

JAMES MULLEN, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

MEETING NOTES

Berkshire Public Health Alliance District Incentive Grant Meeting

Thursday, July 21, 2011
6:00 – 8:00 (Refreshments at 5:30)
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street
Pittsfield, MA
2nd Floor Conference Room
(directions at: <http://www.berkshireplanning.org/about/directions.html>)

Towns/Cities Represented

Dalton – Lois Bessette (Public Health Nurse)
Egremont – Sandra Martin (BOH Agent/also BCBOHA Staff)
Great Barrington – Mark Pruhenski (BOH Agent)
Lanesborough – Nancy Simonds-Ruderman (BOH Agent)
Mt. Washington – Ellie Lovejoy (BOH Agent)

New Marlborough – Scott McFarland (BOH Agent)
Richmond – Andy Fisher (BOH Member)
Sandisfield – Kathleen Segrin (BOH Member)
Sheffield – Priscilla Cote (BOH Chairperson)
Washington – Jim Huebner (BOH/BOS Chairperson) and Jan Paxton (BOH/BOS Member)
Williamstown – Jeff Kennedy (BOH Agent)

Partners Present

BCBOHA – Laura Kittross and Diane Persson
BRPC – Tom Matuszko

Institute for Community Health – Justeen Hyde

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- ❖ Approval of Meeting Notes from July 7, 2011 meeting
 - E. Lovejoy motioned, J. Kennedy seconded, unanimous approval of minutes
 - ❖ Reports / updates from municipalities
 - Dalton – BOH meeting was cancelled; but, T. Matuszko was able to present to the BOS anyway
 - BOH meets on August 1st
 - BOS meet on August 22nd
 - New Marlborough – unsure of meeting schedule
 - BOH voted to recommend the IMA to the BOS – need date of approval
 - BOS meet every other Monday
 - Great Barrington
 - BOH voted to recommend the IMA to the BOS at their July meeting
 - BOS meet on August 22nd – T. Matuszko will attend
 - Washington
 - Jan Paxton is a new BOH/BOS member and will be alternating with J. Huebner
 - Core Duties Assessment completed – some misunderstanding about how to fill it out
 - When a town is filling out the core duties assessment, they should be looking at current and near future wants/needs for services now and their priority. They may not need help with the services, but if the town has a lot of something it may be high priority anyway. A town may also realize that in the

next couple of years that their agent may retire and they might need more services, so longer term needs should be indicated on the assessment.

- Richmond – BOH voted to recommend the IMA to the BOS on July 20th
 - A. Fisher will work with the Town Administrator to get it on the BOS Agenda
 - Sandisfield – BOH voted to recommend IMA to BOS
 - If BOS meet August 1st – S. Martin could attend
 - If BOS meet August 8th – L. Kittross could attend
 - Mt. Washington – BOH has agreed in principle
 - According to BRPC records, attorney Beth Goodman has approved of the IMA; but, the BOS does not have it in their records
 - BOS meet on July 25th but have already indicated that they will not approve until they see the final draft
 - Williamstown – BOH meets on September 6th and BOS meet on September 12th
 - T. Matuszko and a representative from BCBOHA will attend both meetings at J. Kennedy's request
 - Lanesborough – BOS met July 20th and have decided to take some time to review
 - BOS will discuss on July 25th meeting
 - Sheffield – BOH voted to recommend the IMA to the BOS on July 11th
 - It was on the BOS agenda for July 18th; but, the attorney had not had a chance to review it
 - Will discuss at August 1st meeting
 - Hinsdale – could not attend meeting but sent word through email that the BOH will discuss IMA at next week's meeting
 - Savoy – BOH/BOS Chairperson has indicated that he does not see a problem with the IMA being approved
 - Alford – BOH/BOS will be taking it up at their August 22 meeting which S. Martin will attend.
 - Peru – BOH/BOS approved the IMA on July 18th
 - Windsor – BOH/BOS approved the IMA
 - Kopelman and Paige represent 7 of the 21 towns with 3 different attorneys (Joel Bard, David Doneski, and Janet Pumphrey)
 - J. Pumphrey reviewed it, approved it, and sent it off to the Boston office for further review
 - J. Langsam, attorney from MHAB that has been assisting on project, said that she had heard from Kopelman and Paige that they were refusing to offer an opinion on the IMA because they represented more than one town that was involved and they feel this is a conflict.
 - T. Matuszko has asked Dalton to request a formal letter to that effect
 - Sheffield has asked their attorney, Gary Brackett, who represents other towns, to review it
 - Will share his response
- ❖ Intermunicipal Services Agreement (IMA) update
- Attorneys who have reviewed it have not had any significant changes, only clarification suggestions
 - Aiming for a September completion so that by October the Governing Board can begin working on the Implementation Grant
- ❖ Shared Services discussion – Public Health Nurse focus
- Emilie Jarrett will come to a future meeting to discuss services the CHA provide in Richmond and West Stockbridge
- ❖ "Business Plan" discussion
- S. Martin went over the BPHA Business Plan Overview handout
 - Compilation of what has been discussed previously with highlighted changes in need of discussion
 - \$5 processing fee added because of paperwork for Host Agent to bill and pay for one inspection
 - Group decided to remove the \$5 processing fee from all the service plans and include the costs in the hourly fee.
 - J. Huebner suggested that pricing reflect an incentive towards block of time
 - Change single inspection from \$55 to \$65 - \$75 per hour
 - E. Lovejoy said that if the single inspection was to be used for emergencies and excessive fees seem to penalize the town
 - ◆ Could there be a separate fee for emergencies?
 - It would be difficult to define emergency
 - ◆ E. Lovejoy used a food outbreak as an example. It cannot be foreseen, but is very time consuming. Is it fair to charge a town \$10/\$15 more per hour?

- L. Kittross explained that the block of time approach helps with a situation like that. A town could sign up for 20 hours a month and if a food outbreak occurs, it becomes the priority and all of the agent's hours go towards dealing with it.
 - Also, if the town contracts in advance for their inspections – even if it is only one or two inspections – they will pay a lower rate.
- N. Simonds-Ruderman asked if there would be a separate contract for an emergency event
 - Yes – it would be something similar to a purchase order for the block of time
- N. Simonds-Ruderman asked what would happen if a town ran out of money during an emergency and regular duties couldn't be covered.
 - Towns are allowed to ask the Finance Committee for funds to cover emergencies. There may also be federal disaster funds available that the town could apply for
- Under the Public Health Nursing Program a town could pay a base of \$2500 plus \$0.50 per person
 - This does not cover all expenses
 - Flu clinics, fundraising, and applying for grants would need to raise an addition \$30,000 per year
 - ◆ E. Lovejoy suggested that if a town participates in the Public Health Nurse Program, that town should have to help apply for grants. The concept of supporting grant applications is included in our basic Agreement.
- Single Inspection Fees – camps and food
 - J. Kennedy pointed out that pools only need 1 inspection per year (Note, the code actually doesn't seem to require any inspections unless the pool is new, but issuing a permit without one usually isn't done.)
 - If a town comes to Alliance and wants to pre-book for the rest of the year, the Board can allow them to be charged at the pre-book price, not the single inspection fee, but the expectation is that the next year the town would pre-book.
 - It is important that the Alliance create a steady flow of income if we want to attract and keep qualified inspectors. Most rural towns have much of their work in the warmer months, but preparation and training need to happen in the cold months to be ready for the very busy warmer months.
 - If pre-payment is on a quarterly basis, opting in for pre-booking could as well
 - Large camp inspection should be listed at 8 hours, not 6
- Summary of changes/discussion
 - Processing fee removed
 - Single inspection charge will be \$65 - \$75 per hour
 - Under group inspection service program, eliminate the fourth bullet "Minimum of 3 inspections, otherwise use Single Inspection Fee"
 - The key is to pre-book at beginning of budget year
 - Under Block Inspection Service, discussion occurred around removing the 6 month minimum, which may create a planning problem for Alliance staff/inspectors. One year would be preferable for administrative & budgeting purposes.
 - This was added at the request of R. Wood from Sheffield
 - ◆ P. Cote will discuss with her and get back to group about it
 - There was a lot of discussion about pricing, affordability for towns, the need/option for a town to raise fees for the businesses, etc.
 - It is obvious that taxpayers are subsidizing inspections in many towns
 - E. Lovejoy asked if the group was coming across as trying to replace agents
 - Group said no; but, E. Lovejoy thought it was a possibility. The Business Plan is being set up to supplement the current agent system by providing back up and future service options. It is also to provide some way for Towns to work together to standardize practices and services.
 - A. Fisher said that if a town works with a health agent who covers all the needs already, the Alliance would be used for those times that the agent wasn't available i.e.: sick or vacation
 - Suggested that the single inspection fee should be reduced
 - Group decided to continue to think about these topics and come back to them next meeting

❖ Rules and Regulations of Operation discussion

- Starting conversation for Governing Board
- Article I, Section 1: "higher standard of" removed
- Article I, Section 2: "efficiently" changed to "equitably"
- Article II, Section 3: removed to reflect group's decision that there would be no pending members. If a town wanted to access services, they could; but would not have any voting rights until a new IMA could be signed. J. Hyde suggested an open enrollment period every year as one option.

- L. Kittross expanded to say that the Alliance could have a standing appointment on the agendas of every BOS each year to sign new IMA and if no new towns expressed interest, Alliance could be taken off the agenda
 - ◆ T. Matuszko said that it should coordinate with budget
- Article II, Section 5: removed to reflect group's decision to keep the Alliance simple and BOH oriented
- Article III, Section 3: add phrase that there are no mandatory fees to the towns
- Article IV, Section 1: add in language to reflect group's decision that once appointed, a representative will serve until someone else is appointed or otherwise specified by a town. Also, the BOH must notify the Governing Board in writing who the representatives are, what the terms of appointment are, and if there are any changes.
 - Group also decided that one person should represent only one town to eliminate conflicts of interest. If two towns want the same person, it is up to them to figure it out – the Alliance will not participate in determining which town that person will ultimately represent.
- Article IV, Section 2: There shall be a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson who are selected from the voting representatives.
 - The Governing Board may choose to have a Secretary and Treasurer
 - There shall be staggered terms so that there are not multiple vacancies at one time
 - To ensure that a town is aware of the level of participation, attendance record, and voting record of the Board, minutes from every meeting will be sent to the BOH and BOS

❖ Implementation Grant discussion

❖ Next Meeting

- Scheduled for August 4, 2011
- Tom Matuszko will be on vacation
- Agenda items
 - Update on Business Plan details
 - Continue with Rules and Regulations of Operation discussion
 - Joan Langsam, attorney from MHAB, will be at next meeting to address any IMA or Rules and Regulations of Operation concerns

❖ Adjourn

- E. Lovejoy motioned, P. Cote seconded, unanimous approval to adjourn

More Information:

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RSVP:

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