

DRAFT – Subject to Board of Health Approval

Minutes

Board of Health Minutes

November 22, 2021 via ZOOM

Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq., Chairman; Anne Fountain; Dr. Danielle Goodwin, DDS; Dr. Sarah Gamble; Joel Muhlbaum, Esq.; Lauren O’Keefe, APRN, FNP-BC; Maryann Ramos, MPH, PA-C Emeritus

Staff: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health; Kristin Donlin, Interim Operations Administrator/Environmental Health Supervisor; Deborah Travers, Director of Family Health

Presenters: Tracy Schietinger, Greenwich Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) Executive Director; Tom Miserendino, GEMS Director of Finance

The ZOOM Meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Robert Carangelo, Esq. at 6:31 pm

Minutes

The minutes of the October 26, 2021 ZOOM meeting were presented. No edits were requested. Motion to accept the minutes as submitted were approved and accepted. **(Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Muhlbaum / Vote: 5 in favor, 2 not present at the time – 0 opposed)**

GEMS Proposed 2022-2023 Budget: Tracy Schietinger, Executive Director and Tom Miserendino, Director of Finance:

The Chairman stated that the proposed GEMS budget was relatively flat. The budget had just been approved by the GEMS Board of Directors prior to the Board of Health Meeting. Both the approved budget and quarterly report were emailed to the Department tonight. Tom Miserendino agreed that the 2022-2023 budget was similar to the previous year. The patient revenue as been adjusted to be lower than normally budgeted. Stand-by services are back up to pre-pandemic level. Reimbursement rates have increased. Health insurance benefits were set to go up. They shopped around and found another comparable plan with costs only going up less than 1%. The Worker’s Compensation premium has been significantly reduced. Motor fuel costs are way up and that has been adjusted in the budget.

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Questions:

- The Chairman asked how long they have been providing Greenwich Hospital support. Tom replied for 15 years
- Lauren O’Keefe spoke that previously that if patients refused transport, the call was not considered billable, but she had heard it recently changed. Tracy Schietinger confirmed that it did in fact change and GEMS could now bill for treat and release without transport
- Dr. Sarah Gamble asked if there were lift assist calls everyday and what is the volume of no transports. Tracy replied 10-12%. Sarah then asked if there was a list of repeat falls that could be provided to the Human Services Department. Tracy said that they have worked along side the Greenwich Police Department and with other agencies when this occurs so that the focus can be on more serious and reimbursable calls

Chairman moved to support GEMS Budget (Motion: O’Keefe/ Second: Ramos Vote: 7 in favor – 0 opposed)

Department of Health 2022-2023 Proposed Budget:

The Chairman reported that the Director of Health, Caroline Baisley plus Debora Edwards and Karen Pizzicara from the Department’s Business Office have been working hard preparing the budget. Board of Health Members Joel Muhlbaum and Maryann Ramos served on the budget subcommittee. Representative Town Meeting (RTM) members Ellen Murdock and Eileen Toretta have been very supportive. The Department’s budget is basically flat. Majority of the budget goes towards salaries and any increases are union based and contractual. The Town of Greenwich will be receiving \$30 (thirty) million from the federal government. Caroline has submitted five projects in hopes that the Department will receive some of those funds. The Public Health Educator position is one of those projects.

Questions:

- Joel stated that the Department is fortunate that Caroline could tap into non-town sourced funding such as grants and doesn’t see how the budget could not be approved, especially with how lean it is
- Anne Fountain stated that when Public Health is doing everything right, there is nothing to speak about. She asked if there were any anticipated cuts in grant money. Caroline didn’t think there would be. More Public Health Act money has been received and Department is looking to fill the role of a Public Health Data Analyst. That is approval will need to be made by the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET). Also, more grant money as it relates to COVID-19 is available and if it is not used, it must be returned. The Department continues to fund the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator from grants received and the Town is reimbursed he funds once the State grant becomes available in the fall of each year

Chairman moved to approve the 2022-2023 Department of Health’s Proposed Budget as presented (Motion: Ramos/ Second: O’Keefe/ Vote: 7 in favor – 0 opposed)

Department of Health 2022-2023 Proposed Fee Schedule:

The Chairman stated that the revenue received from the Department goes into the Town’s general fund. There is a proposed flat – 2% increase in fees.

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Questions:

- Anne asked whether there is an automatic yearly increase in fees and do they have to go through Board and Town approval. The Chairman replied that it is part of the annual budget process. Fees have been raised considerably in years past, but with the pandemic, it is important to keep things reasonable
- The Chairman asked if a resident/non-resident fee should be introduced at times when the Laboratory gets busy as an example. Caroline responded that it wouldn't be necessary.
- Joel asked for clarification on what "Sliding Scale" meant on the Family Health Fee Schedule and what does it cover. Caroline stated that many homebound residents are on a fixed/low-income budget and the Department does not want fees to deter people from receiving the services they need. This would include nursing services, evaluation, shots, etc. The Department bills Medicare, but not Medicaid for services, with an exception for Tuberculosis services. Medicaid is billed for Tuberculosis Services. Sarah agreed that it is easier to eat the cost of Medicaid services that to do all the paperwork that comes with it.

Chairman moved to approve the 2022-2023 Department of Health's Proposed Fee Schedule as presented (Motion: O'Keefe/ Second: Gamble/ Vote: 7 in favor – 0 opposed)

Other Business:

The Chairman asked Caroline to provide an update on COVID-19.

- The Governor held a Press Conference today at 4:00 pm. CT is currently at a 3.53% positivity rate
- A total of 414,978 (four hundred fourteen thousand nine hundred seventy-eight) CT residents have tested positive
- There has been an increase of 2,060 (two thousand and sixty) cases since Friday, November 19, 2021
- There are currently 268 (two hundred sixty-eight) cases in the hospital, which is 21 (twenty-one) more cases since Friday, November 19, 2021
- CT is ranked first in individuals who are fully vaccinated, ninth in booster shots given
- 84% of individuals who are 18 (eighteen) years and older have been fully vaccinated, 18% have received boosters
- Local spread has been happening within sports, activities and families
- Once COVID-19 is in the household, whether a person is vaccinated or not, COVID-19 will infect everyone
- There new guidance/recommendations for schools called Screen and Stay, which allows for less restrictive quarantine options due to classroom only exposure
- Winter Sports guidance has been released
- COVID-19 will affect the holidays. Cases have been going up and it is too soon to tell whether this is a surge or the fifth wave of the pandemic

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Questions:

- Anne asked with this typically being flu season, have there been any reported outbreaks locally. Caroline replied that some colleges have reported cases, but that is not the case here. A heavier than normal flu season is expected. The flu vaccine should have a 50-65% protection

Motion to adjourn requested at 7:23 pm by Robert Carangelo, Esq. (Motion: Muhlbaum / Second: Ramos)

Minutes prepared by, Kristin Donlin, Interim Operations Administrator/Environmental Health Supervisor
11/23/21