



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH BOARD OF HEALTH

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • 508-393-5009 • 508-393-3130 Fax

## MEETING MINUTES

### **Greater Boroughs Partnership for Health (GBPH) Advisory Board December 13, 2023, at 2:00 pm by Zoom**

PRESENT VOTING MEMBERS: Kristin Black, PhD, MS (Northborough), Heather Alker, MD, MPH (Southborough)

ALTERNATIVE VOTING MEMBER: Chelsea Malinowski (Southborough), Ann Marie Muckenstrom, RN (Boylston), and Ray Gauthier (Westborough)

PRESENT NON-VOTING: Taylor West, RN (Southborough), Isabella Caruso, MPH (GBPH), Gabriella Knox (DPH Intern), Mike Hugo (MAHB), and Richard Mucci (MAHB)

#### **2:06 – Call to Order**

Kristin Black called the meeting to order. A roll call of voting members took place; Kristin Black, Heather Alker, Ray Gauthier, and Ann Marie Muckenstrom, all present.

#### **2:10 – Public Health Excellent Grant**

GBPH's first IMA was signed in July of 2021 by each town's Board of Health and Select Board. This IMA will expire at the end of June. Northborough started the IMA revision process with Mike Hugo and Richard Mucci. Rich Mucci is a contract attorney working with MAHB to assist SSAs. He has prepared a personalized template with best practices and recommendations, using feedback from law firms, for PHE groups. Mucci provided an overview of the draft IMA. A summary of some of the revisions are below: the "whereas statements" were added to set the stage of our collaborative. The Program Manager refers to the employee at the host municipality who signs the contracts and works directly with DPH. The grant term has been updated to end when grant funds expire, so it will not need to be updated every 2 or 3 years. Recommendations include taking out specific services and programming of the region from the main contract and adding them to an exhibit, which can be updated without changing the main components of the IMA, and permitting the Shared Service Coordinator to have a vote in the event of a tie vote. In Section 6, paragraphs F-J were added to define the roles and expectations of each town.

Chelsea Malinowski requested specific information about the posting method 940 CMR 29.03 to be added to the revised IMA, since Northborough is the only required municipality to post the agenda and meeting minutes. Additionally, the entrance provision will be changed to be supermajority.

Exhibit A will be the contract with the Department of Public Health at the time of signing. Isabella Caruso will draft Exhibit B with general programming and services to be reviewed by MAHB and the Advisory Board. Richard Mucci will revise the IMA with the requested revisions and write a summary memo. At the meeting in March, the group will look to agree on the final draft and send it out to each town to be voted on by their Board of Health and Select Boards. MAHB can also provide support by answering any questions towns may have.

Kristin Black shared an update on regional staffing. Erin Couillard, full-time public health nurse, who was contracted through Salmon VNA, resigned at the end of October. That position remains open and the contract with Salmon VNA has decreased to meet the current hours for our regional nurses. Northborough will work to hire a full-time nurse in July, to be discussed in the FY2025 budget process. We are working with Heather Welch, a Registered Nurse, and Health Educator, also contracted through Salmon VNA to offer Narcan trainings and CPR trainings. Due to these staffing changes, we will have a surplus of \$21,000 from PHE grant funding. These funds can be used for per diem nursing trainings. We will discuss our budget and staffing plans at our next quarterly meeting, as we prepare to plan for the FY25 budget.

### **2:45 – Data Update**

Isabella Caruso, Regional Epidemiologist, shared data from the MetroWest Health Foundation’s Community Health Assessment. Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough had 192 responses, which made up 17.1% of total respondents. Boylston is not in the catchment area for the MetroWest Health Foundation. The five main priorities for the report include mental health, substance use, built and natural environment, housing insecurity and homelessness, and food insecurity. Additional barriers included in the report were barriers to access to health care, challenges with chronic disease, and health disparities. The interactive dashboard and full comprehensive report are available at their website: [www.mwhealth.org](http://www.mwhealth.org).

The [Community Health Equity Initiative Survey](#), the state-wide health assessment, ended in November 2023. Boylston, Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough had a total of 276 responses. The state’s timeline includes preliminary data reports available in late December, SSA-specific tables, and reports in January, followed by state-wide resources and data dashboards.

Isabella Caruso shared annual statistics for regional nursing programming. In 2023, GBPH hosted 11 flu clinics and 102 blood pressure clinics, administered 31 homebound flu vaccinations, conducted 107 home wellness visits, presented 12 educational webinars, and distributed 449 Narcan kits (898 Narcan doses). Currently, Caruso sends out a health update weekly via email and upload it to the GBPH website ([www.gbph.org](http://www.gbph.org)), on Friday afternoons. Caruso recommended sending these updates bi-weekly – the Advisory Board agreed. Caruso will also share the distribution email list with the Advisory Board to review and add staff to reach a larger audience.

### **2:50 – Food Insecurity: DPH Final Project**

Gabriella Knox, DPH intern and BU MPH student, shared an overview of her completed food insecurity project. Knox sent a draft of the guide to all health directors to review and provide suggestions. Knox shared her screen so all meeting attendees could view the guide, which is also available at [www.gbph.org](http://www.gbph.org). The guide includes local food resources, as well as state-wide benefits, including SNAP and WIC.

Printed postcards with the QR code will be distributed widely, including at the food pantries, schools, libraries, and senior centers. We can also create other fliers, pamphlets, etc. to meet the needs of the region. Other ideas to increase accessibility and equity, the group will be looking to translate the guide into several languages. Please reach out to Isabella Caruso, with any edits to the guide, including adding local food resources, as well as the number of copies requested of the postcards or guides.

### **3:00 – Substance Use Prevention Work**

Kristin Black provided a brief update on the Opioid Abatement Funds. Black shared the recent work of Falmouth, who worked with a consultant to solicit input, including key stakeholder interviews with individuals

with lived experience of substance use. This work may be an allowable expense with one of the regional grants. Ray Gauthier shared an update on Westborough's progress of identifying the community's needs to identify how to use the funds. Kristin Black will provide the Advisory Board with more information to gauge the level of interest in a project like this. We would need to vote on this project in a future meeting. Northborough and Southborough expressed interest in this type of project.

### ***2:06 – Equipment Needs***

Kristin Black reminded all members to let her know if they have equipment/items that need to be ordered. Jen Sullivan requested a replacement iPad, which has been secured and will be dropped-off. Black also purchased yellow safety vests and will distribute them to the towns. Westborough requested a breakdown of the cost for the housing, food, and pool Relevant software and how much of the cost is being covered by the grant. Kristin Black will provide that information. Each town should receive an invoice for the contract – that is paid by the PHE grant, but Northborough has the master contract for the region. A discussion of the budget and staffing plans will be planned for our next meeting, as we are preparing to plan for the FY25 budget.

### **2:10 – Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2023**

Chelsea Malinowski made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 20, 2023. Seconded by Kristin Black. The motion passed (3,0,0).

Meeting minutes will be sent following the meeting, as well as posted on the GBPH website.

### ***2:12 – Confirm Future Meeting Dates***

Future quarterly meetings are tentatively scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>, June 12<sup>th</sup>, and September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **2:13 – Question and Discussion**

Isabella Caruso shared information on the Department of Public Health [Summer Intern Program](#). The application is live, as of December 13<sup>th</sup>. Northborough/GBPH host is requesting an intern to assist with health communication and social media. Caruso also encouraged towns to apply to the program and will send out all information to the Advisory Group.

Chelsea Malinowski motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:15. Ray Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion passed (4,0,0).