

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**ASPETUCK BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**March 14, 2022**

**Subject to change until approved by the Board of Directors.**

**The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Shaum at 7:08 pm.**

**The following voting Board Members were present:** Chairman Paul Shaum, Vice Chairman Catherine Revzon, Director Linda Bruce, Director Doreen Collins, Director Ilisa Nussbaum, and Director Edward P. Mally were present in the room.

**Also, present were** Mark A.R. Cooper, Director of Health, Kerri Hagan, Atty. Michael J. Spagnola attended the executive session via Zoom.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Cooper noted a couple of errors have been brought to his attention and apologized for them saying it have been a very busy time. He noted that Mr. Crawford is no longer the chairman and that the two Directors who attended the meeting via zoom, were also not in the room.

Chairman Shaum asked if there were any other comments on the February 14, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes.

On a motion made by Director Collins, and seconded by Vice Chairman Revzon, the Board voted to approve the February 14, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes. Chairman Shaum voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes, Director Nussbaum voted yes, Director Bruce voted yes, Director Shaum voted yes, Director Collins voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes.

**Motion was approved 6 to 0.**

**Communications**

Mr. Cooper indicated that the Health District received an email from Jeff Krulwich from the Harvard Business School Club of Connecticut Partners, outlining their approach to strategic planning. He introduced Kerri Hagan who is the Health District staff member leading the effort gathering data needed for the work to move forward.

Chairman Shaum noted that he and Mr. Cooper have been discussing the need for the strategic plan with members of the Harvard Business School Club team for a while and asked Director Collins if she could give a little more background on the HBSC team.

Director Collins noted that the effort to have HBSC team input began at the November 29, 2021 Board Meeting when Mr. Cooper had summarized the efforts up to that point and brought forth a cost estimate from a consulting group that would provide an outline and guidance on how best to proceed with a strategic planning effort. The price was higher than expected and Mr. Cooper indicated staff had already begun compiling various community action plans and other data needed for comprehensive planning effort. Director Collins noted that she is on Community Partners Board, which is an organization through the Harvard Business School Club of Connecticut. There are a number of similar clubs across the country that do pro bono consulting work for non-profits. Some of the clubs have also done work for governmental entities. She brought the idea of working with the Health District back to the HBSC's project committee which needed to decide if they would be willing to work with a governmental agency. There had been some concern about what it is like to work with government and how well the three towns get along and whether HBSC could potentially find themselves in a difficult situation. However, the type of work needed by the Health District is exactly the kind of work the HBSC does, which they have been doing since 2005.

Chairman Shaum asked Mr. Cooper to summarize the Health District's strategic planning efforts. Mr. Cooper stated that CT-DPH requires public health agencies to conduct a strategic plan about every 5 years. The Health District had been doing that and did the last plan in 2009 after he became the Director of Health. Subsequently, when it came time to start thinking about the next 5-year plan, the State Commissioner of Public Health was pushing a plan to consolidate all local public health agencies into 5 major regional health districts, essentially ending local public health as we know it. The greatest challenge to local public health at that time was CT-DPH, the State Commissioner was saying the consolidation would be complete in 2 to 3 years. When the State Commissioner was asked directly whether it made fiscal sense to undertake strategic planning and/or accreditation efforts in view of this consolidation effort, his response was that it would be a good exercise. The Health District chose not to spend the money on either. Ultimately, the consolidation effort was dropped because of opposition by the majority of municipalities. There has been a change in the State Commissioners office, the world got hit by COVID19 which has changed what local public health does, and Easton has joined the Health District. It is time to do a strategic plan.

Chairman Shaum stated that the Health District needs to update its Strategic Plan. Director Nussbaum asked what the make up is of the HBSC Club team. Director Collins said they are all Harvard Business School alumni, many are retired thus have the time to do pro bono work, and have varying backgrounds such as marketing, finance, and operations from leadership positions. It is their way to give back to their communities. Most of the data is all there, it is a matter of facilitating and bringing it all together. The plan does not get to the level of detail that specifies who may be needed and how much to pay them but rather organizationally if these are the things the Health District is going to pursue, it might point out certain key skills that are needed but missing. The review by the HBSC Club team comes back to the Health District outlining things like here is where you need to go, here is what you need to focus on in the next 3 to 5 years, here are some goals and initiatives you should strive for, here are some targets as to whom should do things and when it should be accomplished. Once the HBSC Club provides this guidance, it is then up to the Health District and staff to get the work done. Typically, the Club will check on progress in about 6 months.

Kerri Hagan summarized the Health District's involvement with the greater Norwalk and Bridgeport coalitions that are doing Community Health Needs assessments and Community Health improvement plans. She noted a lot of the work involving surveys tends to focus on the larger population centers and not so much on the smaller towns. The past few community studies have all been focusing on the same issues, access to health care, behavioral health, and substance abuse and misuse. The expectation for 2022 results is that they will be very similar to previous studies. The smaller wealthier communities are unlikely to have the same access to health care issues as other communities, but there could be a need for more chronic disease prevention or other health education efforts. Ms. Hagan stated she thought some of the value a group like the HBSC Club brings to the table is objectivity as we look into the needs of our communities. A lot of data is available, there is no need to duplicate it.

Mr. Cooper agreed that having a third unbiased party guiding the Strategic Plan effort is key to getting a good plan. Director Nussbaum stated she thinks it is very important to get the input of those individuals who don't normally have a voice or don't know about the Health District. Ms. Hagan added that is why engaging with each town's department of Human Services, Senior Centers, and municipal leaders to hear what they believe may be needed.

There was some general discussion on next steps and whether the Board should authorize the signing of the HBSC Club's outline of services. Director Collins noted that it was her understanding the outline of services was only a draft and a request for a more formal agreement is needed.

On a motion made by Chairman Shaum and seconded by Director Bruce, the Board voted to request a formal engagement letter from the Harvard Business School Club of Connecticut Community Partners for the Board's consideration. Chairman Shaum voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes, Director Nussbaum voted yes, Director Bruce voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes. Director Collins abstained from voting because she is a member of the Harvard Business School Club of Connecticut Community Partners.

**Motion was approved 5 to 0 with 1 abstention.**

#### Budget Work Session and Discussion

Mr. Cooper noted that he started to finalize work on the budget after the last session but in the meantime an adjoining community has made inquiries about possibly joining the Health District prior to July 1, 2022. Meetings have been set up for later this week to explore their interest. Since this could significantly change the budget, he stopped making revisions. He noted that the requests from our existing member towns will not change, those requests are already working through each town's budget approval process. He noted that there are sufficient funds to cover expenses such as computers, strategic planning, salary adjustments for replacing the retiring nurse, etc. Mr. Cooper indicated that he prefers not to build one-time surpluses from grants into reoccurring expenses, rather use them for special one-time purchases and to stabilize the town health assessments over a number of years. The important part of the work tonight is to set a date for the statutory required budget public hearing.

There was general discussion on the process of another town joining the Health District and the steps that need to be taken.

On a motion made by Director Mally, and seconded by Director Collins, the Board voted to set the FY22-23 Budget Public Hearing date for April 11, 2022, at 7pm in the Health District's conference room. Chairman Shaum voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes, Director Nussbaum voted yes, Director Bruce voted yes, Director Shaum voted yes, Director Collins voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes.

**Motion was approved 6 to 0.**

## **Director of Health Report**

### *Operational and Permit Activity*

Mr. Cooper indicated he has revised the November and December Operational reports based on comments from the previous meeting. It appeared some sections may have been started but the updates from those months not completed. He explained how the information comes to him and how the reports get updated each month. Each report is updated manually with the figures coming from the bookkeeper, community health and environmental staff. There was discussion on how these reports could be animated. Mr. Cooper noted that the report's current format was something previous Board members preferred, but if this Board prefers a different format or to see the raw data, that can be explored. Director Nussbaum stated she did not want to see the raw data but thought there should be a way to link the raw data to a spreadsheet. Chairman Shaum indicated it should be an easy to set up an Excel Spread sheet to capture the desired information, but someone needs to look into the data systems being used.

Mr. Cooper indicated the other question from the previous meeting was the salary line-item differential from the October to November Consolidated income statements. Staff has taken a look and believe the difference is because of the number of pay periods. The Auditor is coming to the office in the next few days to do the end of year (fiscal year ended June 31, 2021) adjustments and said he would take a look.

### *COVID 19 Update*

Mr. Cooper noted that in each Director's meeting package was the chart of Confirmed and Probable COVID-19 Weekly Case Number Summary. The number of Westport case has been creeping up, while Weston's and Easton's have been relatively stable. Generally, across the country and state the case numbers are in decline with occasional spikes. There is plenty of vaccine and test kits for those who are interested.

### *Transitioning from WWHD to the Aspetuck Health District*

Mr. Cooper stated that a checking account for the Aspetuck Health District has finally been approved. What Bank of America could not do in 3 months, Peoples Bank set one up in 3 days. He will keep working with Peoples Bank to set up remote banking, electronic check cashing etc., and after awhile when no more WWHD checks are received, close the old WWHD accounts.

## **Executive Session**

On a motion made by Director Bruce, and seconded by Director Collins, the Board voted to enter an Executive Session to receive a status update from attorney Michael Spagnola regarding the D'Onofrio lawsuit. Chairman Shaum voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes, Director Nussbaum voted yes, Director Bruce voted yes, Director Shaum voted yes, Director Collins voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes.

**Motion was approved 6 to 0.**

At 8:20pm Chairman Shaum declared the Executive Session over and the meeting resumed in open session.


Chairman Shaum asked if there was any more business to come before the Board. Director Bruce announced that she is resigning from the Board and that this was her last meeting. There was general discussion on what she will be doing next, and everyone thanked her for her time serving on the Board

## **Adjournment**

On a motion made by Director Mally and seconded by Director Collins, the Board voted adjourn at 8:27 pm. Chairman Shaum voted yes; Vice Chairman Revzon voted yes, Director Nussbaum voted yes, Director Bruce voted yes, Director Collins voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes.

**Motion was approved 6 to 0.**

Respectfully submitted



Mark A.R. Cooper Director of Health  
Westport Weston Health District