REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

ASPETUCK HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 09, 2026

Subject to change until approved by the Board of Directors

The following voting Board Members were present at the in-person Regular Board of Directors Meeting: Chairman, Paul Shaum, Vice Chair, Catherine Revzon, Directors, Scott Bennewitz, Doreen Collins, Allison Taylor Walker, Director Ed Mally participated via Zoom. Also present in person were Luci Bango, Director of Health, and Pamela Scott, Director of Finance and Human Resources.

The meeting was open to the public; however, no members of the public were in attendance.

Chairman Paul Shaum called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Review and Approval of September Regular Board Meeting and October Special Meeting Minutes:

The Board reviewed the minutes from September Regular Meeting and October Special Meeting. A minor amendment was requested to clarify that the October meeting was open to the public, but no members of the public attended.

Director Bennewitz made a motion to approve the minutes with the minor amendment. Vice Chair, Revzon seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously

Review of the September Director of Health Report:

The Director of Health described the monthly reporting format and summarized departmental operations, including flood response in Westport, flu vaccine clinics and rabies guidance. The department continues working with Westport to prepare for the complete onboarding of Accela permitting, which is anticipated to launch in January.

Ms. Bango highlighted current respiratory virus surveillance and scheduled flu clinics in district towns, including homebound vaccinations.

The discussion covered the use of student interns to create content for our social media platforms and marketing and engagement for the district. The topic of town newsletters,

and how residents learn about department events was discussed. Director Collins suggested an opt-in or mail version of a newsletter for residents, while Ms. Bango recognized that direct distribution could require additional funding and resources and the need to conduct outreach utilizing current digital distribution methods.

There was discussion on several events that were hosted and attended by district staff, including participation in the State of Connecticut's Emergency Preparedness and Planning Initiative, testing communications and staffing response during emergencies. Ms. Bango discussed the emergency preparedness events held in September; focused on personal preparedness, Stop the Bleed, Narcan, AED and respiratory viruses.

The board then reviewed year-over-year activity measures, including file searches, environmental health permits and several community health measures.

Ms. Bango discussed the decrease in vaccination administration by 28%, largely due to fewer Japanese encephalitis vaccinations and less travel. Municipal disease activity fell as COVID cases decreased, while tick submissions increased.

The Board reviewed the number of customers arriving after 4:00 p.m. and the operational demands of closing the register and completing end-of-day work. They discussed communicating the public's service hours as ending at 4:00pm. Director Bennewitz stated that the decision to close the office for transactions was an operational decision and should be made by Ms. Bango. Board members agreed that it would be acceptable to close the office early for transactions provided that sufficient notification is made to the public to alert them of the change and operations are being performed until the end of the business day.

The Board reviewed financial data showing modest losses associated with Medicaid services. Despite these losses, the Board agreed that the services should be maintained because of their value as a public health service.

Updates regarding subsurface sewage disposal system regulations and associated code changes were discussed. Ms. Bango stated that this does not largely impact the office operations at this time.

Review of the October Director of Health Report:

The report included enforcement action against a salon operating without a permit. Participants also reviewed New Canaan's proposed transfer of emergency preparedness grant funds and the associated benefit of access to the existing Medical Reserve Corps.

The group discussed proposed changes to central-system sewage plan review, with the state taking approval responsibility from DEEP while local staff continue reviewing plans. They also covered state oversight, appeals, certification delays, and a still-open question about review protocols.

Ms. Bango reported improvements in sanitarian certification processes at the state level, though new challenges have emerged regarding oversight protocols. She discussed an upcoming exercise on December 7-9 where volunteers will test local health departments' response to restaurant reopenings after flooding, including scenarios about mutual aid and inspector deployment across regions.

Ms. Bango shared updates on the state vaccination campaign, measles cases and vaccination rates, and contact tracing for measles and Ebola exposures. She also covered respiratory-virus data, flu clinic turnout, and an upcoming Alpha-gal training.

Ms. Bango reviewed activity-report trends, including declines in septic and building-plan submissions and community health activity. Vaccine administration increased, while communicable diseases, particularly tickborne diseases and flu increased. Homebound vaccines increased from 10 to 21, travel consults decreased from 30 to 19, and communicable diseases increased by over 97% due to increases in specific diseases like anaplasmosis, Lyme, and flu.

Other:

The Board discussed the audit timeline, QuickBooks migration and coordination between the CPA consultants and the District's external auditor. Board members emphasized the need for the completion of financial reports before budget submissions, and Ms. Scott and Ms. Bango agreed to provide the Board with profit and loss, bank statements and balance sheets for review.

The Board also discussed the potential for the Town of Westport to begin implementing rent charges for the health district's facility. While no substantive discussions have taken place, the topic has been raised at meetings with representatives of the Board of Finance. In addition, the AHD Board discussed its concerns about Westport's ability to adjust the Districts assessments unilaterally as well as the potential impact on Easton's *per capita* payments. The conversation ended with discussions about bringing Easton's *per capita* assessments up to parity with Westport and Weston, based on population, over a phased-in period, considering both the financial impact and the need to demonstrate savings to the towns.

Board members expressed concern with the delays in receiving accurate financial information throughout the audit process and discussed the importance of improving financial reporting and communication moving forward. The meeting also addressed concerns about potential rent charges from Westport and the upcoming deadline for Director Bennewitz's reappointment, with the board noting that if no response is received by November 30th, they will be one board member short.Director Bennewitz presented updated population data and analyzed potential per capita assessment changes across the three towns (Westport, Weston, and Easton) based on a 5% increase in total appropriations. The analysis showed significant percentage changes, particularly a 24% increase for Easton. Director Bennewitz identified two potential options: accepting lower assessment increases to maintain equal per capita rates or obtaining agreement from the other towns for different per capita assessments.

The Board discussed exploring options for gradually bringing Easton up to parity, potentially over a three-year period, while demonstrating the historical savings benefits of the health district. The group acknowledged the need to develop a comprehensive analysis and documentation showing the benefits and savings achieved by the health district over the years to demonstrate thew value associated with any changes in assessment rates.

The board discussed budget implications and potential changes to town support, including a scenario where losing Easton's support would result in a $92,000 reduction but maintaining Westport's share at $180,000 would require an additional $13,000 annually for two years. They addressed challenges in securing public health funding and the need to prepare talking points for upcoming budget discussions in different towns. The group also discussed concerns about potential rent increases for their facility, estimating it could reach as much as $170,000 annually, and agreed this would likely be addressed during the appropriations process rather than as an immediate change.

Executive Session

Chairman, Paul Shaum, made a motion to enter Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. to discuss budgetary matters. Director Bennewitz seconded the motion. The meeting moved into executive session after confirming Zoom recordings were turned off.

Motion approved unanimously

Director Bennewitz made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:47 p.m. Director Collins seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously

Regular Board Meeting Resumes at 8:47 pm:

Adjournment:

There being no further discussion, A motion was made by Chairman Shaum to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 pm. Director Bennewitz seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Lucienne Bango, MPH, REHS/RS
Director of Health, Aspetuck Health District Secretary/Treasurer/(Ex-Officio)