



Town of Southborough
Board of Health
9 Cordaville Road, Lower Level
Southborough, MA 01772-1662

Phone: (508) 481-3013

Minutes of the Southborough Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022 – Board of Health Joint with Advisory Committee – Virtual – 7:30 PM

Present:

Board Members Chelsea Malinowski, Nancy Sacco, Dr. Safdar Medina; Public Health Director, Dr. Heather Alker; Public Health Nurse, Taylor West

Opening:

The meeting of the Board of Health was called to order at 7:34 PM by Ms. Malinowski.

Topic: FY23 BOH Budget

Ms. Malinowski introduced the staff backgrounds and that Heather Alker has been with the town for a year. There is also a part-time administrative assistant Barbara Spiri who is shared with the Assessor's office.

Ms. Cook introduced the composite of last year's board of health committee and staff. She explained the change in direction that the board was seeking. This included moving from a part time to a full-time director. They wanted the nurse hours changed to full time also and the admin position to be full time. The board also had HIPAA compliance concerns that warranted (in their opinion) a dedicated/secure copy machine.

Ms. Cook explained the FY22 budget plan and how it would be covered with CARES act funding and have the reserve fund act as a backstop. These were all the reasons for the significant increase in their budget.

Ms. Malinowski explained that the board and staff are working towards what the department should look like in a non-pandemic environment. This would include staffing during the pandemic and how to operate with potential regionalization of services (being promoted by the state).

Ms. Cook reviewed that during the past year, Advisory was trying to understand what the department should look like in a post pandemic environment. There is a grant for \$300k grant for regional services to be shared among 4 towns. It has covered housing inspections, software services and nursing surges.

Ms. Malinowski updated that a recent Metro-West grant for 50k had been awarded. This was not included in the report that was provided. In addition to the nursing staff, there is a part time sanitary inspector for site reviews and Title 5 inspections - approximately 16-18 hours a week. She feels he can keep up with the demand. The inspection revenue was 65k last year which pays for the position. Additionally, the board studied fees in similar towns and adjusted (raised) sanitation fees. She referenced the report that contains all the information that she presented.



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Dr Medina provided his opinions on what a public health department should look like and what the state is looking at for public health goals. Dr. Alker stated that towns are not meeting the basic requirements for their health department according to a blueprint that was produced in 2019.

Ms. Cook feels that Southborough is heavily dependent on septic systems and the regionalization of service does not have that focus.

Mr. Pfaff discussed his initial study/analysis of 2021 numbers from the Environmental Labor Institute - Division of Local Services. The cost for human services (for Southborough includes council on aging, youth and family services, and board of health) per capita cost.

The state average is about \$49 per person per year, Southborough is at \$72. With the proposed budget, it would raise the town's cost to about \$95 per person. This shows we are way above peer towns and in the top 15% of the state. Wayland and Acton are close to this amount. He thinks that Wayland includes school nurses. Southborough has 2.4 FTEs and Acton has 6.8 (including a home health agency with 7 people). The health budget does not include per diem nurses. He questions if we are getting the right bang for the buck.

	A	B	C	D	AH	AI	AU
	DOR Code	Municipality	Fiscal Year	Population	Human Service	Human Services Per Capita	
14	315	Wayland	2021	13,882	1,455,477	104.85	
15	277	Southborough FY23	2021	10,169	964,325	94.83	
28	277	Southborough	2021	10,169	740,309	72.80	
36	269	Sherborn	2021	4,341	285,849	65.85	
64	139	Hopkinton	2021	18,269	947,783	51.88	
69	Totals:			6,902,149	341,574,439	49.49	
74	328	Westborough	2021	19,189	923,624	48.13	
81	288	Sudbury	2021	19,627	908,180	46.27	
84	136	Holliston	2021	14,939	683,802	45.77	
85	215	Northborough	2021	15,101	686,938	45.49	
136	014	Ashland	2021	17,739	659,666	37.19	
169	110	Grafton	2021	18,885	578,131	30.61	
213	170	Marlborough	2021	39,825	870,654	21.86	
237	271	Shrewsbury	2021	37,973	610,465	16.08	
255	002	Acton	2021	23,738	2,198,058	92.60	
356							
357							

As discussion continued, Ms. Cook is concerned that there is no model to use for structuring a budget. She feels that the budget narrative presents a case for regionalization. This needs to be answered to make an appropriate budget recommendation. She does not want to see some of the proposed activities/programs funded with real estate taxes.

Mr. Nodiff pointed out that potential increased numbers (for other towns) may be possible as these are FY21 numbers. He questioned as to the benefit of restructuring and heavily relying on COVID. He needs to understand what additional benefit the town gets from increasing the director's hours by 13 and the



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nurse's hours by 15. Ms. Jones would like to see more precise reporting and data to build a case for restructuring.

Ms. Cook clarified that they are already working these hours and it is being funded by CARES. The committee provided their opinions on what needed to be provided to support the board's case for continuing with their request for hours and changing the blueprint.

Ms. Malinowski added that there is a lot of money potentially available from grants to fund what the director and nurse would like to do. She does not want to see the taxpayers funding the tasks on the list, just the staffing at this point. Again, the summary document shows what they would like to do.

The Board of Health adjourned at 9:07pm by a motion by Ms. Malinowski. Ms. Sacco seconded – aye, Dr. Medina – aye, Ms. Malinowski – aye.

Respectively submitted Chelsea Malinowski.

Documents:

Summary Report to Advisory
Detailed Report to Advisory