



CHESPROCOTT HEALTH DISTRICT

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular Meeting

Unapproved Minutes

1247 Highland Ave. Cheshire

Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 5:30 pm.

Members Present: Andy Giordino, Michael Milone, Lauren Backman, Barbara Ecke

Members Absent: Liz Normand, Sarah Montavon

The Board meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

I. Approve Minutes

a. May 15, 2024, Regular Board Meeting

Lauren asked Michael if Chuck looked into what was mentioned in the minutes.

Lauren will send corrections from previous minutes to the clerk.

Motion made by Michael Milone, seconded by Lauren Backman to approve the May 15, 2024, Regular Board Meeting minutes. **Unanimous.**

b. May 15, 2024, Special Meeting- Executive Session

Motion made by Michael Milone, seconded by Andy Giordino to approve the May 15, 2024, Special Meeting-Executive Session minutes. **Unanimous.**

c. May 21, 2024, and May 23, 2024, Walk-Thru Site Visit to 1220 Waterbury Rd., Cheshire.

Motion made by Barbara Ecke, seconded by Andy Giordino to approve the May 21, 2024, and May 23, 2024, Walk-Thru Site Visit(s) minutes.

Unanimous.

Hilary Norcia, Acting Director of Health informed the board that Chesprocott received an award from CASA showing Wolcott appreciated our support.

Hilary also wanted to inform the Board that Jeff Andrews-Chief Sanitarian put in his resignation today. She presented the Board Members with a copy of his resignation letter. His last day will be July 5, 2024.

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The Board Members wished him good luck and stated they are sorry to see him go.

II. Communications

a. Waterbury Republican Newspaper Article

Lauren presented two articles to the Board. She just wanted the Board to know that they did a nice article about Chesprocott, and it is also great to publish the fact that we need a new Health Director.

b. Hearst Media Newspaper Article

Hilary had forwarded the article to Lauren. The writer, Austin Mirmina asked Lauren for our bylaws. Lauren sent them and asked what kind of article he was writing. He just wanted it for future reference, No article.

c. May 7, 2024, Prospect Town Council Approved Minutes; Future Health District Discussion.

Lauren presented the Board with copies of the May 7, 2024, Prospect Town Council minutes. Lauren explained that Jeff Slapikas mentioned being blindsided by Cheshire. He recommended exploring other health districts. The Council members want to do some info. gathering. The Board discussed that Liz Normand, Prospect's Rep. on the Board, should be submitting reports to the Town Council. Lauren asked for any suggestions/ideas on how we should handle this. Michael Milone referred to the minutes where Jeff Slapikas mentioned that Prospect has until December to make a decision. They are staying for now but looking into other Health District's. Michael stated we have a real communication problem. The Board should meet with the Mayors of the other towns and explain what we have been doing, goals, changes that have been made etc. It is important that we get ourselves in front of this and address their concerns.

Darlene Miakos mentioned that with Jeff Andrews giving notice today, it was a rough day. Jeff is a Prospect resident. He is very well known and well respected. Lauren stated that the Prospect Town Council has been invited repeatedly to come to these meetings. They have also been invited to the site visits at Artsplace. Prospect has the right to assign an alternate to the Board. If Liz can't come, an alternate can come in her place. Lauren stated she is willing to give a presentation to the Town Council.

Hilary stated she did speak with Mayor Bob, and he assured her they were staying with Chesprocott.

Lauren reiterated her idea from the last meeting to rotate board meeting locations.

Michael Milone mentioned Jeff Andrews, he plays a critical role in the operations of this facility. He is hoping the Board can meet with him and he can help them understand what the impact of his leaving will be and also

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understand how Hilary and the office will fill that void. What can we do to quickly activate a recruitment process?

Jim Jinks referred to the Prospect Town Council. They are probably doing their due diligence based on what happened in the fall. It is important for the Board to be more proactive in communicating with the Town Council. The Board mentioned Arnette Talbot attending those meetings.

III. Committee Reports

a. Finance

i. Audit follow-up

Michael Milone mentioned that Michael Federico, the accountant, couldn't be here tonight. Michael M. explained the issue with the Audit was that Chesprocott was not assigning expenditures for the proper grants. Funds were comingled. He is not questioning the legitimacy; it is the process of paying. Michael M. explained that Mike F. redesigned our reports, and both he and Darlene will redesign the way they charge in the software. The charge will go right to the grant.

Michael M. referenced the R2 grant. He explained that the charges haven't been transferred to the operating budget yet. So, the \$236,537.67 excess is not accurate. He also explained that they decided to change the monthly report format. Maura used to give detailed reports of expenses and revenue of the operating budget by line items. They felt it should go a little farther. Future reports will show appropriations, ytd, amount, available and used to date. This will give us a better trend with information on the line-item expenditures. This will also help to project where we think the final fiscal year results will be.

Michael M. feels very uncomfortable with the way business has been conducted. None of these grants were ever approved by this Board. He went back 2 years. He mentioned the Cheshire Charter requiring that before the Town Manager applies for a grant, they have to get Council approval. Then the grant comes in and has to go back to the Council. He feels this is prudent fiscal management. Michael stated that at next month's meeting he intends to introduce a resolution and amendment to the bylaws. Any future grants will need to be approved by the Board before any money can be spent.

Darlene mentioned that the last big grant we received, Lauren was notified, and she signed for it. Michael wants the Director to come in and explain when they have the opportunity for a grant. He wants the Board to know and decide before the application goes or possibly have them apply then bring it to the Board. It should not be spent until this body has knowledge, reviewed and approved.

Darlene stated she sent Mike F. all of the grants. He has all that information.

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Michael M. explained that the current grant process takes the authority of this group; the Board is here to make policy. He is simply saying it isn't the best way to conduct business.

Michael mentioned that with Darlene's help he looked into the interest income he questioned during the Audit presentation. In 2022, the Interest Income was around \$800 and in 2023 we generated \$33,000. Michael had asked the Auditor what the big difference was, and he explained that the interest rates had increased. Michael asked the Auditor to look into this further. He found that the Interest Income came from the fact that the money was invested into a STIF account. That is why interest earnings went up so much. This year it is already \$47,000. Darlene explained that she transferred all the idle cash into this fund. Michael M. stated this was a very smart thing to do.

ii. Monthly Financial report

Michael M. explained that the budget projects that \$180,000 will go back into the General Fund from the R2 grant and another \$80,000 also needs to be transferred as well as all the interest earnings. Michael Federico's opinion is that the surplus Maura projected of \$117,000 could be at least \$250,000. We will know better in the next week or two.

Darlene asked if Mike F. put into consideration that we won't get the final quarter from other health districts that we have to pay out. Michael M. thinks they did.

IV. Division Report

a. Acting Director of Health Report

- Hilary stated she and Darlene are working on the grant reports.
- She is also waiting for a fully executed contract under the PHEP grant. Michael M. asked how many health dept. districts they distribute to. Hilary stated 5.
- Hilary also mentioned that they have received 36 customer service surveys. They are all very positive. Lauren asked when they started doing the surveys. Darlene said around February. Lauren asked what they do with the surveys that come back "not satisfied". Darlene and Hilary explained that is very rare and they are usually "anonymous". If there is a name on them, they reach out to them and ask what they can do to make it better.
- Hilary stated that the Public Health Nurse, Alexa, planned all the Flu Clinics; they are ready to go. There are different locations in each town. 600 vaccines have been ordered and they usually come in August. They will need freezers to store them. Hilary is unsure if they are going to do the Covid vaccine as well; it depends on the need in the community.

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- Hilary stated that they started to pack stuff up in terms of getting ready for the move. She asked staff to start packing, purging and bringing personal stuff home.
- Hilary and the other staff sent the Board a wish list of what they would like to see in the new building as well as in the new Director of Health. The job posting is on multiple websites.
- Hilary asked that the Board Members make sure to read the division reports sent out. It tells you all about communicative diseases and respiratory diseases.
- Jeff Andrews stated that this last month 98% of businesses that were due have been inspected on time.

V. Old Business

a. Human Resource Consulting group: Update on hire of new Health Director.

Jim Jinks asked for clarification on the hiring process and the deadline etc.

Michael M. explained the process. Jim stated it has been 2 months without a new Health Director. Michael explained that it is an extensive process.

Michael also mentioned a glitch with the posting, Hilary and Darlene found it and called him. The reply email was incorrect. (Chestprocott). It has since been corrected and the corrections are in red. They also extended the deadline from June 14th to June 21st.

Lauren suggested that the posting also be sent to Southern Connecticut State University as well as UCONN career development.

b. Update on State funding to Cheshire Health District: \$350,000.

Jim Jinks stated that he received an email from Arnette regarding the \$350,000 State Funding. These funds will be appropriated for the renovations of 1220 Waterbury Road. They need to come up with priorities. There is no word as to when the funding will be received. Michael M. explained the \$350,000 is a baseline; they can't do all the renovation needed for that much. Jim is under the impression Chesprocott would be supplementing the difference.

Don Walsh, a Cheshire Council Member, wanted to mention that is a lot of money for Chesprocott to spend on a building that they don't own. Michael M. mentioned the idea previously discussed of lowering the monthly rent.

There should be some offset since they are enhancing that building but not going to own it.

Lauren stated she talked to the architect, and they did say that if this went out to bid, they anticipate 7-8 months to renovate Artsplace. We need to be realistic. If this didn't require a bid, the renovations would take about 3 months. But it does have to go out to bid.

Hilary mentioned another building, the DATTCO building. This would only need cosmetic work. They would be able to go in there sooner. She feels we are going to be in limbo too long. They are already planning to put an

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elevator in the DATTCO building. Darlene stated it will take 5-6 months for the elevator there. Lauren mentioned mobile offices being placed at the Artsplace site and working out of those in the interim. She also mentioned a POD for the storage of all records. Darlene did research on the mobile units cost.

Michael M. asked for clarification. He asked if Hilary and Darlene are proposing to move to DATTCO vs. Artsplace renovated designed to meet their needs and wants. DATTCO has a fraction of the square footage. Darlene mentioned spending approx. \$100,000 at the DATTCO building. Lauren explained that Public Health is growing. The purpose of ARTSPLACE is that it has the square footage to grow in the future. It will meet the needs of the Health Dept. 10-20 years from now. The DATTCO building meets the needs now but not the future. Lauren strongly feels 1220 Waterbury Road really meets the needs of the Health Dept. Michael's hope is that other towns will join Chesprocott.

Hilary mentioned the asbestos issue; this is a concern of all the staff. Lauren referred to Arnette who looked into this. Hilary asked to see the report. Arnette stated she cannot say there is no asbestos in the building. However, the town renovating the facility 15-20 years ago would have had to meet certain requirements.

Jim referenced the elevator for Artsplace. He asked if the public functions were upstairs, there wouldn't be a need for an elevator. There also would be ramp access outside. Arnette explained there needs to be accommodations for ADA for employees. Michael M. explained that it would be a lift for 1-2 people, not an elevator with a cost of approx. \$70,000.

c. Robinson & Cole Executed Contract

Lauren wanted to make sure that everyone is aware there is a difference between when we started speaking and when we executed the contract. There is an updated contract that was signed. She also confirmed that we will be using Robinson & Cole for everything.

Jim Jinks referred back to the move. Is there a plan for employees for when and what they are supposed to do and take and what days? Lauren stated she presented employees with a moving checklist during the one-on-ones with employees. Jim mentioned that we now have 6 weeks.

VI. New Business

a. Hiring of New Auditor

Michael M. explained that he was very disappointed with this auditor. They weren't very responsive, not timely and a little sloppy. He didn't want to extend the contract another year. Also, having the same auditor for 10 years is too long. However, Michael was informed that we have to get a document to the State one month before the fiscal year end, which would be May 31st.

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It hasn't been done. Mike F. told Michael M. the likelihood of finding a new auditor in that short of time is not going to be very easy. Especially, with the price consistent with the current \$8,000. Michael explained that with Mike F on board now and reports changing it is going to be easier to follow the auditor. There will be monthly reports. Michael M. will be around also as a member of the Board and the Finance Committee Chairman.

Motion made by Michael Milone, seconded by Andy Giordino to reappoint Costello Company LLC to do the audit for the fiscal year 2024. **Unanimous.**

b. Use of Mobile Office Trailer(s) at 1220 Waterbury Rd.

Lauren stated she will reach out to the mobile trailer company and look at sizes, space, if they come with office furniture, bathrooms etc. Jim asked about the cost. Michael M. presented a quote to Jim with a price of \$1,800-\$2,000 per month. This price is for one trailer that would house 5-10 people.

c. Purchase of Office Furniture

Lauren explained this would be dependent on if mobile trailers come with furniture. She did get names of recycled furniture if needed.

d. CT DPH Regulations for Public Health Clinic

Lauren stated there has been a lot of talk about what's needed for a Public Health Clinic License. She reached out to Alice Martinez who is in charge of facility licensing at the State. She spoke with James Augusten who works right under Alice. He thinks that not having a licensed clinic would mean that Medicare would not provide any reimbursements. Lauren also asked him if they can store a refrigerator in the trailer. James was unsure. He will confirm with Alice. Lauren explained that our current clinic license expires in December, however, as soon as we move locations it is no longer valid. Lauren also mentioned the Acting Director of Health, Hilary. She contacted Juanita Estrada, and she informed Lauren that if they meet the requirements, they can serve for more than 2 months. There are no concerns at this time from DPH.

VII. Adjournment

Motion made by Barbara Ecke, seconded by Andy Giordino to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. **Unanimous.**



Lauren A. Backman
Chairperson, Board of Directors
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June 14, 2024