

# ***Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative***

Serving the Towns of Alford, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Sheffield, and Stockbridge

## **December 10, 2021 Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**Via Remote Zoom and in person-Great Barrington Town Hall-Selectmen's Office  
334 Main Street, GB MA 012309:00 AM**

**Present (In Person):** Jim Wilusz (Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge), Ellie Lovejoy (Mt. Washington), Rebecca Jurczyk (Great Barrington), Pat Levine (Sheffield), Jayne Smith (Alford), Cheryl Sbarra (Guest from MAHB), Jill Sweet (SBPHC PHN)  
Dianne Romeo (Lenox), Scott McFarland (New Marlborough)

**Present (Zoom):** Brandi Page (Otis),  
Melissa Noe John Makuc, (Monterey), and Michael Hugo (Guest MAHB), Richard Mucci (consultant for DPH)

### **1. Administrative Items**

- a. Review and Approve November 12, 2021, Minutes: Ellie Lovejoy made motion to correct minutes, Dianne Romeo 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. MOTION PASSED

### **2. Updates**

a, b, c: **Intermunicipal Agreement Presentation** (Cheryl Sbarra, MAHB Executive Director)

Jim Wilusz introduced Cheryl Sbarra and Michael Hugo who, along with Rich Mucchi, are providing technical assistance with the PHE grants. Cheryl presented on the proposed IMA, which she feels is town friendly. This draft has also been reviewed and commented on by KP Law. Refer to enclosed PowerPoint presentation for details.



Final 12.10.21  
SBPHC Presentation.

The goal of the PHE grants came out of the Blueprint for Public Health created by the Special Commission, which included representatives a broad group of representatives from different sectors to assess what is broken with the MA public health infrastructure and their proposal on how to fix it. One GOAL is for every BOH to be able to perform regulatory and statutorily obligations, which is not the current state of affairs in Massachusetts. Another GOAL is to ensure that the members of every community can get services and access to health by implementing foundational public health services, which are not yet fully defined.

Scott McFarland asked if a Town that also had signed in IMA with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance can sign the new IMA. Cheryl replied that neither are exclusive, and it is OK short term.

Pat Levine asked whether State Law allowed for remote meetings. Cheryl replied that she will look into it but believes that even though the State of Emergency has ended, that the provision allowing remote meetings was extended to April 2022 as long as the public has access. Members of the group thought that we should lobby representatives to continue the allowance for remote meetings.

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- d. **FDA Update:** Jayne Smith explained that because the group had agreed to not pursue the one 3-year grant, that she submitted 3 separate grants with multiple sublevels. The Tri-Town Health Department grant included support for Tri-Town to work on making progress with the FDA Voluntary Retail Standards, conduct a Risk Assessment and funding for training. For Sheffield, the grant included money to evaluate the clerical processes and procedures and to conduct a Risk Assessment. For New Marlborough, the grant included money to train their existing BOH staff and to establish clerical processes and procedures to meet the VRNS as well as conduct a Risk Assessment with that inspector. The moneys will also be used across the board to purchase required equipment, forms and to provide training to LBOH and to industry.
- e. **List serve conversation-**Jayne Smith presented an idea to create a list serve so that questions and thoughts could be shared with the rest of the group. The other members were less interested in an list-serve and more interested in having a common shared file folder. Jayne will look into the best cloud service to host resources.
- f. **Shared Services Coordinator:** Jim explained the need for a Shared Services Coordinator, which was a line item included in the initial grant budget. This would be a hybrid position because the Shared Services portion would be approximately 10-hours a week and the rest would be under the auspices of Tri-Town Health Department, paid for with \$70K of ARPA funding from TTHD to supplement TTHD to progress in the retail standards, as well as support the work of TTHD.

The long-term goal of the Collaborative is for it to become an independent and wean off TTHD as it evolves over time. This position will initially support Jim, facilitate meetings, help the nurses, help with the signing of the IMA, and work on special projects, etc. As time goes on, this position will take more hours as the SBPHC transitions towards independence. The Shared Coordinator position was advertised, and Jayne Smith applied.

Jayne Smith stated that she would like to abstain from the conversation and offered to leave the room, which the group felt was unnecessary.

Ellie Lovejoy made a motion to hire Jayne as the Shared Services Coordinator. Dianne Romeo seconded the motion. The motion was PASSED unanimously.

### **3. Community Collaboration**

- a. **Report of from SBPHC and BPHA meeting:** Pat, Rebecca, Jim have set up a monthly meeting with BPHA board members and Laura Kittross.
- b. **Rural Vaccine Equity Collaborative:** Dep Phillips reached out to us to participate in a grant to ensure equity in the outreach and availability of vaccines throughout all populations.
- c. **RSYP Collaboration:** We will be working with Railroad Street Youth Project and other partners to facilitate the Southern Berkshire Opioid Working Group
- d. **Mass in Motion:** TTHD had built Mass in Motion from the ground up and made the difficult decision to pass the torch to NBCC with the most recent grant renewal so that TTHD could focus on improving public health in Southern Berkshire County.

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### **4. Public Health Nursing Updates** Jill Sweet, RN

**Guidelines:** The DPH changed the guidelines on contact tracing so that PHN will no longer be following up with contacts and only need to contact priority cases (such as school aged children, elderly, clusters, etc). The PHN will still go on MAVEN to acknowledge cases.

Rebecca Jurczyk is concerned about the revised requirements just as cases are going up but does agree that we should be looking at other mitigation strategies. Asked what the policy will be for the SBPHC PHN. Will they just meet requirements or go above and beyond?

Ellie Lovejoy asked whether we could expand free testing by providing rapid test kits now that we have access.

**Boosters:** Boosters have now been approved for 16-17 year old's. It has been reported that Macony will be doing a clinic (Jill will follow up on this)

**Vaccine Provider Application:** The application to become a vaccine provider has been submitted and we are getting close to becoming a vaccine provider

**Additional Resources:** Sam Wong offered SBPHC some resources for a new contact tracer before the state changed the guidelines. The thought now is to designate Jayne as a backup contact tracer. Jim will be sending out letters to the Towns to add Jayne onto the MAVEN for individual towns.

### **5. Group Values**

- a. **Mission Statement approved** (at last meeting)
- b. **Logo development updates:** Consultant has been given the revised mission statement and would like to work with Pat Levine and Rebecca Jurczyk to get it to the point where there will be a couple of proposals.

### **6. Member Discussion/ Updates**

Jim reminded members that the DPH/PHE is looking for information on existing services and to please return the questionnaire that he sent out ASAP or send him the BOH wording in your 2019 Town Report.

### **7. Next Meeting Date/Focus**

- January 14, 2022/ IMA Focus

Materials Distribution: IMA, MAHB Presentation