, per Matt). Role is open at this time.

Director Patricia Tilley joins the meeting – 0925

Commissioner has been an incredible advocate, and we've been lucky to have her in this role during the pandemic. She's giving us a long exit-ramp so the Governor's office has time to evaluate who will best fill this role. Director Tilley commends and thanks the Health Officers to our commitment to protecting the health of our communities, even when it was unpopular. With limited resources, the State is also tasked with appointment of over 300 Health Officers & Deputies, as well as guidance manual, technical support, training and other support. We have new training coming available later this year. The role of the local health officer is seen as part of the local community, and makes informed decisions about response to emergencies, as evidenced by our roles during the pandemic. During Hampton during the outbreak of Legionella, the department has leaned on Health Officers to help through the event. Even without those illnesses, the Health Officer Manual defines health hazards, finding solutions, negotiating with property owners, businesses and local governments. It's equally important to know the bookends of environmental health as it is to have the skills to negotiate with the local community to support healthy living conditions.

The right to equitable and safe rental housing is important, and is supported by the health officer community.

Thank you, Health Officers Association, for the role taken to reach out to legislators, the Municipal Association, to educate regulators and remind them what important work we do with our existing limited resources and authority. The recent bill to limit Health Officer authority was an excellent example of the cooperative actions we take to support local health and equity.

Health Officer and State partnerships across a variety of different offices (environmental health, lead poisoning prevention, climate change, emergency preparedness and management, etc.) are invaluable. Expanding into reports of cancer concerns as they relate to environmental exposures may be a future partnership growth. There is interest in learning more about the relationship between exposure and incidence of illness.

Director Tilley is excited to work with us for the State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan (SHA/SHIP). Representative Marsh strongly represents the Health Officer's interest through these projects.

Intersection of HOUSING and PUBLIC HEALTH – The department feels this is an invaluable intersection. We would like to better understand Health Officers thoughts about local public health readiness, and better understand challenges faced by local health agencies.

We would like to emphasize how much we appreciate your work, and recognize how ready and responsive Health Officers are in responding to local health and local issues. We have an opportunity to improve our training and

support to help Health Officers handle more complicated things Health Officers face, such as hoarding and more complicated housing challenges.

Brian Lockard – Thank you, you have a great understanding of what we do. I'd like to start with the Liaison Program. They're a great resource, hugely valuable and we need them. Is there any way to bolster this program? Can we budget for this position, since we're losing Matt?

PT – We're getting some federal funding related to COVID, and we're trying to budget in an additional full-time position to work with the Health Officers. To [Brian Lockard's] point, it is top of our mind to make sure we have the resources available to support Health Officers. It was very clear during the pandemic what all of your roles were. We're going to be challenged because other areas of our federal funding are being reduced, as the COVID funds are reduced.

Brian Lockard – would something from our organization help? *Patricia Tilley* – Sure! We can talk offline to discuss how we can add support to the program.

Rene Beaudoin – Sophia and Matt have been a valuable resource to all of us here. We kind of had a missed opportunity to showcase what the Liaison Unit has done for us over the last 2.5 years. They produced a tremendous amount of work, data analysis and support. Especially losing Matt, we'll only have one part time person to respond to 300 different communities. We understand budgets are kind of tight, and we're interested in building on our existing programs. We request to look at the report we sent out with our top issues, and look at those needs, where those gaps are, and where we can best locate funding and resources. Often when funds are requested, the response is "why do you need it?" We need to see where those needs are, where those gaps are, and help support the maintenance and growth of the Liaison Program. When we last met either prior to or just at the start of COVID, there were goals at that time to bolster the resources there. What other movement other than what we've just discussed would help support growth there?

Patricia Tilley – We have identified funding for additional training, which ties hand in hand working with the Liaison Unit to ID key training elements and strategize for these needs in the future. We need to be expansive for our thinking moving forward. There're opportunities to tie these relationships back to the SHA/SHIP, and to coordinate with Rep. Marsh, to put all these pieces together. We're currently shifting to the more fundamental social determinant issues.

Brian Lockard – Adding to housing, which is a big issue for Health Officers, we do have a representative on SHA/SHIP, Kim McNamara of Portsmouth. The Board is interested in being involved in that process.

Rene Beaudoin – I would echo the housing issue, and everyone who deals with them has seen them morph as people have been stuck at home; these issues have really grown and become more complicated during the pandemic. We have a lot of Health Officers with no, or very limited Health Officer training. We have the manual, which is our "bible," which covers dozens and dozens of issues we address on a daily basis. It can be difficult to shift mindset to a different program on a dime. Smaller towns don't have resources, funding and training, that they need. We should keep their needs in mind, especially the further out areas, so they have what they need moving forward.

Patricia Tilley – we certainly think about the environmental threats, health threats, as these issues arise. The other issue is behavioral health as we identify these issues, and we could be more supportive to help Hos recognize resources, when they're valuable, and how to make those connections between those who need behavioral health support as well as the behavioral health resources.

Sophia Johnson – With flexibly funding in mind, we were able to use COVID dollars to bolster the training program. This module is going live, online to help support training needs.

Rene Beaudoin – How do we collect data? Another struggle is how do these places collect their data so we know what they're dealing with. If anyone has a system, it's fragmented. It's hard to identify needs, State-wide, that integrates so we can analyze needs on a regional basis, identify gaps and needs, and would help us move forward with the readiness reports to identify problems being dealt with, and support local Health Officers as they write their reports to emphasize local needs.

Wayne Whitford – Public Health Networks (PHN) don't always intersect with the Health Officers, throughout the State. This connection could be more strongly coordinated.

Patricia Tilley – for those involved with local PHNs, I have huge gratitude for your efforts on this level as well. Their capacity and collaboration have highlighted both some phenomenal examples and some areas for improvements. We anticipate rethinking our relationship with PHNs, our contract with them, and hope to build a much more creative mindset for future PHNs and ensure they all have the support they need, and that it's clear what their job is. We'll throw a thousand different small pieces of money at PHNs, and expect them to then be a thousand different things. We want to more sharply define what a PHN is, what they need for resources to accomplish that.

Matt Cahillane – When PHNs were first proposed, they went out to the community to identify themselves and make themselves available as a resource. Recognizing what the resource is, and what is given back to the PHN for the support they provide is a valuable connection. Health Officers don't necessarily have emergency services for support, and can connect with PHNs to coordinate some shared responsibilities, especially on the emergency services end of things. We may want to reach out to Stephanie Lock, to coordinate PHN-Health Officer resources for emergency services

Patricia Tilley – this is the time we have to begin planning efforts that were put off while we were all busy responding to the pandemic. We want to make sure we hear from you and incorporate your ideas into what is coming next.

VI. Health Officer Liaison Updates – Sophia Johnson

It sounds like additional follow-up with Directory Tilley is a good idea.

- **HB79 Training Requirement Update**

The first group of health officers are moving through this course right now. This is opened up to the group at large, and we're getting back good feedback right now. Not everyone who needs to take it is taking it at once. The goal is all Health Officers from June of 2021 have had the training and completed their certification. The hope is to add additional training to Health Officers up on

the platform.

Wayne Whitford – how have the results been, what has been the feedback from Health Officers?

Sophia Johnson – All positive feedback so far. Some haven't responded to some situations yet, so it's great to have the wherewithal for where else in the RSAs they're given authority.

- SHA/SHIP Data Project Update

Both committees gave action items – the HHS addendum proposes solutions to the challenges identified in this document. The other document is a data assessment showcasing why the items identified are priorities. Ren has given types of calls and volume of calls responded to. Beverly and Sophia have just finished a draft, and hope to discuss this data at the next Board meeting, and hope to include this information at the next SHA/SHIP meeting. The information could be shared with the group either through Rep. Marsh, or Kim McNamara. They may invite to be on the agenda (*Matt Cahillane*, please make a 1-page document on committees we're coordinate with, and how we request to get onto the agenda.). It was very challenging to get the data, because it just isn't there. It's hard to clarify the work Health Officers do, when there isn't time for data collection in addition to the actual work being done. There's a lot of data, but we don't have a common space to share it and analyze it. If we could find this information and share it with the legislature, this may help direct additional details in our direction.

- *Brian Lockard* offered to share his data spreadsheet with *Sophia Johnson* as an example.

- *Matt Cahillane* created and shared with *Ren Beaudoin* an excel template. How do we show not only do we do housing inspections, but that there are gaps across the State?

- *Gwen Williams* - I will share food safety spreadsheet with *Sophia Johnson*.

- *Beverly Drouin* – when *Patricia Tilley* mentioned to the team that the State is applying for a workforce modernization grant. Wouldn't it be nice if we could carve out some funding that created a taskforce to work with the Health Officers to develop a spreadsheet like what is already being discussed that everyone agrees on, that can be used regularly. It would be voluntary, but if it's uniform enough, it can be compiled. Then we could have an analyst help tell the story, and let the data let the story of where we need more support.

Sophia Johnson – That would be very helpful, and let's make sure that grant can be used for this purpose.

Matt Cahillane – The Biden Admin did promise a lot more money coming into the public health field to support efforts in this area.

- HHS Readiness Report Addendum Update These should be wrapped up by August, and the next round should be drafted starting in September.

Beverly Drouin – Team lead for Matt and Sophia. Beverly Drouin glanced at it for initial comments from John Williams. Expected timeline for wrap-up is by Friday. Anticipate having the report out by the middle of next week. (Beverly is Sophia's new supervisor. Beverly has had the Health Officer Unit in her section for a number of years now, and is familiar with the community.

She has jotted down some action items, remove barriers and continue to push Health Officer support forward.)

- COVID and Schools Project Update

This was money that came in from the CDC to train Health Officers for school inspections from the communicable disease perspective, as well as school inspections. The second part of this is to work with select Health Officers to use the new knowledge. The goal was to have the training available in the October-November timeframe

Beverly Drouin – HHS has invested half a million in the new training cornerstone – this is our first outwardly facing adult learning system used by the state. We want to provide all Health Officer training on demand. We want all of our training available, but the goal is to make all of our training available via this on-demand training platform.

Sophia Johnson – The foster care program recently reached out about updating how to conduct training, inspections, and rules. Better define how to do a foster care inspection. What are we looking for in foster care homes, and how do we best communicate those requirements to the families?

Wayne Whitford – Fire Departments are also doing their inspections, and we need to make sure we're not contradicting their requirements.

Sophia Johnson – That's part of the process. The goal is to provide a similar guidance document for Fire inspections.

- *Beverly Drouin and Sophia Johnson* have been working really hard to ID broken links in the Health Officer Manual. Repairs to these broken links as well as updating chapters is being prioritized. This may take a few months to fully address.

VII. Fall Workshop scheduled at NHMA October 24, 2022

This date has been confirmed. Nancy has done surveys for requested topics. For the next meeting, we should start to look at topics we'll hold at the October Meeting.

Nancy Kilbride – The meeting is on Monday. We've never done a Monday before. With this in mind, should we have a delayed start?

Wayne Whitford – not sure this would make a difference?

General consensus seems to be that starting earlier won't be a challenge for participants, but we might not be able to access the building to set up when we're intending to begin registration.

Restaurants available for catering need to be confirmed.

We will be moving forward with the awards program? YES, we plan to proceed with this. Brian Lockard is the chair for this subcommittee, and hopefully is getting responses for nominees. Do we want to send this out via Google format, or just a Word document for people to complete and return?

Brian would prefer the Word format. These results can go back to Nancy or to Brian, as long as it goes out within the next month so information can be collected and collated. Nominations can be made by any member of the Health Officer's Association, not just to the Board. (confirmed by Wayne Whitford)

Sophia Johnson – maybe the Board should identify a few people who meet the criteria for the award, and then the membership votes on the awardee?

Nancy Kilbride – partnership award needs to go out to non-members, so we'll need to get into those details.

Brian Lockard - Some awards, like the Lifetime Service Award may be better identified by the Board. That said, it's important to get the input from our membership as well.

Nancy Kilbride - We could send out the whole package to the membership, and the Board could make a nomination if a viable candidate isn't identified by the membership. Ideally, this will go out by August 1st.

Wayne Whitford – This being our first return to in-person, we want to make this an excellent session.

VIII. Strategic Planning

Sophia Johnson – contact at JSI doesn't have the capacity, as she is now the director of JSI. Nancy was going to reach out to a few other contacts, as the initial quote (\$2500) was a little steep.

Nancy Kilbride reached out to another contact, and is waiting to hear back from him. It would be nice to have at least 2 proposals to compare. We're thinking in the fee range of around \$2000, as for what we're looking for. Is this what the Board would like, or is this not enough to cover the scope of work we'd like done? We're expecting a live event, probably in November. Once we have a second quote, we'll have a better idea of what the market accommodates.

Matt Cahillane – What is expected for this? This person would produce reading materials, will facilitate the meeting, and will come out with specific products, and a written report at the conclusion of the day.

Beverly Drouin – Who is in attendance? Is it just the Board?

Sophia Johnson – The Board would attend. Part of the SP plan would include interviews from external partners to get perspective on the Board's activities. We could trim this down, but the actual in-person session would be just the Board.

(This will be a total of 4 hours, over 2 days)

Association Secretary Vacancy

Motion to approve Gwen Williams as Secretary: Brian Lockard moved

Seconded by: Rene Beaudoin

Approved by the Board 1040AM

IX. Committee Reports:

a) Seasonal Issues:

Matt Cahillane - Nothing for arboviral reports so far. Typically, we see human cases late July, August and September. Might be a side effect of the current drought? We are currently under moderate drought Statewide, with some severe drought in the Southern part of the State. We may see inappropriate refilling of wells, sanitation challenges for handwashing and cooking, and wells may run low or dry. Hauling and transporting water as needed may be a solution should the drought increase in severity.

Rene Beaudoin – DES sent out a drought alert through the chain regarding limiting water usage last week. Messaging would be good, the drought may continue for the rest of the summer/fall.

b) Legislative/ NH Public Health Association:

Matt Cahillane – The upcoming session was discussed by Director Tilley. The face of the

legislature will be changing with the upcoming election. This session may swing more towards the Republican side, based on current polls. We can expect challenges protecting public health powers and authority.

Beverly Drouin – Health Officer rules are moving through the DHHS system, and will be ready for public comment in the next month and a half, August 2nd at 1PM. Not a virtual session, but there is opportunity to provide feedback electronically. The sessions are typically at the Brown Building at the Office Park.

X. New business: Will the fall conference be recorded? We haven't done this in the past. We're not sure what the abilities are. The NHMA recently changed their setup for AV. There may be a cost factor involved, but we can look into this. We could get the presentations, and make those available after the conference. A point to discuss at the next meeting.

XI. Next Meeting: August 23rd

XII. The meeting was adjourned at 1050AM.

Respectfully submitted: Gwen Williams