



New Hampshire Health Officers Association

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday April 28, 2020

Via Zoom Video Meeting Platform

I. Call to Order/ Attendance

President Arthur Capello called the meeting to order at 2:32 PM via Zoom Meeting Platform NH.

Arthur Capello, President
Wayne Whitford, Vice President
Brian Lockard, Treasurer
Dennise Horrocks, Secretary
Rene Beaudoin
Ron Beard
Heidi Peek
Ron Eisenhart
Dennis Roseberry
Denise DeBlois
Matt Cahillane, Program Manager, HOL
Sophia Johnson, Health Officer Specialist
Nancy Kilbride, Events Your Way
Absent:
James Murray

II. Review Agenda

III. Updates on the COVID-19 response

a) NHDHHS:

- Matt updated the board on efforts by DHHS to combat COVID-19.
- The Governor's Reopening Task Force hear presentations from each service sector which provide their SOP's on how they will proceed to open.
- Matt and Sophia have provided 60-70 consults with HO's or municipal officials.

b) Municipalities:

- Ren reviewed Nashua's response. They are a full service department and have been doing contact tracing; working with Response Task Force; daily phone calls with partners (LTCF, hospitals, etc.); providing guidance to essential/ non-essential businesses; mitigating news reports. They have set up an Alternate Care Site and it is ready, but fortunately the hospitals are not currently overwhelmed. Heidi is the Safety Officer for the city. They are preparing

for reopening and the guidance to correlate with that. They have suspended inspections but are doing wellness checks.

- Wayne reviewed Newbury's response. Summer residents have already started to arrive, which increases traffic and number of people in the stores. The PD have been enforcing social distancing.
- Brian reviewed Salem's response. He has suspended routine inspections, except for septic. He is disappointed with the State's lack of communication with HO's. He wishes they would work with us more. He gets information freely from MA about cases, but hears nothing from NH, and sometimes he lets them know about cases. He receives calls from restaurant owners about positive cases (staff) and he cannot even get confirmation of that from the State. He reminds the establishment about deep cleaning, have staff self-monitor for 14 days. He is concerned because re-openings will fall on us, and about whether we get better communication from the State.
- Dennise reviewed Plaistow's response. She has suspended all inspections except emergency situations. She has been monitoring non-essential businesses for compliance issues. Biggest offenders are the Vape stores. She has also been doing compliance checks for businesses. The Town, being a border town to MA, is very concerned about the steady amount of out-of-state traffic and the impact on the businesses. Complaint calls keep mounting.

c) Wants and needs:

- Better communication from the State to local HO's.
- If the State notified the HO of a positive case, the HO would be able to assist residents and businesses with guidance.
- Arthur questioned what authority do we have to enforce? The executive order says DHHS and local and state law enforcement. So, do HO's act as that DHHS enforcement? HO's can still investigate and enforce RSA 147- Public Nuisance and issues injurious to public health. They can go in and assess to see if they are doing things correctly, consult with the business, offer guidance, then if they are still non-compliant, bring in law enforcement. Law enforcement has the authority to close them down. RSA 141 implies the State takes the lead and then the HO is the agent. Should there be an executive order for the HO to be an agent of the State? Brian said it was made clear that we are NOT agents of the State. So how are they going to roll this out?
- Ren mentioned that most times we learn about new guidance releases as it comes out to the media. We need time to prepare for this and review the guidance. People are already at a heightened state and this could make it worse. Most towns and cities have decreased staff.
- Matt said that the State did not communicate the Food establishment restrictions to Bureau of Food Protection before they were released. It would be best to get a heads up many days in advance to prepare. Should we draft a letter to the Governor with requests for better communication or a call to the Governor or Lisa Morris? Should the funding money trickle down to health officers? Do they need more staff to do this? Perhaps every town over 5,000 population needs a staff person to assist. What about the proper PPE? Should be bring up the issue to the EOC, ESF-8?

IV. Listserv messages sent to Health Officers

- a) Currently some of the messages sent out were on executive orders; reporting positive cases; guidance on COVID-19.

- b) Arthur feels we should keep putting them out there. Future messages will be on preparing the businesses for reopening. These include daycares, campgrounds, youth education, day camps, restaurants, retail businesses.
- c) For moderation of listserv, should we put out a paragraph of moderation of accepted practices? The recent message from a HO about the NH Reopen Rally caused quite a stir, and should it be better moderated?

V. Proposed Webinar on COVID-19 for HO's

- a) Matt proposed a Zoom meeting for 100-200 participants, and what do they need to know, and who will present?
- b) Arthur feels people are too busy.
- c) Ren asked what is needed from the HO's what are they calling Matt and Sophia about? Are there many calls? Matt said they have received 60 calls in 6 weeks. Most calls were about campgrounds, retail businesses and youth camps.
- d) Wayne mentioned that the knowledge and guidance changes too often.
- e) Issues where HO's will be going in on a complaint basis: retail; food establishments; youth groups; day care; lodging.
- f) Heidi mentioned it appears the HO is not supported from NHDHHS, but then we are expected to just take care of the issue.
- g) There is an expected uptick in the Fall, but how bad; will it mutate; what type of tests will be used.

VI. Next Steps & Action Items

- a) Arthur sent an email to the Governor with our concerns.
- b) Matt will review RSA 141, are HO's agents of the State?
- c) Should we meet with Lisa Morris about our concerns?
- d) Does reaching out to SEOC help?

VII. Adjournment

- a) The meeting was adjourned at 3:40PM.

Respectfully submitted: Dennise Horrocks, Secretary