



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

"The mission of the Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative is to leverage partnerships in order to provide quality public health services that directly improve the health and well-being of the entire community."

SBPHC Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2022 @ 9AM

**Great Barrington Conference Room, 334 Main St., Great Barrington, MA
w/ Remote Option**

Present: Pat Levine (Chair, Sheffield), Rebecca Jurczyk (Great Barrington), Jim Wilusz (Lee), Dianne Romeo (Lenox), Dr. Schwerner (Stockbridge), Scott McFarland (New Marlborough), Ellie Lovejoy (Mount Washington) Jayne Smith (Alford), Amy Hardt (PHN), Jill Sweet (PHN) Kim Spring & Steve Rubenstein (Sandisfield)

1. Administrative Items

- a. **Review and Approve July 8, 2022 Minutes:** Ellie Lovejoy voted to accept minutes from July 8, 2022 SBPHC meeting. Jim Wilusz seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

2. J&J Opioid Settlement Subcommittee Update

Pat Levine worked with Gary Pratt to form a draft white paper to be used for engagement with individual towns' BOH and select boards to consider supporting the Rural Recovery Center. Suggestions to move forward included:

- Consider revising how the budget is presented. Highlight that the \$450,000 startup grant is only good for finite period of time and that there are efforts to diversify funding and work on sustainability piece of the program;
- There needs to be an ask created by the BOH sent to select boards on how to utilize funds.
- PHE grant groups were specifically mentioned as a potential mechanism to distribute funding.
- Ultimately it is Rural Recovery's responsibility to make the case to use funds to support their program.

Action Items:

- Jim offered to email Pat and Rebecca to discuss revisions to add a sustainability piece to the white paper summary of Rural Recovery Resources as well as formulate an ask.
- The draft white paper for Rural Recovery will be distributed after the meeting.
- Pat offered to get link to slides to presentation given by the Attorney General and BSAS on settlement earlier in August. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/aug-11-ago-dph-statewide-opioid-settlement-forum-slide-deck/download>
- Future agenda items for this topic should be called "Opioid Settlement Subcommittee."

3. Topics for Discussion

- a. **Vote to accept Sandisfield as member of SBPHC:** Jayne Smith recused herself, explaining that she is helping out Sandisfield after the unexpected death of their longtime health agent. Group discussed that past concerns to dilute resources were cleared up after discussions with the nurses. Sandisfield being part of the Collaborative will mean that they are included in our capacity assessment. Ellie Lovejoy made motion to accept Sandisfield as member of the SBPHC. Scott McFarland seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken. Motion passed: 7-yes, 0-no and 1 abstention (Jayne Smith)
- b. **Vote to accept Tyringham as member of SBPHC:** Jim Wilusz, Amy Hardt and Jill Sweet gave a presentation to the Town of Tyringham last month. There were some questions that got addressed as follow up, including making sure that SBPHC would not be setting policy on behalf of the town. Questions on the SBPHC capacity have been discussed and resolved within the Collaborative as well. Tyringham voted earlier in the week to join the SBPHC pending approval by the SBPHC. Jim Wilusz made a motion to accept Tyringham as a member of the SBPHC effective today. Dianne Romeo seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken. Motion passed 9-yes, 0-no (Note that Kim Spring voted as a member from Sandisfield).
- c. **First Draft Articles of Incorporation:** A draft document was reviewed by SBPHC members. It was noted that they are Articles of Organization, not "Incorporation." This document reflects the agreement of the IMA in layman terms. Areas such as goal(s) and responsibilities were highlighted for the SBPHC board to consider for the next meeting. This

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Commented [PL1]: Do we know who seconded the motion?

document will give the Collaborative an opportunity to define goals, quorum, absentee voting, remote meeting options, and mechanism for revisions. Jim Wilusz stated he will search out technical assistance for this document for the next meeting.

- d. **Preparation for DPH Capacity Assessment:** At this stage, we do not exactly know what the capacity assessment process will look like. PHE leadership did give a presentation at the monthly grant meeting, which was distributed with the agenda and a Q/A was provided to members, as emailed. We do know that resources appropriated to meet needs will come through the Collaborative. We expect that the assessment will identify needs of each town and resources will be allocated to meet the needs of the towns.

Towns on two PHE grants:

DPH will be contacting "crossover towns" that are listed on both Berkshire Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant applications and ask them to choose which PHE grant they would like to join by the end of the capacity assessment.

It was shared that Laura Kittross had emailed Great Barrington, Sheffield and New Marlborough and indicated there were no hard feelings if the towns indicated they wanted to join the SBPHC PHE nor were time constraints on when that needed to happen since DPH had agreed to give Berkshire County an extension.

The members identified that a core issue is duplication of grants in the future which may be resolved by the BOH and/or BPHA members formally requesting notification and/or approval before including SBPHC in a grant to ensure we are not duplicative in the future. It was discussed that BCBOHA also applies for grants but that they are generally for education throughout the county and less likely to conflict with any SBPHC initiatives. Future monthly meetings between the SBPHC/BPHA create a platform to discuss upcoming grants and opportunities so we can plan accordingly to manage the BPHA 25-year IMA that allows BPHA to write grants on behalf of all member towns.

Mt. Washington is a cross over town and historically their issue has been that they have not gotten benefit from being a member of the BPHA except for having the option to pay a fee for service. Mt. Washington sentiment that if BRPC is getting grants to provide services, then towns should not be paying at the level they are being asked. Ellie Lovejoy would like clarification in writing what the expectations are as far as deadlines and extensions of the time frame of officially declaring what PHE grant they will be joining.

Great Barrington will be discussing at the next meeting and Rebecca Jurczyk had asked Laura Kittross to attend the Great Barrington BOH meeting on Thursday at 6:30 and discuss how the division of resources would happen.

A question was asked about whether BCBOHA should also be communicating grant applications on behalf of the entire county. The consensus was that that BCBOHA represent the entire county and are focused on emergency preparedness funds and education and less likely to overlap with future grants.

- e. **2023 NEHA/FDA Retail Standards Grant Program Proposal:** Jayne Smith shared the summary sheet for the 2023 FDA grant applications. Jayne asked the group whether to submit individual applications, which is more administrative work, or try for a larger one. There will need to be clarification on what towns are interested in building up their food protection program. Currently working with New Marlborough and Sheffield to build their program in 2022.

Items to be discussed for each town include:

- Mt. Washington: Finish getting food inspector (Ellie Lovejoy) standardized (Standard 2)
- Sheffield, New Marlborough and Tri-Town: Address risk factors identified in ongoing risk factor study and do additional training with PIC in establishments
- Great Barrington: Joint Field Training with inspector
- Sandisfield: Implement online permitting program
- Regionally: Look at increased education, upgrading online permitting

Jayne will reach out to a TA provider for the grant to see what the best approach would be. Administratively it is easier to do one grant, but it is unclear whether the grant would accommodate what needs to be done regionally. It was stated that it is OK if emphasis is on service and not necessary direct payments to the towns.

MHOA grant is an allowable expense under the Tri-Town Health District FDA grant. Jayne Smith requested that food inspectors who wish to attend the Food Track of the MHOA conference should register and select "check" as the payment option and then submit the registration to Jim Wilusz to for the Collaborative to send a check. The hotel will

need to be paid by the individual and then be submitted for reimbursement. Members who wish to attend include: Jill Sweet, Pat Levine, Ellie Lovejoy, Jayne Smith and it is thought that Rebecca Jurczyk (no hotel), Jordan Chretien and Heather Gray will also attend. All registrations must be in by the end of August.

f. Discussion on other ways SBPHC communities can support each other

This was placed on the agenda to start talking about a mechanism to support each other. We need to be there to support one another and be a resource for each other, especially when a BOH or agent's authority and scope of work is being brought into question. Overall, public health has seen a more aggressive push back on employees trying to do their jobs within the scope of responsibility. There needs to be clarification of the role of a health agent. Ellie is having issues in the Town of Mt Washington around the role of an agent and what is within the scope of an agent's job, namely that they act on behalf of the board. Ellie requested support at the BOH meeting held later that day at 5:30 in Mt. Washington about a situation where she had asked a question of DPH who then reached out to USDA who then conducted an inspection without notifying the BOH.

Ellie Lovejoy asked if there could be a future conversation on how to support each other. It was mentioned that perhaps one of our goals could be that we provide mutual support to each other. Jim has more ideas that will be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Public Health Nursing

- a. **Update:** Amy Hardt gave update on the Public Health Nursing program. They have been busy with the car seat installation programming, flu clinic planning, distribution of masks and tests, having conversations with schools about the upcoming school year. Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad offered volunteer support for the SBPHC initiatives through a blood pressure grant they received.
- b. **Intern Project Discussion:** Maureen presented to the DPH on the project she had been working on to look at a mechanism for the public to report positive test results from home rapid antigen test. She found that it was easier than expected; it does provide a chance to provide timely information to people who are positive; HIPPA is typically not an issue because they aren't asked specific identifying information; it gives people who are positive a direct mechanism for support and follow up. The negatives that Maureen had hypothesized was that we have a high senior population and so this tool may be harder for seniors to access and use. Amy will get the information to us and we can decide whether to move forward. It was suggested that we put together a letter for her portfolio. Amy offered to finalize a thank you letter to be signed by Pat and Rebecca.

The updated quarterly report was included in the packet. The question arose whether there could be a breakout of foodborne, tickborne, waterborne, etc. in the report. It is difficult because there is significant overlap.

Tri-Town is upgrading to the newest Full Circle online permitting that will be able to pull out foodborne risk-based assessments. This will help identify where we need to focus when it comes from foodborne illness.

c. Community Partner Updates:

- **NACCHO:** Providing LBOH opportunity to apply for grant to reduce overdose death.
- **Prevention Needs Assessment:** Tri-Town will be helping to administer the youth prevention needs assessment to Lee and Lenox High Schools.
- **SAPHE 2.0 Bill:** Governor Baker sent back the bill to the legislature with comments, including to not make it mandatory for BOHs to comply with the standards. Jim will send out the governor's letter.
- **Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad:** Isiah has offered support to our community clinics. They do have a grant to provide a series of blood pressure clinics and the first one will be at Monterey.
- **Media List:** Jayne passed out media list and asked towns to look at it and determine whether there are additional mechanisms for getting out information in each town.

5. Citizen Speak Time

6. Upcoming Events

- a. **Sheffield Fair**, September 10, 2022
- b. **Smash the Stigma**, September 17, 2022
- c. **MHOA Conference**, October 26th- 28th, 2022

7. Next Meeting Date: September 9, 2022: In-person at GB Town Hall with remote option

8. Adjourn Meeting: Ellie Lovejoy made motion to adjourn, Jim Wilusz seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:34am.