



Public Health
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Cooperative Public Health Service
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

CPHS Oversight Board Online Meeting Minutes January 20, 2022

Member Attendance:

Ashfield	Caroline White	Gill-	absent
Bernardston-	Jean Page	Hawley-	absent
Buckland-	Terry Estes	Heath-	Barbara Gordon
Charlemont-	Mae Tanner, Doug Telling	Leyden-	Beth Kuzdeba
Colrain-	Nina Martin-Anzuoni	Monroe-	absent
Conway-	absent	Northfield-	Ali Wahlstom
Deerfield-	Trevor McDaniel	Rowe-	Maggie Rice
Erving-	absent	Shelburne-	Fritz Vohr

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

Introductions & Town Updates

- **Ashfield/White:** The BOH remain unsuccessful in encouraging Neighbor's convenience store employees to adhere to the mask mandate; otherwise, things are quiet.
- **Bernardston/Page:** The controversy surrounding the mask mandate has subsided, and the BOH distributed test kits on Saturday.
- **Buckland/Estes:** COVID case numbers are up and down, the mask mandate remains, and the topic was not an issue at the last BOH meeting. The Fire Department received funding to purchase masks, and has been distributing them. Estes recommended the YouTube channel brittlestar for a humorous take on mask/vax resistance.
- **Charlemont/Telling:** the BOH instituted a mask mandate; a new restaurant plans to delay opening until the mandate is removed, and two existing businesses refused to put up the signs. The BOH distributed testing kits at the town hall and through various means, including via first responders.
- **Colrain/Martin-Anzuoni:** The BOH distributed test kits via the library, town hall, school, and first responders, and has been asked by town hall staff to purchase more. COVID cases are 2 to 3 times higher than last year, and the mask mandate will remain in place. At her job in a local doctor's office, Martin-Anzuoni's days are busy answering COVID questions and making test appointments.
- **Deerfield/McDaniel:** An explosion of COVID case numbers has resulted, in part, from boarding school students testing positive from home, or upon arrival; many organizations have been impacted, and businesses disrupted. The CPHS nurses are very helpful, and the BOH is hoping things will stabilize soon.
- **Heath/Gordon:** The BOH scrambled in order to distribute 90% of their COVID tests by Christmas eve via the food pantry, elementary school, meals-on-wheels program, a list of at-risk residents, and the town nurse. The

library staff and BOH decided to return to window-service only; the BOH is eager for a rubric to determine when to tighten and loosen restrictions in town in the future.

- **Leyden/Kuzdeba:** The mask mandate for town offices stands, and will be evaluated monthly. Test kits were distributed before Christmas. COVID cases have skyrocketed in the past two weeks to 15.
- **Northfield/Wahlstrom:** The BOH instituted a mask mandate, despite pushback, and has received little feedback.
- **Rowe/Rice:** The BOH has kept its mask mandate in place, and hired both a BOH secretary and a transfer station attendant at last night's meeting. They continue to search for a new town nurse, and remain grateful to CPHS nurses for their Monday visits. Cases have increased at the school, and Rice is working closely with nurse Lydia to track and trace.
- **Shelburne/Vohr:** Currently there are six cases in town, none particularly ill; Walker confirmed Vohr's assessment that they are likely of the omicron variant. She noted that someone has altered and re-posted copies of a FRCOG 'masks required' sign to contradict the original message; she has reported it to MAHB.

Approve Meeting Minutes

With a motion from Gordon, seconded by McDaniel, the minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously, with one abstention (Page), and with minor amendments.

Review Draft Budget for FY23

After sharing a circle graph depicting CPHS's core services surrounded by additional grant-funded programming, and a pie chart of core funding (26% assessments + 15% permit fees = 41%) and leveraged funding (2% vax admin + 44% PHE + 13% contact tracing = 59%), Crochier led the board's third discussion of the FY23 budget. He and Walker reviewed CPHS revenue sources, costs covered by town assessments vs. those funded by grants, fiscal realities and proposed compensatory actions, and the role of board members in the budget approval process. Revenue sources include: Healthy Aging grant, \$25,000; epidemiology/contact tracing grant, \$87,000; Public Health Excellence grant, \$285,000; permit revenue, \$95,000; vaccine administration fees, \$10,000; member town assessments, TBD but \$169,321 in FY22 minus Deerfield's contribution of \$21,867.) Unusual expenses include a staff COLA of up to 6% (driven by CPI) and a staff salary longevity adjustment. Compensatory revenue increases and expense reduction measures include: cutting the part-time Software TA position, seeking DLTA funds for abandoned housing and age-friendly work, increasing use of contact tracing and PHE grant money in FY22 to add about \$15K to our "rainy day fund" for FY23. In all, these changes result in a \$16,000 reduction in the CPHS Membership Assessments overall, a 4% proposed increase in individual town assessments, with no decrease in core staff or service. Crochier showed a spreadsheet of assessment amounts by town FY19-FY23, and noted the CPHS OB's approval of a 20% increase last year, which was ultimately reduced to a 2.5% increase upon receipt of the PHE grant. The proposed FY23 assessments remain below those approved for FY22, he noted.

In response to questions, Walker offered several explanations: Bernardston's assessment appears high because the town does not benefit from septic permit fees that offset expenses in the calculation of full-member towns' assessments; the use of \$15,000 FY22 contract-tracing funding as retained earnings for use in FY23 will partially bridge the loss of assessment funds from Deerfield; and the resignation of a FRCOG staff member enabled the transfer of unused Community Health Improvement Program funding to similar CPHS housing-related work, thus preserving other district funding in FY22. Further, she spoke to the anticipated reliability of multi-year and renewable grant-funding.

Regarding next steps, Crochier requested immediate approval of the budget (with or without changes), which he explained will be followed by a full Council vote on January 27th, and the subsequent sending of

assessment figures to towns for inclusion in their own FY23 budget planning. The role of CPHS OB members, he said, is to reach out to their towns' Select Board/COG Council representatives to express support for the final number approved by the CPHS OB. He shared a list of Council representatives by town. Both Crochier and Walker emphasized their availability to attend any finance committee or select board meeting to discuss the CPHS membership assessment.

McDaniel expressed his appreciation for work done by the CPHS OB in recent years, cited his gratitude for his own and Deerfield's involvement, and signaled his general approval of the FY23 budget despite his plan to abstain from voting. **With a roll-call by town vote, the budget was accepted unanimously, with one abstention.**

Public Health Nursing Report

Regarding COVID, Ryan described new opportunities for rapid antigen testing available from the state for town employees; this test must be monitored, so she encouraged members to contact her to schedule a clinic in their towns for first responders, DPW workers and others. White summarized the recent and frequent changes in contact tracing protocols coming from DPH, and CPHS's effort to adapt and work within the state guidelines. Staff are abbreviating individual contact tracing while shifting toward efforts to stave off outbreaks in cluster settings, she said. O'Reilly articulated the dramatic increase in cases to 370 and 320 in the past two weeks. She described contacting individuals via text and land lines, and directing them to the FRCOG site with information and links for what to do following a positive test. Discussion topics included methods of contacting the newly diagnosed, problematic lag-times in the receipt of data, difficulties with MAVEN, the impact of household spread on case counts in small towns, and the undercounting of cases due to un-reported positive home tests. Regarding vaccinations, White continues to seek out and administer to the homebound, and the team of White/Ryan/Choate have scheduled a one-day circuit including Rowe, Charlemont, Buckland, Conway, Deerfield and Erving residences and municipal buildings. Walker announced that mobile vaccination clinics will again visit the area, though the provider has changed, the clinics will be indoors, and the term "vax bus" should be avoided.

Ryan, whose presentation at The Senior Center serving Shelburne, Buckland and Ashfield was well received, announced that a survey to assess community needs pertaining to healthy aging will be emailed on Monday. Paper copies and drop-boxes are also available, she said, and encouraged members to contact her with suggestions for how to ensure data collection amply robust to appropriately guide 3-5 years worth of activity.

Health Agents Report

Schellenberg reported on a deep dive into the permitting software, and the successful renewal of 71 annual food permit renewals – each of which requires employee certification in three areas of food safety, passing septic and water systems, workers compensation coverage and more. He will continue to pursue the businesses not yet permitted. The permitting of short-term rentals has been less successful, he said, due to the difficulty of contacting owners who do not receive mail at the rental address, and the complexity of synthesizing data from DOR with two FRCOG databases. He has recently had some success using the MassGIS and MassLandRecords websites to match properties to owners. He will continue this pursuit of owners' compliance to ensure the safety of those renting these properties. Crochier indicated that several recent housing cases have provided learning opportunities for Schellenberg, as will the recent request for a review of a planned swimming pool at the Buckland Recreation Center.

Danek Burke indicated that a record number of Title IV inspections and percolation tests were conducted in 2021, and that she will give a full report at the February meeting. Currently he is reviewing a few complicated

commercial septic plans, cleaning up system records, reviewing the fee schedule for possible changes, and updating the descriptions of policies and procedures on the website.

Annual Report

Walker reviewed the current practice of CPHS sending each town a thorough written report along with the more quantitative information included in the larger FRCOG report to each town. Noting some duplication of data that could cause confusion amongst readers, she asked if members still wanted the former; all replied affirmatively.

PHE Workplan – tabled until the February meeting.

SAPHE 2.0 Coalition Report

Walker announced that the statewide coalition of local public health officials successfully drafted and advocated for the passage of Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community Act (SAPHE 2.0). Passage of this bill will: ensure minimum public health standards for every community; increase capacity and effectiveness by encouraging municipalities to share services; create a uniform data collection and reporting system; and establish a sustainable state funding mechanism to support local boards of health and health departments.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Documents Viewed or Referenced:

- CPHSOvBrd Agenda_2022.01.20
- CPHS town assessment history 2019 to 23
- CPHS Budget: amended FY22 and proposed FY23 1 18 22
- Slides for FY23 Budget Conversation Number 3 January 20 2022
- 2021.12.16 CPHS OB Meeting Minutes
- Winter Mobile COVID Vaccine Clinic Flyer 1.18.22
- CPHS weekly case count graph for oversight meeting
- Rapid Antigen FAQ