

Minutes from the Board of Health meeting held at 5:00 pm Wednesday April 20th 2022

Present: Charlene Farris (CF), Donald Makowski (DM), Daniel Thibodeau (DT), Brianna Dunn (BD)

Attendees: Mike Hugo from MAHB (MH), Melvin Dorman from West Brookfield BOH (MD), Chrissy Florence (CF), and Jason Pare

5:00 pm: DM opens the meeting and CF welcomes those who have joined

5:00: Chrissy Florence opens discussion about why she and MAHB have joined the BOH meeting. There are 4 rounds of grant money, and this is the last round. Palmer is willing to be the host community for regionalization for the last round of grants.

5:03pm: MH says it is not regionalization, BOH's wouldn't be regionalizing because BOH's would be giving up powers if they regionalized, what this is, is keeping powers. MAHB defends Health Boards. MH tells everyone that "I am the guy that goes and sits at the state house to get funding that goes directly to BOH's." He is the director of policy for MAHB and because of COVID-19 MAHB was able to get the state to give money to BOH's. A silver lining of COVID was that BOH's got a lot of attention, before the pandemic MAHB tried to come up with a grouping of towns for shared services and the state house only gave 1.7 million dollars. 3 years later, 13 million was asked for, but the state house said, that's not enough and proposed 15 million dollars. MH makes the point that the government doesn't usually turn around in budget time, and say no, here you need more money. MH discusses that ARPA funds were fought for in the state house to aid BOH's but what happened was the funds ended up with BOS in most towns, and BOH's haven't seen much.

BD does tell MH that Warren's BOS have put money aside for BOH purposes when it has been requested. The purpose of this shared group grant is for the money to go directly to BOH's in the State of Massachusetts. The funds should be geared towards staffing, social inequities, money for upgrading databases, training, and different assistances. The grant is designed to combine these services between towns, and to add resources. It does not replace anyone or get rid of current staffing. In fact, it could cushion the training, and income, of the current staffing. The reason the grant is designed to combine towns and cities is because it makes distribution easier of the 200 million dollars instead of distributing the money between 351 towns/cities.

There are two conditions of the grant if Warren agrees to work with a host town, MH, and Chrissy Florence proposing Palmer.

1. Warren must agree to cooperate with Palmer.
2. Warren agrees they won't use funding to replace current staff, for the same position with a new person.

MH says that this is free money for BOH's, interest free, it pays for personal development trainings, and it is non-threatening.

There is an issue of stability, this is a grant designed for 3 rounds of 3 years each so this is good for 9 years but is not guaranteed right now past 9 years. The goal for MAHB is to make this funding a permanent line item on the state's budget.

Some of the procedures were outlined. Palmer is lead agency they have the duty to facilitate. A chair, or agent, or designated person from each town will sit on the council which meets at whatever period chosen, usually once a month. Hiring of staff must be unanimous between each member of the council.

The first hire is recommended that it should be a shared services coordinator who has the duty of making sure one town is not hogging all the resources and reporting the budget quarterly.

MD, chairman of West Brookfield joined because WB has been offered to join the coalition with Palmer, Warren and Ludlow. He asks if a shared services inspector gets hurt on the job, who is responsible? MH says that inspector should know the nuances between the towns. MD asks how payroll is done, and what the lead town gets. MH answers Palmer gets 15% of grant for administrative work, and all payroll is processed through lead town, Palmer.

MD asks how soon MH needs commitments. Agreements need to be made by 5/3/2022, and the submission needs to be accompanied by a 300-word essay on what the group wants to accomplish. This would be done and submitted by the lead town.

MH says BOH can do a memorandum of understanding which is an agreement between BOH's and they do not need permission to join from BOS of the town.

Warren BOH agrees to a memorandum of understanding and to enter into the group grant with Palmer, Ludlow, and West Brookfield.

6:40 pm: DM makes a motion to agree to a memorandum of understanding and to join a coalition between Palmer, Ludlow, and Warren. DT seconds, AIF

6:45 pm: Tamara Dufresne is up for reappointment for Animal Inspector. CF makes a motion to appoint Tamara Dufresne as Animal Inspector. DM seconds AIF.

7:00 pm: BD discusses having a hazardous waste disposal day with the board. We have RDP funds that need to be used and we get more points for hosting a hazardous waste disposal day. ACV is a company that does curbside residential pick up for household hazardous waste. BD is still looking into options for the pour off truck to stay, transfer station, or maybe highway dept. The board recommends making sure we can cap the event off at X amount in dollars. The board recommends \$10,000.00 for the event.

7:24 pm: CF motions to accept bills and payroll. DT seconds, AIF.

7:25 pm: BD is to sign the entire board up for MAHB certificate program, and herself.

7:30 pm: CF makes a motion to adjourn, DT seconds, AIF.

Respectfully Submitted

Warren Board of Health