

3/26/20 CPHS Oversight Board Meeting -- via Conference Call -- Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marti Taft-Ferguson/Buckland, Bill Harker/Charlemont, Rob Lingle/Charlemont, Nina Martin/Anzuoni/Colrain, Marie Iken, Conway, Trevor McDaniel/Deerfield, Carolyn Ness/Deerfield, Bryan Smith/Erving, Cass Nawrocki/Hawley, Betsy Kovacs/Heath, Beth Kuzdeba/Leyden, Maggie Rice/Rowe, Jody Stetson/Shelburne, Ron Kelter/Shelburne.

Guests: Barbara Craddock, Wendell BOH

Staff: Lisa White, Lisa Danek Burke, Phoebe Walker, Randy Crochier, Melanie Zamojski

Absent: Monroe, Gill, Bernardston

1. **Opening, Minutes February meeting:** Marti opened the meeting and explained how it would work with muting, raising hand on phone lines. If you are using the phone alone -- You can mute and unmute yourself using *6. You can raise your hand using *9. We will vote on Minutes in April so we do not have to do a roll call.
2. **FRCOG Update:** Phoebe thanked all the BOHS for the work they are doing in this incredibly quickly evolving situation. Her perspective: While our community is used to having emergencies, we have not had a public health emergency like this before. Much of what is stressful about the situation is that is a disaster that our usual tools -- fire, police, and EMD are not the primary responders for, and in many towns those first responders are not used to working with our local public health folks. But this emergency requires leadership from public health, first and foremost. As local public health, we have two major roles -- containing the spread of disease from infected folks and changing norms to prevent further spread. In our district we have that divided up -- the nurses are handling the infected folks, and boards of health are taking care of the public.

What the FRCOG overall has been working on: The HMCC is coordinating all PPE requests for healthcare, public health, and EMS -- these will be filled by the state from the massive cache they are assembling. Priority will go to healthcare and EMS. FRCOG has been working on the local emergency response grants -- more on this below. Staff have been coordinating HMCC, CPHS, and MAPHCO on messaging, and the COVID MACC is about to stand up on Monday. Finally, Phoebe shared that through the new state emergency response funding, Lisa and her team of nurses have agreed to help out some neighbors -- and provide COVID Public Health Nursing Coverage for Leverett, Northfield, and Wendell. We are confident that we have enough staff to help these towns out, and no district funds will be used to support that work.

3. **Public Health Nursing Report on Coronavirus:** What are we doing to protect the public health? -- Lisa reported on how she is learning of cases, getting data from hospital, from medical practices, and, from other nurses who ID cases who have contacts in our towns. We have 3 identified positive cases from testing, in isolation, 18 contacts in quarantine. Lisa described exactly what happens when we get a case: 1. Talk to person, 2. Talk to BOH, 3. Talk to Dispatch. 4. Talk to the person's close contacts. The people are offered supports, and could often benefit from a volunteer to go get them things -- towns should let her know who in their town can help in this way if there is someone. Lisa introduced two new Public Health Nurses, Meg Burch and Melanie Zamojski. Melanie talked a little about her background in EMS and Nursing, currently teaches at GCC and coordinates all the service learning for student nurses. Meg was not able to join us.

Lisa suggested important roles for local boards of health: spreading information about the fact that there is a good response in place, encouraging social distancing, and taking care of residents who are impacted by the economic disaster, support people with the stress.

We then took folks off mute and went through each town to see if they had questions, and got updates from members on local actions being taken to protect the public and support those in quarantine:

- a. **Marti/Buckland** -- thanked Lisa. 4 town EDS region to meet weekly fire, police, boh, EMD, school, to share info about sub-region. Town facebook page just started, have a mailbox on the BOH phone which they didnt have before (note from Phoebe: DPH emergency funds could support boosted ads)
- b. **Rob and Bill/Charlemont** -- has formed a COVID committee -- 2 BOS, 2 BOH, EMD, first meeting today. -- get website links out. BOH trying to give good input to town government functions -- for example transfer station procedures are needing to be tweaked. Checking with EMS to make sure they are following best practice -- like shaving so masks work. . Randy has been indispensable.
- c. **Nina/Colrain** -- emergency response team meeting, working well. Chaired by BOH since it is a public health crisis. Town website is being updated, putting up posters on the bulletin boards of businesses. Using e-newsletter and will use e-911. Librarian is helping organize people who will volunteer to shop for people who are isolated - Nina will train them in MRC, PD will CORI. Transfer station critical infrastructure -- has to stay open. Gave them PPE -- gloves and masks. People paying by check, not cash, but still closer than 6 feet.
- d. **Marie/Conway**-- many thanks to the nurses. BOH member is now the EMD assistant. They are meeting regularly. PD has list of vulnerable people in case they need to reach out. Using FRCOG resource web page regularly and sharing on TV. Transfer station attendants are 70+ -- they have gloves, but no masks. Reducing the amount of waste people can bring to the bulkies. Canceled hazardous waste pick up day. Marie is making cloth masks. Phoebe noted that DPH reports guidance on cloth masks will be posted soon. Question: New York citizens need to quarantine 14 days? Suspend food service short term rental inspections is that ok? Randy shared a link about [current inspection and permitting guidance from DPH](#). Betsy shared that in Heath the BOH writes to everyone who comes into town to ask them to self-quarantine if they came from NYC, other hot spots, or foreign countries.
- e. **Trevor/Deerfield** -- working with their EDS - Conway, Sunderland, Whately. Three-town senior center is closed, but kept staff on and added two extra days a week for lunch, seniors come through in cars to pick up food. Kids getting breakfast at Frontier. They have a liveTV show with FCAT regularly. Need money. Especially for food. Are concerned that there may not be enough backup for the nurses when things get really bad.
- f. **Bryan/Erving** -- senior center closed, staff are meeting with folks to make sure basic needs are met. EMD is coordinating effort to get PPE for first responders. Concern about process for connecting when a positive case. How fast does it go in? What links are there in that chain? What if Butch is at home? Group discussed this concern and how to allay it and still follow the law regarding privacy. Phoebe and Lisa reminded group that increasingly, there are lots of folks have this disease, including many who will not be tested, will not be tracked. Good not to rely on dispatch to decide when to wear PPE.
- g. **Randy/Gill** -- Their emergency group includes EMD/Town Admin/Randy as BOH/BOS/ DPW. Friends of Gill working with seniors. Using town website, reverse 911. Need to hire backup PD in case one of two police gets sick. Randy had some PPE to give to the Fire Dept, which had none.

- h. **Cass/Hawley** -- Question: what is the chain of command in this situation? EMD or BOH? (Randy's Answer: legally, the Board of Health. Colrain and Heath shared that they are meeting and making decisions as unified command). Question: Why don't we know what towns have the cases? Lengthy group discussion of whether to share this information (which towns have cases, no more) among towns. In a straw poll everyone on the call at the time voted either yes to share, or did not care about sharing (no No votes), but we had lost Deerfield and Erving by then, so did not make the final decision. Question: Why is Colrain CORI checking volunteers? Answer: to avoid liability for the Town.
- i. **Betsy/Heath** -- Their emergency team includes: BOH, BOS, EMD (who is also EMT) and Asst EMD (RN). They are meeting together online and have moved to a new Unified Command System. Lisa and Randy have been absolutely incredible. Moved into new systems at Transfer Station -- masks, gloves, and he has to lock gate to do the compacting. Elders can honk if they want him to take trash out -- they stay in car. Post Office is using boxes only. Postmistress has a service window through a mail box. Asked all town departments to develop COOPs in case the key person in their dept gets sick -- e.g. tax collection. Have a list of vulnerable folks and check in every few days. Working with some volunteers --using the [Volunteer Training Guidance from MAPHCO](#). Difficult issue: young people not taking it seriously. Suggestion: Ask Recorder to set aside a half a page per week to put out contact information. (Phoebe thinks that state Emergency Funds could pay for that). Suggestion: Clearinghouse for local messages for Code Red, Newsletters, etc. would be appreciated too.
- j. **Beth/Leyden** -- Thanks to Lisa, Randy, Phoebe. Leyden has a lot of ways to get info out -- monthly newsletter, email blast, paper newsletter delivery. Issue: people do not understand the terms. Shared the [good ones shared by MAPHCO](#). Lots of license plates from out of town -- putting notices on front door to read, since they do not have a post office, to ask folks to self-quarantine. Lots of anxiety from BOS, first responder. Suggestion: can we get the email addresses of others on this board shared again so we can communicate? (Phoebe will do) As a pharmacist, Beth weighed in in favor of volunteers being CORI checked.
- k. **Maggie/Rowe** -- Emergency Team (includes Rowe conf center rep) meets after DPH call on Tuesday, robo-call goes out every week. Have been encouraging residents to go out and get some fresh air. Closed bathrooms at park, closed swap shop, one person at a time in Transfer Station. Librarians are on duty -- will leave books in bags on the porch (discussion -- no other libraries touching books except Wendell). Sent out a questionnaire before this anticipating disasters -- for people to ID as needing help. Volunteers for neighborhoods have been ID'd and matched with their neighbors in need. Newsletter has articles in every issue. Town Nurse Sheila Litchfield is on duty MWF -- phone calls only. Rowe Conference Center closed now. Problem: EMD resigned by April 1. Other towns all very interested in how to connect people to the Library.
- l. **Jody/Shelburne**: BOH meeting recently. Finally found a new member for their board. Weighed in on knowing how many cases there are in the area: do it! Would encourage more adherence. Their emergency management team is up and running and divided into sections under ICS. They use volunteers for senior center who are already CORI'd. Working on ID'ing who needs help. BOH now the first thing that is announced on town voicemail. Not a lot of calls yet.
- m. **Barbara/Wendell** -- working well with the rest of the town emergency management team, doing a lot of the same stuff that others are, and no one seems to be questioning the authority of the BOH. Question: who gives patients the [order to quarantine?](#) Answer: Lisa White delivers it to them. Each town has a rep she can talk over the case with. Question: What defines who needs to be part of case tracing? Lisa: Anyone within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes since symptom onset.

4. **State Emergency Funding Update** -- Phoebe described that there are two different pots of money serving 22 towns in total at COG, district and unaffiliated (Nfield, Erving, Shutesbury and Whately are funded through their inspection health districts). She described the purpose of funding and the [allowable expenses](#), updated information to be shared with towns next week. For towns in the district, the process for accessing it is for the town to send Phoebe the reimbursement form sent earlier this week. As regards PPE: These funds can only support local public health functions. These might be: the nurse monitoring folks, Senior center staff checking on frail elders (outside, hopefully), maybe offering it to food establishments. CANNOT pay for PPE for ambulance, fire, or the EDS stockpiles. We ordered a bulk supply for all our BOHS at HMCC. Ambulances can order there too. Other muni functions go through EMD. Phoebe shared that Emergency Dispensing Site caches will be restocked out of either PHEP or Homeland Security funds once the immediate crisis has passed and the supply is better.

5. Health Agent Reports.

Randy reported that he is attending BOH meetings online, helping communities with knowing what they can do with the current restrictions. He shared some good creative examples of how to have civic life go on -- church services in Charlemont, Bernardston pot pie drive-thru dinner. Food establishment status: almost no one is open. Fee schedule changes moved to July 1. Short Term Rental discussion also on hold until after COVID-19.

Lisa DB --Continuing to improve permitting software by working through discovered functional and user issues and making incremental improvements. Septic inspections & witnessing has begun - 3 TFIs in March, several upcoming scheduled; 2 SE's done with 3 more within next few weeks. Abandoned housing inventories are ongoing in Buckland & Gill. Training Grant- we will be providing Boards a survey on training types and options in meantime, Lisa offered to help anyone connect to the online LPHI trainings: Emergency Preparedness and Local BOH Role, Isolation and Quarantine, and Emergency Risk Communication. [Link to Training Site](#).

[Link to MADPH COVID Information for LBOH](#)

6. MACC -- Phoebe described the point of the new COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Center for Franklin County and asked for input. Members generally positive. Betsy shared her feeling that this meeting was very encouraging and helpful and would like to hear from folks like this again. Would like to do it again and combine with MAPHCO Steering Committee meeting. Beth asked if the MACC could help streamline all the information coming in. What conference calls should she go to. What meetings? Jody asked that the MACC share business loan info when it comes out.

Adjourned 7:20 PM.

Scribe: Phoebe Walker