

Foothills Health District Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2023

Present: Fran Fortino, Chair, Whately; Mark Bushee, Health Agent; Janet Scully, Office Manager; Katch Bacheller, Westhampton; Mike Kurland, Goshen; Helen Symons and Donna Gibson, Williamsburg.

Meeting began at 6:14 PM

1. Moved (KB/MK) to accept minutes of March 14, 2023, meeting: unanimous acceptance.
2. FF reported that supplies requested from MAPHCO/FRCOG (tent, ambu-bags, radios) were accepted and are being ordered. JS requested “tick-pullers” and tick ID cards for distribution to senior housing.
3. Discussed were the Baseline Capacity, PHE grant, FHD PHE budget. In the budget it is noted that Niki Vaughn, Health Inspector, hours have increased from 20 to 30 and now go to 40 hours per week and Janet Scully’s hours from 20 to 30 hours. Her treasurer’s duties will be included in those hours. We also need to raise our PHRN hours from 20 to 30 per week. Whately and Williamsburg are both in the Tobacco Coalition which is in the process of hiring youth to go into town’s tobacco-selling facilities.

Question raised about being able to reduce town assessment amounts with the PHE grant. The answer is, no, that is not allowed by the grant, but they do stay level funded. An 8.7% COLA salary increase will be added. We still may need to add another health inspector to meet DPH’s standards.~~{requirements.}~~ This position could be combined with a social worker to do assessments and to help residents with things like housing needs. There is a possible new candidate, AC, a new PH graduate. MB will be emailing her resume to us. FF/KB moved to accept the proposed FY 2024 budget. Voted for unanimously.

The PHE grant requires quarterly and annual reports including finances and work plans that keep MB and others very busy just keeping up with all the additional paperwork for the state DPH making more demands on the Health Inspector.

With any staff increases we need to be looking for another office space and the Town Offices building in Williamsburg has no additional space. With required files, supplies, furniture and staff the current space is becoming very difficult to work in. A question was raised about Burgy’s new Safety Complex building ever having been thought if to include a Public Health Department area. Not to anyone’s knowledge.

4. MB update included the report that the PHRN job description was still in process. FF suggested HS’s assistance would be helpful, being an RN herself. Opioid funds are now in all towns’ coffers and the discussion of how to use them is ongoing. All thought being able to combine several town’s amounts would make the most sense in best ways to make them effective, such as hiring a speaker to go into grade schools and do presentations.
5. Our May meeting includes the election of officers. DG/MK nominated Fran Fortino to continue to be Chair. The vote was, for, with FF abstaining. MK/HS nominated Donna Gibson for the Clerk position. The vote was unanimous, for. The PHE budget committee volunteers are MB, FF, MK and KB. DG/ FF nominated Janet Scully for Treasurer. The vote was unanimously, for.
6. Also discussed was the idea of setting up FHD’s own website so that residents in all 4 towns could quickly access forms and information without having to go through each town’s website individually.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Gibson.