



**CPHS Oversight Board –Online Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2021**

**Member Attendance:**

Ashfield	Absent	Erving-	Leo Parent
Bernardston-	Jean Page	Gill-	Absent
Buckland-	Peggy Hart	Hawley-	Absent
Charlemont-	Doug Telling, Mae Tanner	Heath-	Barbara Gordon
Colrain-	Nina Martin-Anzuoni	Leyden-	Beth Kuzdeba
Conway-	Devon Whitney-Deal, Kathy Llamas	Monroe-	Absent
Deerfield-	Trevor McDaniel, Carolyn Shores Ness	Northfield-	Absent
		Rowe-	Maggie Rice
		Shelburne-	Fritz Vohr

**Staff Attendance:** Randy Crochier, Lisa Danek Burke, Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Maureen O’Reilly, Meg Ryan, Kurt Schellenberg, Phoebe Walker, Lisa White, Melanie Zamojski

**Introductions & Town Updates**

- Charlemont – Telling introduced new BOH member Mae Tanner.
- Deerfield – McDaniel and Shores Ness reported that 387 people were served by the “vax bus” at the elementary school the previous day, and that there are two clusters of cases at the school.
- Shelburne – Vohr noted that while the BOH rescinded the mask mandate, most stores and restaurants continue to require that they be worn.
- Heath – Gordon said that while ticks are active in town, the BOH is wrapping-up their work on a cluster of cases. A dog recently tested positive for Lyme disease and anaplasmosis. The BOH is planning a COVID summit in the Town Hall.
- Leyden – There have been a breakthrough case or two each week, Kuzdeba said. The public safety department is in turmoil, and the BOH is wondering what they can do to facilitate emergency services.
- Colrain – The BOH is maintaining the mask mandate, at least until the next meeting in December, despite some pushback, Martin-Anzuoni said.
- Erving – The Town does not have a mandate, Parent reported. The BOH has two new members.
- Buckland – The BOH decided last night to maintain the mandate, with cases rising to 7 this week, and to align with the schools, which will maintain mandates until January. Taft-Ferguson resigned from the BOH, and the Select Board is accepting letters of interest for her replacement.

**Approve Meeting Minutes**

With a motion from Rice, seconded by Gordon, the minutes of the October 28, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

**Public Health Nursing Report**

Ryan reported that Franklin County has moved back into the high transmission category in the ratings from the Public Health Institute of Western MA. Yesterday there were 15 known cases within CPHS, she said. This mirrors an increase in cases statewide. She reiterated the importance of vaccinations and masking, noting that only 1.3% of vaccinated people catch COVID. She shared a chart created by

Jeannette Voas that indicates that vaccinated patients have far milder symptoms than those of the unvaccinated. The vaccinated patients that need hospitalization are overwhelmingly those with additional health conditions. While the CPHS nurses are no longer staffing large vaccination clinics, they continue to vaccinate individuals in the member towns, one walk-in clinic per week. In response to a question, she indicated that six Franklin County COVID patients are hospitalized. While that number is manageable, the hospitals are nonetheless overwhelmed due to a surge in deferred-care visits, she said, and to approximately 1 in 5 healthcare workers leaving their jobs (nationwide). There was discussion of an increase in influenza cases after so little of it in the winter of 2020-21.

Ryan and White summarized other outreach efforts, noting that some towns are considering fuller participation in the district. Ryan plans to send a community assessment pertaining to the age-friendliness of our towns' hard and soft infrastructure, after the holidays. O'Reilly has been focused on contact tracing, but hopes to assess community education needs early in 2022. She welcomes suggestions from BOH members regarding what topics are relevant to their communities, and whether they are interested in workshops, talks, newsletter articles or other means of education. There was discussion regarding the need to make HIP/SNAP known more broadly in the community, and of ways to disseminate information to the many eligible people that are not enjoying the free local produce. The use of posters, handouts, social media and local cable channels can circumvent the experience of stigma that in-person events may conjure, it was noted. Ryan shared the "Layer Up" winter gatherings safety tip sheet recently developed and distributed by staff.

Walker reported that she is in conversation with the company running the "vax busses", and that they have taken constructive criticism and made several adjustments. Notably, they will be using the Color software to enhance the registration process beginning on Monday. It is important to convey to residents that they can get a shot at any of the vax buses, regardless of registration status.

### **Budget Development Process for FY23**

Crochier reviewed the budget timeline, which includes deadlines for the Oversight Board and the FRCOG Council voting in January and, after that, communications with towns prior to town meetings. Members may vote on proposed changes to the budget at the December meeting, Walker said, though it more commonly takes until January to put together the final document. She shared a chart indicating various town meeting dates, noting that the CPHS OB must give finance committees and Select Boards ample time to review the budget it before asking residents to approve the corresponding expenditure for membership.

Crochier reviewed changes in the district over time, including maps indicating a gradual increase in the number of member towns. He shared the operating principles and goals of CPHS, articulated at its founding: add member town(s) every year; charge fairly; avoid penalizing towns for utilizing nursing services; and increase town assessments gradually over time to achieve sustainability. Also, he referred to the original goal of limiting grant funding to 25% of the budget; this no longer pertains, as ongoing state funding now accounts for a larger percentage of revenue. Lastly, he noted that increases in staff health insurance and salaries may increase assessments this year. Anticipated revenue includes \$95,000 from assessments, \$285,000 from the PHE grant, \$25,000 from the Healthy Aging initiative, and \$87,000 in state funds for contact tracing. Shores Ness expressed frustration regarding Deerfield's assessment, saying that White has been stretched too thin, that CPHS has been slow to hire additional nurses, and that the cost of 8 hours of CPHS nursing approaches that of Deerfield hiring its own full-time nurse. She indicated that the Town may be leaving the district, as was the understanding of CPHS staff, but that a final decision had not been made.

Crochier and Walker summarized DPH's recent overhaul of contact tracing guidelines, and indicated that CPHS staff, while somewhat reducing the number of follow-up calls, will maintain a thorough and

personalized process. Typically, this will include two live conversations during the period of isolation/quarantine, will *not* include the leaving of private information on voice mail, and will continue to be guided by staff members' good judgement. That has served constituents well, as has LBOH member support. O'Reilly has developed written materials, too, which they will now begin sending to those in isolation or quarantine.

### **Health Agents Report**

Crochier expressed enthusiasm for the new CPHS staff. Schellenberg, who has been accompanying Crochier and Danek Burke in the field, and O'Reilly, who has been accompanying White and Ryan, are learning a great deal quickly, he said. He announced two policy changes coming in a month or so: 1.) water tests will be required prior to the sale of a property; and 2.) while the existing septic inspection fee will remain for residential properties, a separate and higher fee will be charged (amount TBD) to better reflect the significantly greater staff time required for commercial properties. He noted that staff have yet to catch up with the inspection of short-term rental properties begun in FY21, but that efforts continue. Crochier promised an email message regarding the state's Neighborhood Renewal (abandoned and derelict housing) program, and encouraged members to take stock of relevant properties in their town. Danek Burke noted that Schellenberg will be taking the lead among CPHS staff on this work, and that several additional towns have signed on to the initiative. Further, she reported that the high volume of inspection requests continues; 52 applications were received since the October 25 meeting, including a flurry of temporary food vendors interested in an annual holiday event in Shelburne Falls.

### **Election of Co-Chair to fill Marti's term**

Gordon made a motion to elect Maggie Rice as CPHS Oversight Board Co-Chair (along with Doug Telling); McDaniel seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.