

**Quabbin Health District
Board of Director's Meeting
Lawrence Memorial Hall Auditorium
2 Jabish St Belchertown
Monday February 6, 2023 6:00 PM
Minutes**

Present: William Pula, Chair; Leanne Connolly, Clerk; Jim Potter, Melissa Nazzaro, Jennifer McMartin, Kenneth Elstein, Richard Hall

Absent: Colleen Duroshea, John Desmond, Hope Guardenier, Katrina Velle

In Attendance: Andrea Crete Director of Public Health, Sainath Palani Health Inspector, Kirsten Krieger Public Health Nurse, Betty Barlow Administrative Assistant, Mary-Jo Grienier Senior Clerk, Joanne Misiaszek, Belchertown HR, Judy Metcalf and Justine Caggiano, Ware HR via telephone

Bill called meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Andrea announced meeting is being audio recorded for creating meeting minutes.

Jim motioned to approve meeting minutes of October 20, 2022 as written, Leeanne seconded., Ken abstained. All voted in favor by roll call voice vote.

Board members reviewed and discussed the draft updated Quabbin Health District employee handbook. Bill stated he had reviewed it and is fine with the updated version however John Desmond had contacted him and is requesting more time to review it. Leeanne stated she would like to go over each individual item rather than the entire handbook as she has questions. Andrea told board that anything highlighted in yellow is something new or updated, anything in red is what was wording from the old handbook that she replaced with new but everything else is same as the current handbook. Leeanne stated she would like to see the Dress Code policy removed as it is not needed. Ken stated he feels the district handbook should be more or less consistent with the District's member towns handbooks. Leeanne again states that the dress code is archaic and should be removed. She also states that any changes to the handbook should only be directed to new employees and hopes this draft was reviewed the District Counsel. Andrea informed board members that she feels the minimal changes and additions she made to the handbook did not warrant counsel review. She also told board she did have both Ware and Belchertown HR professionals review the draft. Both Jennifer and Melissa feel the Dress Code is fine as written and would be beneficial if there is an issue in the future. Justine recommended the board be proactive rather than reactive. Jennifer made motion to keep the dress code in the handbook, Jim seconded. All in Favor, Leeanne opposed. Board members continued discussing the updated handbook. When discussing vacation carry over Judy requested to speak. She says that what is in the current handbook correlates to both district boards for each of those items and she was not instructed until 2003 to compile the policies making them a handbook and add to it as new policies were developed. In 1998 the district switched from individual employee contracts to at will employment. The first new policy the board wanted was orientation & probation period and they hired HR Director Sandy Stapzinski who has done work for them for 25 years to create those new policies. Their attorney

at the time was Alan Seewald created the sexual harassment policy, workplace violence & drug free policy which is how the handbook progressed. Alan also provided the discipline policy which was never added to this handbook. It was in midst of issue so was in form of legal advice. She also wanted to remind the board they only have 5 federal labor standards so many federal policies do not apply due to number of employees. Ken suggests adding a sick leave bank for lending available sick time to other employees to the handbook. The board discussed creating a grievance committee and determined that each member town Board of Health will choose 1 member to be on the committee and 1 member as alternate. This will be decided at each town's next Board of Health meeting. Andrea advised the board to hold off on making a motion to approve the handbook until after the next item on agenda is discussed because what Mary is asking for is different than what is in the handbook.

Mary reiterated the letter she sent to all board members on January 26 given them a little background on her position. At the meeting of 2/9/1998 her part time position was created and included unspecified paid leave as opposed to sick, vacation and personal leave; 1 week after 1 year of employment and 2 weeks after 2 years of employment because they wanted someone to remain permanent. She never received the 2nd week until 2017. Mary is now asking for a 3rd week and if the time is not used to be able to roll it over. Justine recommended the board be consistent with whatever they decide, you have 5 employees so what you do for 1 do for all and really think about what kind of policy and precedent your setting when these decisions are being made. Andrea pointed out to board that Mary left employment in 2001 and returned in 6 years and at the district meeting 10/17/2018 the board voted to give this position 1 week unspecified leave with pay after completion of 1 year employment and 2 weeks after 10 years so this overrides the vote in 1998. After much discussion Leeanne made a motion to send the revised updated employee handbook to the HR director for the Quabbin Health District for review, Melissa seconded the motion. Under discussion of this motion Jennifer feels that you'd get the same answers from any human resources professional, we have policies that are applicable to all sorts of towns and companies and we have 2 here from HR that has already looked over this document so she doesn't see the benefit of having a 3rd HR person to go over it. Bill took roll call 5 Aye, opposed it passes.

Board members decided to table discussion on Mary's request until handbook has been reviewed by HR as her request relies on the handbook.

Jennifer, Melissa and Ken stated they would like to be on the Performance Evaluation Committee. Bill motioned to appoint Ken, Melissa & Jennifer to the committee, Jim seconded All voted in favor by roll call voice vote.

After a brief discussion Ken motioned for the Quabbin Health district to join the Coalition for Safe Drinking Water, Rich seconded, All voted in favor by roll call voice vote.

Andrea informed the board of Ware's Town Manager Stewart Beckley bringing a grant opportunity to her attention which is between a local health department and a private business sector to address economic needs and disparities within the community for \$100,000.00 that was due to quickly for Andrea to approach the board so she made the decision to apply for this grant. It is an opportunity for the Health Department to work with local business to increase health among workers and residents and help address any barriers for employees such as transportation and childcare. This is a very broad grant that can be used for a lot of different things. She did this for the district, not just Ware. This is a team effort with Stuart, Quaboag Hills Substance Abuse Alliance worked and applied for it and we got it. We are 1 in 6 in the

United States that are receiving this grant. This is a 1 year grant with a goal that at end of year would be self-sustaining. The \$100,000.00 would go towards consultants to do the outreaching in the communities & local businesses, education, printing material, travel expenses etc. The Quabbin Health District is the grantee and will be getting the money to be used for strategies to improve the community, nothing goes directly to the Boards of Health. Andrea and Gail Gramarossa of Quaboag Hills Substance Abuse Alliance will be the representatives from Public Health for this grant. Ken motioned to approve this grant, Rich seconded. All voted in favor by roll call voice vote. Ken requests to have a press release about this in the local papers.

Rich motioned to adjourn at 7:43PM, Leeanne seconded. All voted in favor by roll call voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betty Barlow
Administrative Assistant

Minutes Approved 6/29/2023