



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

CPHS Oversight Board - Online Meeting Minutes November 19, 2020, 5 – 7 PM

Present:

- Bernardston – Jean Page
- Buckland - Marti Taft-Ferguson
- Charlemont - Doug Telling
- Colrain – Mike Friedlander
- Deerfield – Trevor McDaniel (left at 5:30)
- Erving – Cyd Scott
- Hawley - Cass Nawrocki
- Heath - Betsy Kovacs
- Leyden - Beth Kuzdeba
- Northfield – Bob MacEwen
- Rowe - Maggie Rice
- Shelburne – Ron Kelter

Absent: Gill, Erving, Monroe, Conway

Staff: Phoebe Walker, Lisa White, Randy Crochier, Lisa Danek Burke, Liz Jacobson-Carroll

Agenda Item	Discussion, Action
Approve Minutes:	Kovacs moved to accept the minutes of the August and September minutes, Rice seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with abstentions by Scott and Friedlander.
FRCOG Update	<p>In response to Walker’s query, attendees affirmed the effectiveness of the COVID Roundtable meetings as a means to keep OB meetings focused on the larger picture of CPHS.</p> <p>Walker provided an update on the work of the MA COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group, and the roles of the CPHS in distribution (potentially), and messaging (definitively, important). Further, she encouraged members to contact legislators to encourage them to pass the SAPHE 2.0 bill, which would provide dedicated funding for statewide public health infrastructure – for the first time ever. Kovacs advocated for the CPHS OB to work with The Recorder to educate residents on both topics.</p> <p>Regarding the CPHS budget, Walker noted target availability for voting on by the OB in December or early January, and the Council on January 28th, thus enabling town administrators to have assessment figures to work with in their own budgeting processes. She reviewed the longer term of CPHS budgeting by recalling initial state subsidies designed to foster self-sufficiency of health districts; CPHS’ subsequent revenue from grants, vaccine reimbursements, and regional collection of fees; and CPHS’ success in evening out town assessments in advance of its 5-year goal. CPHS has grown from having 6 comprehensive/4 shared-services member towns in FY 2013 to 10 comprehensive/5 shared-services member towns in FY 2021, she noted with the aid of color-coded maps of the county.</p> <p>For the benefit of new OB members, Walker provided pictures and information regarding the roles of the CPHS staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Nursing Team: Lead PH Nurse Lisa White (in fy21 budget full time): PH Nurse Meg Burch (not in FY 21 budget, working 3-10 hours/week); COVID PH Nurse Melanie Zamojski (not in fy21 budget, working 1015 hours/week); Flu Clinic Administrator Barbara Wroblewski (not in fy21 budget, working 10-15 hours/week): and Jeanette Voas (not in fy21 budget, working 10-15 hours/week).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Inspection and Permitting Team: Health Agent Randy Crochier (in fy21 budget full time); Health Agent Lisa Dank Burke (in fy21 budget, working 25 hours/week); Permitting Software Technical Assistant Paul Lemelin (in FY 21 budget at 3 hours/week, but working 5 hours/week). <p>Walker reviewed budgeting principled adopted by the Board in 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping all current members is important • Adding new members is desirable • All members should be charged fairly • Towns should not be penalized for using the district staff more • Increases in town funding are necessary for the long-term stability of the district • Increase in town funding for the health district should be gradual • Reliance on grants for >25% of the budget should not be part of the long-term plan <p>Potential expense increases for FY 2022 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health insurance - currently assuming 3% increase • salaries – currently assuming 2.5% increase • additional staff hours to address COVID pandemic, housing boom, eviction crisis, potential addition of Ashfield; and the nursing program (even without COVID) <p>Walker praised the district’s success in leveraging nearly a hundred thousand dollars in grant funding thus far to address the challenges presented by the pandemic, then asked OB members to consider next steps should similar funding not be available going forward. Do we ask towns for more money, or curb services? Are we willing to continue services without guaranteed funding from the state or other sources? She indicated that such questions will need to be addressed at the December OB meeting. In response to a question from Kovacs, Walker indicated that should federal funding be announced immediately following the presidential inauguration, a re-convening of the OB in late January may be needed.</p> <p>Discussion topics included the pros and cons of relying on CTC staff over CPHS staff for contact tracing; the potential funding/purchasing of COVID vaccination clinic supplies; the likelihood that hospitals, health clinics and pharmacies will administer the early phases of vaccine distribution; and the reporting requirements of a pending prescription-only home test kit for COVID.</p>
Public Health Nursing Report	<p>White reported on the tremendous increase in numbers of people receiving an influenza vaccine through the series of CPHS clinics this fall – approximately double that of the previous years. Walker noted that the rate of vaccination was significantly higher in CPHS towns than in other towns in the county. White continues to submit forms to UMass Medical for reimbursement, thus making the clinics self-supporting. Wroblewski has entered all vaccines into MAVEN. Taft-Ferguson thanked White for her good work and extraordinarily long hours spent on the effort. Regarding future COVID vaccine clinics, Crochier suggested a more regional approach, at one or more larger venues, to more efficiently use volunteer, staff and other resources. White indicated that she is actively considering signage and supplies while awaiting information about the vaccine.</p> <p>White noted that contact tracing during the recent wave of COVID cases has revealed significantly more contacts per case, and that more children are contracting the virus. While observing an increasing number of adult cases, most adults have been diagnosed early due to enhanced screening in the region, she said. All cases are reported to Shelburne Control/Dispatch so that first-responders will be notified prior to entering the home of an infected individual.</p> <p>White indicated that she is aiming to convince CTC to report on cases regionally, not town-by-town, and that their doing so will provide LBOH members with better information. The nursing staff is struggling to keep up with COVID contact tracing while continuing other work, she said,</p>

	<p>and requested OB support for sending more cases – particularly those that are straightforward and are likely not to require extensive local knowledge -- to CTC. Walker referred to CTCs recent staff increases, and the importance of their role as part of the CPHS back-up system.</p> <p>White referred to her work with residents regarding other infectious diseases. Also, she reminded OB members that tick-borne diseases continue to be contracted locally, and that individuals with severe fatigue, fever, and joint pain are sometimes misdiagnosed with osteoarthritis.</p> <p>White and Walker thanked BOH members for continuing to push COVID prevention information to their communities, especially holiday-related messaging, offered additional posters, and promised a “hard questions” sheet currently under development. Scott thanked White, noting that they are “ectstatic in Erving” with the services she is providing.</p>
<p>Health Agents Report</p>	<p>Danek Burke and Crochier reported on a substantial amount of field work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing levels of well and septic-related field work related to the boom in the housing market, new home construction, and the prevalence of people working at home • increasing calls for housing safety inspections • continuing need for food inspections • plans to begin permitting short term rentals in January 2021 <p>In regards to the state’s Abandoned Housing Initiative, Crochier reported on recent meetings with representatives from Gill and Buckland, and with the FRCOG’s Housing Coordinator, Senior Planner Alyssa Larose. Danek Burke and Walker enthusiastically noted increasing interest and participation in the program among county towns. Scott shared methods used by Erving, and early adopter of the program with significant results.</p> <p>Danek Burke and Walker touted the imminent start of the State’s on-line training program for LBOH members, asking OB members to encourage their colleagues to enroll. Ideally, all BOH members would individually take each of the two classes (and participate in the corresponding culminating discussion sessions) each month, resulting in certification. While currently optional, certification will be required eventually.</p>
<p>Member Updates</p>	<p>Walker welcomed Erving and Northfield as new Board members attending for the first time.</p> <p>Rice reported that the Rowe BOH is meeting weekly with the COVID team, which initiates a weekly automated telephone message to townspeople. Further, they recently received grant funds for a paper compactor for the transfer station, have begun budget development, and are delighted to have hired public health nurse Chelsea Bezold after a 5-month vacancy.</p> <p>MacEwen reported that Northfield has been pleased to work with White and other CPHS staff on the flu clinic and other concerns.</p> <p>Kuzdeba indicated that Leyden was amazed by the efficiency of the “small army” that ran their flu clinic; and that they are working toward getting holiday/COVID prevention messaging out via town newsletter, and by responding to individual calls.</p> <p>Kovacs said that the Heath BOH is doing much the same as those in other towns, has one recently condemned building, and is working to maintain safety at public buildings used by residents without high-speed internet in their homes.</p> <p>Nawrocki indicated that Hawley has joined the Abandoned Housing Initiative; that two public buildings with high-speed access remain open to students to pursue schoolwork; and that the Town is resisting purchasing software to enable remote meetings of boards and committees. Walker said that CPHS may be able to purchase the software for the LBOH.</p>

	<p>Friedlander indicated that the Colrain BOH was criticized for setting a bad example, so has stopped meeting in person. Martin-Anzuoni, the new chair, will set-up remote meetings going forward. The library has upgraded its ventilation system and hopes to open to the public, on a limited basis, soon.</p> <p>Telling said that the Charlemont BOH has successfully promoted public health/COVID prevention messaging through posters and other means around town.</p> <p>Taft-Ferguson reported that non-compliance with the statewide mask mandate prompted some conflict at the Buckland transfer station recently, but that town police are now successfully enforcing it. The town hall remains closed, and the library continues curbside pickup, she said. The BOH has approved plans for The Mill to hold an outdoor craft fair on the Saturday after Thanksgiving; the town administrator is including their public health messaging in a town newsletter; and ventilation improvements have been completed at Mohawk Trail MS/HS. Further, the BOH is pursuing funding through the MA Shared Streets and Spaces Program to enable small businesses downtown to remain open during the pandemic, and to promote walking from downtown to the middle/high school.</p> <p>Page noted that Bernardston BOH has been busy with Title 5 inspections and perc tests; has joined the Abandoned Housing Initiative; and sent the school back to the remote-learning modality after a student tested positive. They will be addressing a communication problem between first-responders and Shelburne Control/Dispatch regarding COVID-19 status of residences in town; Walker summarized related law and suggested means to address concerns.</p>
	<p>The meeting adjourned at 7 PM.</p>