

Chesprocott Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
Prospect Community Center Room # 204
12 Center St. Prospect, CT 06712
Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 5:30 pm.

Board Members Present: Lauren Backman-Chairperson, Barbara Ecke, Liz Normand, Jim Jinks & Sarah Montavon (5:33 p.m.)

Others Present: Don Walsh - Cheshire Council, John Malone- Cheshire Council, Mike Federico-Accountant, Lorraine Brandolini- CHD nurse, Hilary Norcia -CHD Acting Director

Board Members Absent: none

I. Roll Call

The roll call was taken at 5:31 p.m. and a quorum was determined to not be present. Therefore, no votes or action can be taken.

II. Approve Minutes

a. January 15, 2025, Regular Board Minutes

There was discussion of the above minutes. L. Backman asked H. Norcia about her mentioned that a lot of information was not correct in the letter to the Commissioner. Who received this information? H. Norcia stated just the board members since it is not public information. The board also clarified that OPM is Office of Policy and Management.

b. February 5, 2025, Special meeting Minutes

S. Montavon arrived at 5:33 p.m. A quorum was determined to now be present.

There was discussion of the above minutes. What are considered “mechanicals of the building”. A/C and Heat.

Motion made by L. Normand, seconded by S. Montavon to approve the January 15, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes. **Unanimous.**

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by B. Ecke to approve the February 5, 2025, Special Meeting minutes. **Unanimous.**

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- c. *Confirm if these minutes were approved. If not, approve.
November 20, 2024, Regular Board Meeting-
November 26, 2024, Special Meeting-Executive Session
The Board discussed and tabled action on the November 20th Regular & Special Meeting minutes along with the October 16th Regular and Special Meeting minutes.*

S. Montavon stated that there was no quorum at the Wolcott meeting. The Board needs to revote on the minutes.

Motion made by B. Ecke, seconded by L. Norman to approve the November 20, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. S. Montavon mentioned that Michael Milone's name needs to be removed from 2 sections in the minutes. **Unanimous.**

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by J. Jinks to approve the November 26, 2024, Special Meeting minutes. **Unanimous.**

Motion made by B. Ecke, seconded by J. Jinks to approve the October 16, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. **Unanimous.**

III. Communications

- a. Florence Griswold Museum Acknowledgement of Donation:
We sent a donation in honor of Hilary's mom. She asked if we got acknowledgment of that.
- b. Email from CT DPH OLHA: L. Backman received an email from Juanita Estrada in charge of the Office of Local Health. She read a letter into the record that L. Backman is the boss when there is no Health Director.
- c. CT DPH Ethics Attorney: Maura Esposito was terminated at her job with the State Health Dept. for cause on January 2, 2025. There has been talk about Maura returning to Chesprocott or another Health District. She referred to an e-mail Talisha Brobham CT DPH Ethics attorney regarding rehiring an employee after leaving DPH. Based on State ethics, Maura will not be allowed to be employed by another health district for 1 year and 1 day. L. Backman wanted to go on record because her job is to protect us, the board. We hire and approve, and we are liable for it. (See attached correspondence-CT DPH Ethics Policy.)

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Finance
 - i. Monthly Financial Report: Michael Federico presented the monthly financial report. He sent everyone the reports electronically. Some quick highlights: we received a third installment from the per capita for the town. Cheshire is at \$242,462, Prospect \$78,900, Wolcott \$135,389. Total revenues through Jan were \$1,137,000, expenses YTD is \$1,999,454. We were projecting a loss of 240,00 for the year. We are not at a loss situation right now. We are at \$138,00 excess. We received payments in this fiscal year for grants and core reports that were for 6/31/24 and 6/30/24. We didn't anticipate those carry overs. Budget wise we are close. He doesn't think we are going to run into a \$240,000 short fall for 2024/2025 year. The biggest stumbling block is

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with the freezes on DPH funding. We aren't 100% of what we are going to get in grant income for 2025/2026 year.

H. Norcia stated they were told at first to not spend any new money. All their grants are from CDC and are funneled through DPH. We are allowed to go ahead, like with the PHEP Grant. We aren't totally frozen. They just want them to hire new employees etc. with the grant money. She sent everyone an email with the grants and where they're from etc. H. Norcia briefly explained the 3 grants.

1. **Emergency Preparedness:** \$523,000. Chesprocott only sees about \$140,000 the rest we give out to other health dept as subcontractors for emergency preparedness. And of \$140,000, \$70,000 is for a position for Nora. The other \$70,000 is admin. cost
2. **Administration Grant:** \$247,000. That is used for salaries and media campaign.
3. **Work Force Development Grant:** \$120,000 to be used to try and retain employees, trainings, memberships. They did give bonuses out, which were approved by Dept. of Public Health. Funding through CDC.
4. **The other grant is the Per Capita Grant which is state funded.**

L. Backman stated her concern is that she has heard they really want to cut the "indirects". That is something we really need to be mindful looking to the following year.

M. Federico stated when we looked at the 2024/2025 budget prepared last year, 76% of the projected revenue did not come from grants. The projected revenue from grants was somewhere between 9-11%. It is a significant number from a dollar perspective.

J. Jinks asked L. Backman to mention we need a better idea of legal costs. We need a clear picture of what they have been this past year. M. Federico stated that we didn't receive bill until August or September from May. It is an hourly, as needed contract. L. Backman stated a lot of the legal costs have been related to HR issues.

M. Federico mentioned, just from a cash position, January \$465,000 in the checking account. Between the 3 STIF Accounts there is \$1,182,333. The district through the STIF Account is making close to \$4400 per month on the investment. His question was, is it fairly easy to move money back and forth from STIF and checking. You should be at least a couple of months operating expenses in the checking account.

M. Federico stated that payroll, based on the budget, is \$904,000. We are at less than what our budget should be based on the 7 months.

L. Backman thought we had discussed this in December. She asked why the money had not been transferred. Darlene sent an email last week saying that it takes a few days to transfer; it isn't automatic. M. Federico asked if we can get an answer as to the process required from the State, who can do it and is there a limitation on the amount that can be transferred at one time. He would recommend \$250,000-\$265,000 and move the rest into a STIF Account.

J. Jinks asked if there is danger there, if it is a couple of day process. Do we want to look at a money market account or something else.

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M. Federico mentioned reaching out to ION Bank to see if they have some type of premier or high yield money market that they can link to our checking account. L. Backman asked J. Jinks if he wanted to take the lead on that; just to get information. M. Federico suggested H. Norcia calling Ion informing them that J. Jinks, a board member, will be contacting them to find out more information.

ii. Annual Budget Report: Approval due April 2025

We have to have a Public Hearing and approved in April. M. Federico mentioned challenges. Getting a handle on what we need to budget for legal fees or professional services. The second thing, although the grant percentage is not a large number but dollar wise it is an important piece to it, the group has to decide and get some information on what other grant opportunities do we want to look for (not with the State). Is there a program the district wants to get into that we aren't in right now. Ex. School-based health center. L. Backman mentioned putting together a Grants Committee.

H. Norcia mentioned finding a grant that helped fund social services for Wolcott and Prospect because they don't have one and we can be their go-to.

iii. Expense allocations to date related to Capitol Improvement Project

M. Federico stated right now expenses to date are \$82,000 and the architect fee is \$80,000 and \$93,500 for interior design.

L. Backman read Resolution re: transferring \$200,000 from Fund Balance to Cap. Improvement Fund for new location. This was approved June 12, 2024.

J. Jinks asked if the Board approved the contract with the architect. S. Montavon stated we approved the second \$12,000-\$15,000; that is all we approved. She doesn't remember us ever seeing a contract for the \$80,000 plus. The Board approved the design to build.

M. Federico pointed out that the fund balance from last year's fiscal audit was \$1.191 million. Our equity balance is going to be over \$1.4 million. Of that amount, you have to carve out what the fund balance reserve for fixed assets which is around \$54,000. We need hard numbers of what this build out is going to cost; we need the bids. The Town has not received the plans yet from the architect as of today.

J. Jinks stated that there is a lot of money piling up for this project. We need to be aware of that, what the bids are going to be, the furniture.

John Milone, Cheshire Town Council Member, stated his recollection is they were waiting to go out to bid but they needed what they called the front end of the specifications/the legal part from the Town. If they are using their product as leverage due to a payment; we need to get that taken care of.

H. Norcia stated part of the issue is that the invoices are sent directly to L. Backman, then they are forwarded etc. She feels the architect should send the bill directly to Darlene and H. Norcia and send a copy to L. Backman.

M. Federico suggested that anyone that we do business with they send to Acting Director and the Board Chair. The Board discussed what the best logical streamlined way is to do this.

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J. Jinks asked for confirmation that any contractors any invoices need to go to both L. Backman and Acting Director.

V. Division Report

a. Acting Director of Health Report

- Hilary Norcia, Acting Director, reviewed her Health Report that is in the packet. She stated we already talked about the grants. The Immunization ends this June.
- We are all up to date on all deliverables and financials. She received a memo on February 13th that they can spend what they have currently.
- Lorraine is working on flu clinics for next year/fall. We have 12 scheduled so far. Lorraine stated she was a little bit frustrated that she got no answer or a flat no for. The drug rep. has been in touch. We haven't decided if we are going to do Covid vaccines yet. They don't need to be ordered until August. They are offering a flu and blood pressure clinic on March 7th at Marbridge. She reached out to Cheshire Academy and offered them some services. She reached out to the Prospect Town Employees and Election day; she got no response. The Wolcott and Prospect schools did not response from them. She reached out to the Cheshire Town Employees: she received an email saying they don't need us. The Wolcott Town Employees do want us.
- We do have a referral for homebound. There is a pharmacist who works at Beacon Pharmacy. He is the only one in the State who does homebound vaccines. He will do ANY vaccine.
- She mentioned rescheduling blood drive.
- Lorraine re: grant money-she had incident of a few people in Wolcott that could've used Social Services. Hoarding situations and a foul smell coming from a home. She went out with Michelle with Health and Human Services in Town. The Sr. Centers refer everybody to the Western CT Area Agency on Aging. Maybe we can try to find something for our Town people.
- Lorraine also looked into trying to expand some services that we can provided without being in a permanent location; just acting as a host, like the blood drive. She mentioned some lifeline screening.
- H. Norcia mentioned open staff positions. Chief Sanitarian is still published on CEHA. Then we hired the Sanitarian John, he is doing a great job. We put out an offer to Jasmine Campbell for another Sanitarian and she accepted, as well as a part-time Public Health Nurse, Emily Gomes starting March 17th (25 hours).

We need a job description for the Director of Health. S. Montavon stated she sent it to H. Norcia. The Board discussed the job description. NPH is secondary. "Preferred" registered Sanitarian. S. Montavon mentioned a possible bonus; sign on bonus or after 1-2 years. The Board discussed changing the high part of the salary range to \$130,000 (not \$140,000). Bonus available.

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by L. Normand to edit the CHD-Director Job Description to state "and/or" for the position, being a Registered

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Sanitarian is preferred, that a performance bonus is available, and the range is changing to \$110,000-\$130,000. **Unanimous.**

- H. Norcia mentioned scheduling a Special Budget Meeting. She also mentioned that we haven't done an annual report since 2023/2024. We can start it now. DPH requires it.
- We talked about starting up Board work groups again.
- Bylaws/Staff Handbook/Building Committee
- Flu numbers are off the charts right now.

VI. Old Business

- a. Review and Cost Estimate of the Interior Design Plans for 1220 Waterbury Road Renovation

The Board discussed that this includes everything. L. Backman asked if it would be helpful to have her (Deanna) come and talk about this. The Board agreed. S. Montavon mentioned other companies with lower costs on room dividers etc. J. Jinks asked if she needs answer back from us soon. L. Backman stated we would need to approve it by March.

L. Backman re: the elevator. She emailed Michael Rinaldi, and she read his response into the record. He mentioned a LULA lift (limited in, limited access) modification. As far as presenting the furniture package, that should come from Deanna. L. Backman mentioned putting that project out to bid.

- b. Status of FOIA Emails-no discussion
c. Status of Updike, Kelly and Spellacy Investigation- no update
d. History of Highland Ave. June 2024 lease not renewed, receipt of \$350,000 of which BOD not involved, Trailer Rental, & Former Artsplace Renovation-tabled for the next meeting.
e. L. Backman mentioned board assignments. S. Montavon will take his place on that board. J. Jinks mentioned combining finance and building committee since they are the same people.

Motion made by J. Jinks, seconded by S. Montavon to combine the Finance and Building Committees. **Unanimous.**

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by J. Jinks to replace A. Giordino on any Committees he was on. **Unanimous.**

- f. Status of CHD Employee Handbook (Last updated June 2018)
L. Backman reached out to Prospect & Wolcott, and she also asked Cheshire and got a copy of employee handbooks.
g. Status of CHD Bylaws (Last updated May 2018)

VII. New Business

- a. Director of Health Transfer of Checking Account Money into STIF Account-already discussed
b. CT DPH OLHA BOD Training- L. Backman has not heard from them.

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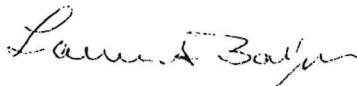
- c. S. Montavon asked if we could add an internet extender into ARTS Place; so people can spread out if they need to, to work.

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by B. Ecke to add an internet extender to ARTS Place. **Unanimous.**

- d. The Board mentioned the lawsuit. It has been referred to Robinson & Cole.
- e. H. Norcia mentioned Gov. Lamont doing his budget; he wants the Per Capita to local health departments by 10%.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion made by S. Montavon, seconded by B. Ecke to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m.
Unanimous.



Lauren A. Backman
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Chesprocott Health District
February 26, 2025