

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

MEETING DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016
5:30 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: JAMES MADISON ROOM (ROOM A) - TOWN CAMPUS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Special Session

First Selectman Banisch called the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen of to order at 5:31 p.m. Present were First Selectman Thomas Banisch, Selectman Goldberg, Selectman Hale, Selectwoman Walker and Selectman Wilson. Also in attendance were:

Jim Monopoli, Director of Health CT River Area Health District
Michael A. Pascucilla, Director of Health East Shore Health District
John Bowers, Interim Director of Health
Debra A. Milardo, Director of Human Resources
Mike Ott, Director of Public Works
Austin Hall, Senior Services Director
Scott Cochran, Director of Youth & Family Services
Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director
Steve Nikituk, Shellfish Commission Chairman
Tom Hansen, WPCA Chairman

1. Presentation from the CT River Area Health District.

Mr. Monopoli thanked the Board for allowing his presentation. He reviewed his credentials and job duties with the health district. He noted that the CT River Area Health District is relatively small with 5 board directors; 2 from Old Saybrook, 2 from Clinton and 1 from Deep River. There are 8 board meetings per year. He noted that the office is in Old Saybrook and is easy to get to. There are 5 staff members including 2 full-time sanitarians. There are also 5 contract employees including 2 part-time sanitarians and a part-time nurse practitioner. The projected budget is \$638,000 and the per capita rate is \$13. Mr. Monopoli stated that this per capita rate was high due to being a smaller operation. He noted that if Madison joined the Health District the per capita rate would drop. The board of directors has offered to let the Town of Madison come in a lower per capita rate, as well, somewhere around \$10.

Mr. Monopoli then provided an outline and examples of how the CT River Area Health District meets the 10 Essentials of Public Health.

1. Monitor and evaluate health status to identify community health problems. Mr. Monopoli also provided examples of services provided and of past planning measurements to prevent public health epidemics.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community. Mr. Monopoli stated that in addition to his prior examples, the Health District conducted flu clinics in the last years.
3. Educate the community. Initiatives include: Training for realtors to assess environmental health risks.
4. Mobilize the community. Initiatives include: Local oral health coalition.
5. Policy development and health improvement through leadership. Initiatives include: Regulations for Body Care Ordinance for Beauty Salons, Tanning Salons, etc.
6. Enforcement of public health codes. Initiatives include: Sanitarians conduct classes such as the realtor training mentioned earlier and also food safety classes, etc. Mr. Monopoli provided statistics for the number of inspections conducted during the prior year. He noted that although the district is small, they are conducting many service inspections.
7. Access to health care for all. Initiatives include: Flu & Pneumonia vaccinations provided to the public.
8. Workforce development, training and certification. Initiatives include: Sanitarians are some of the best in the state and they deal with septic systems on a daily basis. They are responsible for upgrading over 200 septic systems in Old Saybrook alone.
9. Evaluate effectiveness of services. Initiatives include: an evaluation component is implemented in every service and they constantly look for ways to improve service. For instance, at the April 2014 drill the Head of Household form was tested in every way.
10. Research, including with higher education. Initiatives include: A summer intern is typically hired to help.

Selectman Goldberg questioned how the effectiveness of programs is tested. Mr. Monopoli responded that on an annual basis, a report is made of all services for the previous fiscal year. Also, feedback is collected from staff members.

Selectwoman Walker questioned how the Shellfish Commission would fall into this Health District. He noted that there is no recreational shellfish program in place currently as the water quality is too low in the three towns that currently belong to the district. A program is being researched in Clinton; however, it is on hold due to water standards. Sampling and testing is done by the Shellfish Commission. He added that rain fall monitoring could be accessed remotely and a notification system could be implemented for rain fall amounts.

Selectman Wilson stated that the Town currently conducts many services for itself and he questioned what the response for service would be from this health district. Mr. Monopoli stated that the three current towns are non-contiguous, however, Clinton and Madison are neighbors and he would recommend a staff member be present every day at either the Clinton or Madison town campus. He stated that a full-time Sanitarian could be hired and staffed in Madison. As well, Mr. Monopoli could be in Madison physically on a part-time basis. He noted that data transfers are inefficient without a common database that can be used and that a data-sharing clearinghouse would make a big difference in efficacy.

Selectman Goldberg questioned how staffing would change if Madison joined the district. Mr. Monopoli stated that a full-time sanitarian would be hired and a dedicated public health nurse would be available at 4/5 full time and dedicated educator and dedicated preparedness employee would be available at 4/5 full time. He noted that dedicating responsibilities to one person would be very helpful for the oversight of services. Mr. Monopoli also stated that he does have experience in department management and noted that he helped bring the East Shore Health District to where it is now.

First Selectman Banisch stated that the Town has had a Health Director for years and the townspeople were used to this model. He questioned if the Town replaces the Health Director with an employee who is not a sanitarian, could the Health District help with sanitarian duties. Mr. Monopoli stated that this could be accomplished through the current health district sanitarian. He noted that there would be permitting and licensing fees involved that the townspeople may not be used to. Mr. Monopoli stated that the health district is on the low average of fees for the area.

Selectman Wilson questioned the per capita rate and if the rate would increase year-to-year. Mr. Monopoli stated that the rate could be locked in for a three year period and then reassessed. Selectman Wilson also questioned if there was a target size for the health district to grow to. Mr. Monopoli stated that there were seven original towns targeted to join the district and only three actually joined.

Selectman Goldberg also reviewed a handout about why Madison should join this health district and Mr. Monopoli stated that this health district has the type of work that Madison would be looking for at this time. He noted that he could not match the number of services provided by the East Shore Health District, but that his districts' services were more in-line to what Madison needs.

Selectman Hale questioned what the role of the health district was in a septic system replacement and Mr. Monopoli stated that the health district is obligated to issue certain state documents and steps since they receive state grant funds, in addition to the traditional regulatory responsibilities. Selectman Hale also questioned what services would be provided for special programs in the Town, including those for the Shellfish Commission. Mr. Monopoli stated that the district would be available to service the Town and if something was above their current scope of services then they would discuss how to handle this additional service.

Selectwoman Walker questioned the percentage of government funds used in Old Saybrook for septic system replacements. Mr. Monopoli stated that the clean water funds pay 25% of the costs.

Mr. Monopoli also added that the staff members of the district live along the shoreline and are readily available should they be needed.

The Board thanked Mr. Monopoli for his presentation.

2. Presentation from the East Shore District Health Department.

Mr. Pascucilla stated that he has been in public health for over ten years. He also noted that he would be the Director of Health for the Town should the Town join the East Shore Health District.

Mr. Pascucilla then provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Board with highlights as follows:

- A Full-Time “Shared Services” Local Public Health Department.
- Established in 1974 with over 40 years of solid public health experience.
- Operating budget of approximately 1.5 million dollars.
- Comprised of 21 staff members ~ to include FT, PT, contractors and student interns. All Division Leads hold masters degrees and most of staff hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- Leadership is made-up of 8 members Board of Directors from our communities who are appointed for 3 year terms by their Town Selectmen/Mayor/Council.
- Like any town’s local health department, we offer 24 hour/7 days per week emergency response coverage.

Mr. Pascucilla also provided an overview of services that fall under education and enforcement. He noted that the current per capita is \$7.40 based on population and that the fee would be prorated through the end of the fiscal year. The biggest expense which these fees pay for are payroll for staff members. Their budget income is comprised of state and private grants, local/state per capita and user fees.

Mr. Pascucilla also noted that the health district staff would become colleagues of the Town employees and staff members would be assigned to attend own meetings, events, etc. He stated that as the director, he would work with the Board of Selectmen directly.

Also, the health district works to adapt to changes in the public health system including by preventing epidemics and the spread of disease, by education that promotes healthy behaviors, etc. Also the health district meets the LHD’s 10 Essential Public Health Services which are as follows:

1. Understand health issues at the state and community levels. Examples:
Testing for rabies, Lyme disease, etc.; Community Health Assessment, Beach Water programs

- 2. Identify and respond to health problems or threats. Examples: Communicable disease surveillance, Lead poisoning investigations, General nuisance complaints& Foodborne illness disease investigation.
- 3. Keep people informed about health issues and healthy choices. Examples: Health education programs from diseases to nutrition/exercise to lifestyle changes, Community wellness presentations, Traditional and electronic media.
- 4. Mobilize Community Partnerships. Examples: Childhood obesity, Dental initiative, School readiness council, Coastal Resilience, Senior center programs, Pump out boat
- 5. Plan and implement sound health policies. Examples: Public health preparedness, Green initiatives, Increase farmer's markets.
- 6. Enforce Public health laws and regulations. Examples: Housing code enforcement, Food service inspection program, Well and septic system regulation and consulting, Beauty salon, massage/tattoo parlor and nail salon inspection.
- 7. Make sure people receive medical care they need. Examples: Flu vaccinations, Travel Clinic, Cocoon program (whooping cough vaccination), Nurturing Families Network.
- 8. Maintain a competent public health and medical workforce. Examples: Well-trained and experienced staff, 6 master's level employees/most with bachelor's degree or higher, Continual staff development and training, High School/College Intern Training Program.
- 9. Evaluate and improve programs. Examples: Public Health Accreditation efforts, Quality improvement, Customer service, Performance management, Community health improvement planning.
- 10. Support Innovation and identify and use best practices. Examples: Maternal Health Program, Local and nationally recognized programs, Shellfish monitoring and growth programs.

Mr. Pascucilla also provided an overview of the demographics for the Town from 2012-2014. He noted the success of education in the Town as well. Comparisons of health risks between Madison and towns currently in the health district were also provided and Mr. Pascucilla noted that unintentional injuries and Lyme disease cases were high in Madison. Also reviewed were trends of drug overuse.

Mr. Pascucilla overviewed the benefits of the East Shore Health District which are:

- Expanded public health services that meet the 10 Essential Public Health Services.
- Core services as well as additional services as needed for the Town. These core services include; Environmental Health, Senior Center Services, Shellfish Program Enhancements, Community Wellness, School Nurse resources, a Public Health Nurse for the community, guidance for parents on growth and nutrition.

- Cost savings by utilizing unused Connecticut State Funding - Per Capita dollars and other grants funding opportunities.
- Become a Nationally Accredited Local Public Health Department in the near future.

First Selectman Banisch questioned how the Town is currently not tapping into all state funds and Mr. Pascucilla clarified that more funds are available if a Town enters into a health district. He noted that the funding would be a little over \$30,000.

Selectman Goldberg questioned how the status of public health would be determined and Mr. Pascucilla stated that an assessment would be conducted as well as information would be sought from the residents. From there, programs would be initiated with the help of the Town.

Selectman Wilson questioned if Madison joined the district and new funding would be available, would the per capita charge be reassessed. Mr. Pascucilla stated that the cost would be roughly \$134,000 for Madison to join the district as another employee would need to be hired; also there would be other costs associated with increasing staff. He noted that the Board of Directors could provide an assessment of any per capita rate changes for Madison to join the district.

Selectman Hale questioned if the Town was paying for all of the core services even if they were not applicable to the Town. Mr. Pascucilla noted that the core services were industry standards but they could be tailor-fit to the Town. Selectman Hale also confirmed that the total the health district would need for Madison to join them would be roughly \$134,000 plus a \$30,000 funding from the state for a total of roughly \$160,000. Selectman Hale also confirmed that if the Town joins the health district they would no longer receive revenues from health inspections. Mr. Pascucilla noted that the Town did not charge much for services.

Selectman Wilson confirmed with both health districts whether their per capita rates were set for the next fiscal year and Mr. Monopoli stated that there was no increase for the 2016-17 FY; however, Mr. Pascucilla noted a 3% increase in this rate for 2016-17.

Selectman Goldberg also questioned the timeline to join either health district. Mr. Monopoli stated that if the Town joined prior to July 1st there would be state funding available for some services. It would be advantageous for the Town to join prior to July 1st so they could tap into this fiscal year's per capita funding. Mr. Pascucilla stated that although another staff member would need to be hired, there was staff available in the interim for a temporary set-up. He also stated that the sooner the Town entered the district, the better.

Selectman Wilson asked if Mr. Pascucilla had a sense of how the different towns currently in the East Shore Health District were using the budget funds. Mr. Pascucilla stated that all towns utilize services in different ways and also implement different health initiatives.

Selectman Wilson also asked for information regarding initiatives such as farmer's markets and Mr. Pascucilla provided an overview for the Board. The Board thanked Mr. Pascucilla for his presentation.

3. Discuss Health Director Position.

Ms. Milardo stated that at the last Board of Selectmen meeting the job description for a Health Director was approved, however, no recruitment process was started. She noted that there were three options, two being Health Districts and one being to hire a Health Director. She stated that in order to have the full picture the Town needs to move forward with recruitment for this position to determine if a Health Director and Sanitarian could be found in one person. A 30-day recruitment could be started, which is standard for a director position. This recruitment could be closed prior to April 1st and then the Town could make a viable decision to either hire internally or to join a Health District prior to the state's time limit.

First Selectman Banisch stated that a Public Hearing should be held to garner public opinion and Selectwoman Walker stated that the recruitment should note that if no employee is hired the Town would join a health district. Ms. Milardo agreed with this and stated that the job description would be all-encompassing and contain all pertinent information regarding the Town's intent. Ms. Milardo also noted that the Town would have to anticipate a salary closer to the higher end of the salary range if the employee is going to hold both a Master's degree in Public Health as well as a Sanitarian certificate.

Selectman Goldberg asked if this model was comparable to the services provided by either health district and Ms. Milardo stated that all three options would provide the Town with staff that would meet the 10 Health Essentials. The difference would be how these services would be provided, not if the same services would be provided.

First Selectman Banisch stated that a Health Director is tailored directly to the needs of the Town whereas a health district would provide these services plus additional services that the Town may not need. Selectman Wilson also noted that a cost analysis needs to be done to compare the "apples and oranges" of a health district versus a Health Director.

Selectwoman Walker stated that the fees charged in Town currently are very low which implies that tax payers have been picking up the costs for services. She stated that there needs to be analysis of the current scope of services needed and what the cost would be. Selectwoman Walker noted that the Town should also look into the additional services offered by the health districts. She also noted that support for current programs would be helpful, for instance, drug use education through M.A.D.E.

First Selectman Banisch stated that the public should be informed of what the current health needs are and what the costs are for the Town and residents.

Selectwoman Walker stated that for instance, the 10 Essential Health Duties need to be overviewed for the public and the Board should ask if they are being met from a resident standpoint and what services they would like to see in Town.

4. Public Comment.

Liz Nace of County Road stated that she works for the Town of Branford and is a former resident of Branford as well. She noted that Mr. Pascucilla was a great educator of public health and voiced her support of the East Shore Health District.

Kathi Traugh of Boston Post Road stated that she is a past President of the CT Public Health Association. She stated that she encouraged the Board to look into the standards for Health Department accreditation and she added that it is virtually impossible to meet those standards. She noted the value to the Town if there was an accredited Health Department.

4. Adjournment.

There being no objections, First Selectman Banisch adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.