



**Public Health**  
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**Cooperative Public Health Service**  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## CPHS Oversight Board Online Meeting Minutes January 12, 2023

### Member Attendance:

Ashfield	Caroline White	Gill-	Jeff Blomstedt
Bernardston-	absent	Hawley-	absent
Buckland-	Carmela Lanza-Weil	Heath-	Susan Gruen
Charlemont-	Doug Telling	Leyden-	Beth Kuzdeba
Colrain-	Nina Martin-Anzuoni	Monroe-	absent
Conway-	Tilda Hunting, Kat Llamas, Emily Sweet	Northfield-	absent
	Jackie Choate	Rowe-	Herb Butzke
Erving-	absent	Shelburne-	Fritz Vohr

**Staff Attendance:** Randy Crochier, Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Maureen O'Reilly, Kurt Schellenberg, Phoebe Walker

### Agenda Item(s):

#### Introductions & Town Updates

Members introduced themselves and shared news from their towns. Topics included: new select board members; the status of problematic properties; work being done on BOH policies & procedures; BOH member recruitment and education; the development and distribution of town-specific resource contact sheets; concerns regarding the spread of new COVID variants and other respiratory conditions; and the pending shutdown of a privately owned sewer district in Colrain.

#### Approve Meeting Minutes

With a motion by Gruen, seconded by Vohr, the minutes of the December 15, 2022 meeting were accepted unanimously by roll call.

#### DPH Regional Field Training Hub Grant: What It Means for CPHS and Impacts on Budget

Crochier announced that FRCOG has signed a 3-year contract with DPH – after significant and successful negotiating by Walker -- to become one of 10 regional public health training hubs in the state. He explained that DPH had identified FRCOG as the ideal hub organization in the region, but FRCOG turned down the initial invitation to apply due to under-specified terms. Going forward, once the program is underway, FRCOG will provide consistent field training for agents in Franklin and Hampshire counties, and may hire up to 4 new (not replacement) FTEs, gradually enhancing the professional ecosystem in which CPHS and other regional public health programs operate. A position advertisement for a trainer is now posted externally, and one for a clerk will soon be posted internally. The trainer will serve as a health agent when not training, providing back-up for existing agents – especially in the early months as the Field Training program gets up and running. The clerk will provide administrative support to the

agents when not coordinating training -- thus allowing them more time for plan review and field work. (Crochier and Walker noted the availability of multiple open positions at FRCOG, encouraging attendees to spread the word.) Agents are pursuing further training regarding the handling of housing cases.

### **Budget – FY24**

Crochier reviewed FY23 revenue by funding source and its proportion of the overall budget: town assessments (22%), permit revenue (14%), epidemiology grant (13%), healthy aging grants (4%), the PHE grant (41%), FRCOG “rainy day” funds (2%), and vaccine administration reimbursement (4%). Negative changes reflected in the proposed FY24 budget include the loss of the healthy aging and epidemiology grants; increases in the cost of staff health insurance and one salary; and increased rent for the JWOTC and Buckland office. Potential positive changes include using DLTA funds and additional PHE funding to address recently documented shortcomings in staff capacity.

Crochier reminded attendees of the reasons why CPHS charges towns an annual assessment rather than billing hourly for services rendered. He noted that 22% of the CPHS budget comes from assessments, and that for every \$1 paid by member towns, CPHS secures roughly \$2 in grant funding. He referenced a February review and potential adjustment to the fee schedule that would more equitably charge individual users of the service rather than all taxpayers (as is currently the case, via town assessments).

Crochier then displayed a pair of charts illustrating that town assessments and permit fees are directed toward 2.3 FTE’s performing CPHS’s core/mandated services (permitting, inspecting, licensing, disease monitoring), and that grants and other sources allow for additional staff time surrounding and supports that through food and housing safety, vax and wellness clinics, health education, age/dementia-friendly community development, etc.. He summarized changes and aspirations for the coming year (and beyond) regarding each of these, noting anticipated and customary risks, and various factors at play in budgeting. With a bar chart he reviewed town assessment totals over several years, and then shared specific figures for each district town from FY19 - FY24. Discussion topics included the means by which towns advise FRCOG on the use of DLTA funds, vaccine reimbursement revenue, and the use of FRCOG retained earnings.

*S. Gruen motioned to accept the FY24 CPHS budget as presented, F. Vohr seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call.*

### **Health Agents Report**

Crochier reiterated that the hiring of a health agent has been on hold while FRCOG plans to become a DPH Training Hub have been under development, that the hiring of a trainer is underway, and plans for an administrative coordinator to join the team are progressing. There are office space concerns, he said, but expressed confidence in staff to think creatively and collaboratively to address these. He recognized Schellenberg for work on a specific property long in receivership that is now back on the tax rolls in Gill. Neighborhood Renewal Program (receivership for abandoned properties) work with the AG’s office continues, he added.

### **Public Health Nursing Report**

O’Reilly referenced more widespread COVID infection that official counts are capturing. She characterized her work with the public health nurses to normalize and increase vaccination/booster uptake in the community, and the importance of interleaving of public messaging on the topic with other concerns. She

indicated renewed funding from the state, plans for a small clinic in Buckland, and probable protocol with site administrators and 3<sup>rd</sup> party vax vendors for any future clinics.

**Other Items and Adjournment:**

Discussion touched on resources for addressing domestic hoarding, and potential joint contracting for robo-call services. Walker reminded members to attend or send a representative to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> local public health roundtable for important discussion regarding use of towns' opioid settlement funds. She will present a proposal to pool these within the region, thus enabling "more bang for your small buck."

On a motion by Lanza-Weil, seconded by White, the meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

**Documents Viewed or Referenced:**

- CPHSOvBrd Agenda\_2023.1.12
- 2022.12.15 CPHS Oversight Board minutes – draft
- FY24 Budget Proposal 2023.1.11
- FY24 budget Conversation 2 January 12 2023 final