



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

CPHS Oversight Board - Online Meeting Minutes December 30, 2020, 5 – 7 PM

Present:

- Bernardston – Jean Page, Barbara Killeen
- Buckland - Marti Taft-Ferguson
- Charlemont - Doug Telling, Rob Lingle
- Conway – Devon Whitney-Deal, Veronique Blanchard
- Erving – Bryan Smith
- Heath - Betsy Kovacs
- Rowe - Maggie Rice

Absent: Colrain, Deerfield, Hawley, Leyden, Monroe, Northfield, Shelburne, Gill

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

Agenda Item	Discussion, Action
Approve Minutes:	Lacking a quorum of members present at the start of the meeting, no vote was taken.
FRCOG Update	<p>Walker explained the many “moving parts” affecting the CPHS FY21 and FY22 budget planning. In short, while she is reasonably confident that the district will end the current fiscal year in good stead, uncertainty regarding several sources of funding are cause for concern for next year. As a result, she proposed a 20% increase in town assessments for FY22. Walker reported that local, regional and statewide advocacy looks like it may pay off in a significant increase in funding for public health infrastructure in the next state budget. She is hopeful that a stronger system is on the horizon, and will share what she learns in the coming weeks, and will reduce the FY22 budget if significant funds arrive.</p> <p>Re CPHS budget FY21: While no additional money was allocated, the spending window for the current CPHS allocation of CARES Act funding has been extended through December, 2021. Walker will provide a spreadsheet indicating each town’s spending to date.</p> <p>Re CPHS budget FY22: Walker summarized which costs are known and unknown in the budget, noting that while attendees could vote to approve it tonight, they may wait until 1/21/21 to do so while still getting their proposal to the COG Council to approve at their 1/28/21 meeting. The budget includes funding for COVID case management on MAVEN, an increased demand for housing inspections, continued high demand for Title 5 inspections, short term rental inspections, COVID vaccine clinics, flu clinics, and re-starting local wellness clinics (when safe, adding Northfield and Bernardston). Ashfield has also expressed interest in learning more about district membership, she noted.</p> <p>Known cost increases include staff health insurance (3%) and competitive market salary adjustments (2.5%), and increases in staff hours for nursing and health agent work. The COG administrative rate will remain at 11%, Walker’s time will continue to be covered by other sources – the FRCOG and current COVID funding. Walker reviewed what is known regarding grant</p>

	<p>support from the state (for local BOHs and SAPHE). Unknown grant funds including possibilities for healthy aging work from various sources, from the FDA for food safety work.</p> <p>Several significant unknowns make detailed budgeting and program planning difficult. These include: the timing of the COVID vaccine roll-out for the general public; the length of time for which it will be effective; the role CPHS will play in its administration; the extent of COVID management work that will be needed; and the future impact of the ongoing pandemic recession on CPHS work tied to home sales, restaurants, and events. Further, she said, we don't know what the state budget will include for local public health funding or SAPHE regional districts, what the federal government will provide to help local public health entities to fight COVID, how much CARES Act funding towns have left to support contact tracing, or how much revenues our fees will generate.</p> <p>Walker's budget proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds 12 hours a week of staff time, and assumes there will still be some federal and state support for most COVID-related staffing in FY22. • involves a greater percent of the budget being covered by fees and town assessments • requires a 20% increase in town assessment amounts • may be revised prior to annual town meetings, if federal or state bailouts materialize • includes two full-time health agents; a full-time and at least one part-time public health nurse; and 3 hours/week from the software support assistant <p>For context, Walker provided a chart or graph showing overall permit fee revenue for the past 8 years; fee revenue by town for the past 12 months; overall permit fees waived for the past 12 months; and assessments, by town, since FY18 – and she explained the assessment formula. She noted the near 100% success rate of CPHS contact tracing compared with the approximately 80% achieved by the CTC. Lastly, she explained that by increasing the town assessments, the need for special town meetings (to ask for additional funding to administer a vaccine) during a pandemic may be avoided. She will provide bullet points for an “elevator speech” for members to give at annual town meetings. A “straw vote” indicated support for the budget as proposed.</p>
<p>COVID VACCINE</p>	<p>Walker is a member of the state's COVID Vaccine Advisory Group and has convened a small group of local representatives from organizations that are and will be administering the COVID-19 vaccine. These include FRCOG/CPHS, CHCFC, Baystate Franklin, CVS, Walgreens, Valley Medical Group and LifePath. She explained the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 vaccinations (of healthcare workers) are well underway statewide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local first responders, unhappy that they were slated to receive the vaccine in Phase 1c, not 1a., but will soon be served by the Greenfield Health Dept and the CHCFC has already scheduled time for the squads of approximately a dozen communities. An on-going clinic at the UMass campus center remains available to them as well. ○ Local pharmacies have implemented a good system to vaccinate nursing home residents ○ LifePath is assembling a list of home healthcare workers for imminent immunization in the rest of Phase 1. • Phase 2 vaccinations (of specific at-risk populations) is still being planned. CPHS will likely be opening vaccination clinics for elders in the district. • Planning for Phase 3 vaccinations (of the general public under the age of 65) in Franklin County is in capable hands and proceeding rapidly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CPHS will be involved in administering vaccines in Phase 3 to the general public under the age of 65. Fewer, larger clinics than those run for influenza vaccination in the fall of 2020 will be necessary to meet the need, enable workers to collect and process the increase in paperwork for each person, and simplify logistics. As in the

	<p>fall, CPHS will partner with the COG's Emergency Preparedness Program, other health departments, and local EDS groups, pooling expertise and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Walker is gently pressuring others in the healthcare system to run additional large drive-through clinic in the county. <p>Information and a recording on a recent COVID vaccine information session given by a professor at Western New England University is available on the meeting link on the FRCOG website calendar</p>
Public Health Nursing Report	<p>White reported on a significant increase in contact tracing and COVID case management in recent weeks. Since Thanksgiving, the staff has been working with approximately 100 infected individuals and their 200 contacts. In addition to time-consuming contact tracing, each of these involves individual counseling regarding isolation and quarantine requirements, follow-up during that period, and referrals to local social service agencies, as needed. Staff members have developed a "case catcher" system to ensure seamless passing of cases between themselves and the CTC, and alert both the local BOH and dispatch center when new cases are identified. While they are managing the workload successfully, they are feeling the strain. White noted the importance of having one individual from each BOH available to help as needed; for example, Gill's BOH contact has visited non-compliant households, bringing with him a police officer to emphasize local enforcement capacity. With senior centers still closed, staff are unable to return to healthy-aging programming, despite interest.</p>
Health Agents Report	<p>Crochier noted that he and Danek Burke provide back-up follow-up assistance to the nursing staff. They remain busy: Crochier has attended more than 100 local BOH meetings since the start of the pandemic, and inspected most of the approximately 100 food-serving/tobacco-selling establishments in the district; Danek Burke has taken on the bulk of the increase in other field work. Crochier noted that virtually all of the existing restaurants have applied for permits for the coming year, and only three restaurants have closed permanently since March. Danek Burke noted that local wells continue to run dry, notably in Leyden, in part because residents are at home more during the pandemic. Similarly, there has been an increase in septic failures as the need for more frequent pumping has been overlooked by some homeowners. Work with two towns to prioritize lists of abandoned housing continues, and additional towns have joined the state initiative.</p>
Member Updates	<p>Most members reported no major changes in ongoing work since the last meeting. Charlemont is working with Berkshire East on its plans to open soon. Conway is looking to replace BOH member Marie Iken, who had managed their food-safety program. (Crochier noted that while he is currently unable to plan a ServSafe class in the foreseeable future, on-line classes are available.) Erving expressed gratitude for the support provided to residents by the CPHS nursing staff. Heath is addressing congestion in town hall/post office building. Rowe reported good work from their new public health nurse in administering vaccines to homebound residents, fifteen weeks without a single case at the elementary school, and regular robo-calls from the COVID task force.</p>
Adjournment	<p>The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2021; a quorum will be needed to vote on the CPHS budget for FY 22. The meeting adjourned at 7 PM.</p>
Documents viewed or provided:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPHSOvBrd Agenda_2021.12.30 • CPHS OB Meeting Minutes 2020.11.19 • Towns' spending of CPHS CARES Act funding • FY22 Budget Conversation #1 November 19 • CPHS FY22 Budget proposed assessments • FY22 Budget Conversation #2 2020.12.30 • "Sars-2-CoV Vaccine Candidates Info Session Dec 30 2020" (Keane-Moore, Ph.D. Western New England Univ.)