

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

**November 18, 2024**

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

**The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Shaum at 7:04 pm.**

**The following voting Board Members were present in the room:** Chairman Paul Shaum, Vice Chairwoman Catherine Revzon, Director Fonteyne, and Director Mally.

**Also, present in the room was** Mark A.R. Cooper, Director of Health, Vanessa Hurta, Director of Clinical Services, and Dr. Allison Taylor Walker, a candidate to become Weston's next representative on the Board to replace Ilisa Nussbaum who recently resigned.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Shaum asked if there were any comments on the October 17, 2024, Special Meeting minutes.

Hearing none, on a motion made by Director Fonteyne and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Revzon the Board voted to approve the Special Meeting minutes of October 17, 2024. Chairman Shaum voted yes, Vice Chairwoman Revzon voted yes, Director Fonteyne voted yes, and Director Mally voted yes.

**Motion was approved 4 to 0.**

**Communications**

Mr. Cooper stated that response to many questions from the public resulting from a letter sent out by Aquarion Water Company dated October 21 regarding a Notice of unknown water service materials and the concern for lead pipes, a press release was circulated providing the public with additional information on lead in water and contact information for several local certified water testing laboratories that can test for lead.

There was general discussion on why Aquarion sent the letter to some customers and not others. It was noted that Aquarion is complying with Federal mandates, has and continues to be in compliance with drinking water quality standards.

## **Confirmation of Lucienne Bango as Director of Health, Effective December 2, 2024**

Chairman Shaum summarized the interview and selection process and that the Board had met in executive session to formulate an offer of employment to Ms. Bango which was accepted. A formal vote by the Board to appoint her is now needed to formalize her appointment.

Mr. Cooper noted that State Statute 19a - 244 says the Board may request a surety bond from a Director of Health “for the faithful performance of such director’s duties as treasurer, in such sum and upon such conditions as the Board requires”.

The question had come up a few weeks ago in a survey being conducted by CT-DPH. The Board had not requested a Surety Bond from Mr. Cooper when he was hired. In checking with Marty Burger from the MarshMcLennan Agency, the Health District’s Insurance broker, who indicated unless a surety bond is mandatory, it is not needed since all Health District employees are covered under a Fidelity Insurance policy.

Director Collins arrived at the meeting.

On a motion made by Director Mally and seconded by Director Fonteyne, the Board formally appoints Lucienne Bango to become the Aspetuck Health District’s Director of Health, effective December 2, 2024, without having to provide a surety bond to the Board. Chairman Shaum voted yes, Vice Chairwoman Revzon voted yes, Director Fonteyne voted yes, Director Mally voted yes, and Director Collins voted yes.

**Motion was approved 5 to 0.**

## **VaxCare Proposal from Community Health**

Vanessa Hurta, Director of Clinical Services provided the Board with a summary of discussions with Marianne Tarica from VaxCare, a company that provides end to end vaccine management. They would purchase the Health District’s vaccine inventory, control the inventory, backfill the inventory, have the contracts with various insurers to bill for services. The Health District would collect an administration fee. They do not handle travel vaccines, therefore the travel vaccines not covered by VaxCare would be handled as usual. The benefit to the Health District is not having to deal with insurance contracts and VaxCare handles the billing.

Ms. Hurta noted that the Health District runs three vaccine programs, a private supply purchased directly from pharmaceutical companies, Connecticut vaccines for children, and the travel clinic.

At this point, Marianne Tarica from VaxCare was let into the meeting via a Zoom link. Ms. Tarica explained that VaxCare has its own unique special payer and manufacturer contracts. It’s a shared revenue. Their collection rate is 99.4 percent.

Director Collins asked about VaxCare’s customer base. Ms Tarica indicated the company started out just servicing fire departments with flu and pneumonia. From there the company just kept growing and is now national servicing health departments, medical practices, clinics and 99 percent of all health departments in Indiana.

Director Collins asked who VaxCare's competition is. Ms. Tarica indicated they don't have any. The big box stores and pharmacies are the Health District's competitors not theirs. VaxCare works with the primary care network.

There was general discussion on VaxCare's work with pharmacies, other vaccine providers, and other Connecticut clients. The Torrington Area Health District uses Vaxcare.

Ms. Hurta stated that Vaxcare could replace the Health District's current insurance biller, Transact.

Ms. Tarica started a PowerPoint presentation Introducing VaxCare, A simple, powerful solution for vaccines at the point of care that integrates the entire vaccine ecosystem, simplifying the vaccine workflow. They are now the nation's largest primary care vaccinator network working to ensure vaccine providers are collecting payment at their contractor rate.

After the presentation, there was general discussion about vaccine programs and how VaxCare could benefit the Health District's vaccine program. Chairman Shaum indicated that this would be a major change and should be discussed with the new Director of Health after December 2. Ms. Hurta indicated that it is her understanding that Trumbull has also considered this and should be familiar with VaxCare. Director Collins suggested getting a baseline, take it out five years to see how the Health District's vaccine customer base might be expanded, increasing services and revenue, without increasing operating costs.

There was general discussion on who the Health District's customers are and how to market the Health District's vaccine program and what engaging VaxCare might mean to staff's workflow. Ms. Hurta indicated she didn't think VaxCare would reduce the workflow much but could increase the volume of vaccines administered and revenue from the vaccine program.=

### **Preliminary Budget Discussion**

Mr. Cooper indicated the budget process has just begun. Charles Costello, the Health District's auditor was in today to collect the data needed for the audit for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2024. Additionally, Mr. Cooper and Chairman Shaum met with First Selectwoman Tooker in Westport to discuss next year's budget expectations. He summarized the budget development approach of how each town assessment is determined. He starts with Connecticut's Statutory assessment on a per capita basis. Recognizing that each town is different and staff's level of work in each town is also different. The work effort in each town is calculated based on the number of applications and inspections that are done in each town with the percentage applied to the municipal contribution portion of the total budget, and then the third approach is a blending of the two.

All the data needed to get an accurate projection of next year's revenue and expenditures is not in yet. However, the biggest portion of the expenditures, salaries and benefits are known, and the expenditures for contracts, utilities, office expenses, etc are not expected to changes much. It is the revenue side that is mostly in question. Grant revenue is likely to be less and fees from environmental and community health activities may also go down.

More to come, Mr. Cooper will be setting up meetings with Weston and Easton's First Select persons to also have preliminary budget discussions and suggested he and Director Collins meet before he goes to Easton.

There is still a sanitarian position open, several attempts have been made to fill it with offers made, accepted, but then declined. Efforts will continue.

## **Director Of Health Report**

### *Operational and Permit Activity Reports*

Mr. Cooper noted that the September and October reports are in the Board meeting package, Mr. Cooper indicated that there are no surprises and asked if there are any questions.

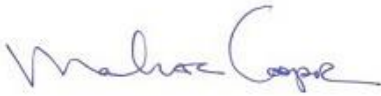
Director Fonteyne noted that in talking to local realtors, the number of homes on the market in Westport is at an all time low, which may impact next year's environmental activity. Director Collins noted that a farm in Easton was recently put on the market and may be developed. Mr. Cooper noted that soil tests are a leading indicator of future work, and the number of requests for testing is up.

## **Adjournment**

Chairman Shaum asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. Hearing none, On a motion made by Director Mally and seconded by Director Collins, the Board voted to adjourn at 8:40pm. Chairman Shaum voted yes, Vice Chairwoman Revzon voted yes, Director Fonteyne voted yes, Director Mally voted yes, and Director Collins voted yes.,

**Motion was approved 5 to 0.**

Respectfully submitted.



Mark A.R. Cooper Director of Health  
Aspetuck Health District