



**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH
NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

A meeting of the Boston Board of Health (Board) was held on Wednesday November 17th, 2021 by remote participation pursuant to An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency.

Board Members Present

Manny Lopes, Chair, Rebecca Gutman, Phillomin Laptiste, Guale Valdez, Dr. Jennifer Childs-Roshak

Others Present

Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, PJ McCann, Britt Frederick, Julia Frederick, Abeer Khatana, Agathe Hoffer-Schaefer, Amanda Toney, Anne McHugh, Ada Romero, Devin Larkin, Debra Paul, Gerry Thomas, Helen Ayanian, Hamilton Paul, Jennifer Tracey, Jennifer Cook, Jennifer Lo, Jannet Sanchez, Julien Farland, Kathryn Hall, Krystal Garcia, Mary Bovenzi, Rita Nieves, Sandra Vasquez, Stacey Kokaram, Steve Simmons, Tim Harrington, Triniese Polk, Velvet Butler.

Proceedings

Chairperson's Opening Remarks

Chairperson Lopes: Hello and welcome, everyone, to this meeting of the Board of Health.

I'm excited to hear more during tonight's meeting about transitions here at BPHC and across City Government. On behalf of the Board of Health, I want to extend our sincere congratulations to Mayor Michelle Wu. We look forward to helping to advance the new administration's public health agenda.

This meeting is being conducted by remote participation as authorized by state law.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Mayor Janey and Chief Martinez for their service to this City and leadership in navigating through a period of tremendous challenges and change.

In keeping with our usual practice, members of the public and BPHC staff will be allowed to observe the proceedings and we will use the moderating features on the Zoom application to keep all on mute other than Board members and BPHC presenters and others as needed.

Since we are deliberating remotely, any votes will be taken by a roll call of the members.

Acceptance and Approval of the September 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

After confirming a quorum, the Chair entertained a motion from Mr. Valdez to approve the September 22nd Board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fernandez and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Executive Office Report

Dr. Ojikutu delivered a report from the Executive Office covering the following: Mayoral transition, updates, including addition of BPHC Executive Director to the Mayoral Cabinet and direct reporting to Mayor Wu; Mass & Cass leadership structure including the announcement of two other cabinet-level roles involved in Mass & Cass Dr. Monica Bharel Chief of Housing Sheila Dillon taking a public health & housing-led approach. A provider roundtable was held at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program last week to plan for this coordinated public health and housing focused approach.

Based on the existing Mayoral Executive Order, Central Coordinated Team (CCT) meetings have been happening with the state, focused on expanding access to housing and appropriate medical care and wraparound services, including low-threshold beds, some of which will be coming online soon. Recovery Services has a Request for Information out for providers able to support wrap-around services right now, applications due next Monday 11/22.

We will work closely with Dr. Bharel and Chief Dillon in this important effort. The format of these meetings and other efforts moving forward may change. BPHC will continue to work on long-term solutions to address homelessness, mental health, and substance use disorder.

Additional updates included the Workplace Improvement Initiative, Telework Policy, Wellness Committee.

Dr. Ojikutu: One business item that I want to put before the Board is a disclosure form regarding some of my ongoing volunteer and civic work that I intend to remain involved in and potential clinical work in the future. I believe you have a copy of that before you. The General Counsel's Office advises that the Board review and vote to approve the disclosure, though I welcome any questions you may have first.

Lopes: If there are no questions I will accept a motion to approve the disclosure.

A motion was made by Ms. Gutman, seconded by Mr. Fernandez and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Executive Office Staffing Update

Dr. Bisola Ojikutu

Dr. Ojikutu: I want to share that Dr Jennifer Lo will be stepping down from her role as Medical Director next month. Dr Lo has served in this role since 2018 and her leadership has been critical in so many issues, particularly Boston's response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your service and particularly your support during this transition period, Dr. Lo.

Since our last meeting, Julia Frederick started as Chief of Staff. Julia worked for several years for Senator Elizabeth Warren, first in her Boston office, and then her DC office, where she led Warren's health policy portfolio. She just wrapped up her MBA and MPH at Yale University and was ready to come back to Boston to work in local public health.

I am also pleased to announce that Batool Raza has agreed to serve as Interim General Counsel. Batool is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Suffolk University School of Law and has served as an Assistant General Counsel here at the Commission since 2018. Prior to joining the Commission Batool served as an Assistant District Attorney and litigator at a firm in Boston. Congratulations, Batool!

I have appointed Tim Harrington as Director of Administration & Finance, and appoint to serve the functions of the Commission's Treasurer under the Enabling Act.

PJ McCann has agreed to serve in the position of Deputy Director for Policy and Planning, and serve as Secretary of the Commission under the Enabling Act.

An update on Communications: New Media Relations Manager starting next week and we are currently interviewing for a Communications Director. We have an RFP out for a communications consultant, applications due by Nov 29. We hope to share more updates at our next meeting.

Exciting news; thank you. Now I will turn it over to PJ McCann to facilitate a signatory authority vote.

Signatory Authority Vote

Mr. McCann read the following into the record:

Whereas, The Boston Public Health Commission's Executive Director has appointed Timothy Harrington to serve as Director of Administration and Finance and Treasurer of the Commission, Paul McCann Jr. (PJ) to serve as Deputy Director for Policy and Planning, and Secretary of the Commission under M.G.L. c. 111 App. 2-4(b), and Batool Raza to serve as Interim General Counsel.

Therefore, it is hereby resolved as follows: That Timothy Harrington, PJ McCann, and Batool Raza shall have signatory authority for the Commission and shall exercise all powers and authorities of the Commission pursuant to M.G.L. c. 111 App. Sec 2-3(a);

That Mr. Harrington, Mr. McCann, and Ms. Raza shall be public employees for the purposes of liability pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 258 and will be covered by the Commission for any and all acts taken on behalf of the Commission or the Board of Health occurring during the scope of their employment; and

That Mr. Harrington, Mr. McCann, and Ms. Raza shall serve in these capacities until their respective successors may be appointed.

A motion to approve the signatory authority for Mr. McCann, Ms. Raza, and Mr. Harrington was made by Mr. Fernandez, seconded by Dr. Childs-Roshak, and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Valdez asked if a signatory authority vote was necessary for Dr. Ojikutu. Mr. McCann responded that the vote in June 2021 to appoint Dr. Ojikutu included a vote to delegate signatory authority.

FY2021 Audit
Jennifer Cook, Clifton Larson Allen

Ms. Cook presented the FY2021 Audit. Hearing a question about the category of allowances, Ms. Cook responded that Trinity receivables are the primary source; \$5.6M outstanding with an allowance of \$4.9M.

Ms. Cook noted that the draft financial statements, are near complete, resolving final footnotes and are waiting on OMB guidance to start the separate Single Audit process, due 9/30/22.

Mr. Valdez asked about any deficiencies found. Ms. Cook: Responded that there was nothing that would raise significant concern.

Mr. Valdez asked: how Do you determine whether to do a write off? Ms. Cook: Each AR source has different considerations. Source and history is driving here.

Mr. Valdez asked: How is deficit on balance sheet handled. Ms. Cook: It is being paid over time, driven by pension liability.

Dr. Childs-Roshak asked about the \$4.9M of allowance. Ms. Cook responded \$1.8 is outstanding rent, remaining is water and sewer utilities.

Mr. Harrington: This utility issue is related to Northampton and Mattapan redevelopment process. It is a longstanding dispute and still an open issue. On the rental side, determined that they were not going to pay rent, and so it stays on their books. I will note that they have made their most recent quarterly payment in full.

Valdez: Allowance is 80% of receivable? Ms. Cook: Yes, based on age, and computations based on likelihood paying certain amounts.

COVID-19 Update
Stacey Kokaram, Director, Office of Public Health Preparedness
Velvet Butler, Director of Human Resources

Presenters delivered the posted slides.

Lopes: Other cities that have allowed all adults to do booster shots. Has that been considered?

Dr. Ojikutu: We have had discussions about this and there has been a call for that nationally. The vaccine series will likely become a three-dose series. I think that's where this is going but we will continue to plan for implementing this change once it is made.

Ms. Gutman: I see the pool testing to be an issue in the high schools, and contact tracing. I'm wondering what else we can do as a Commission to support the schools and agencies that are responsible.

Dr. Ojikutu: We've been funding FTEs to support contact tracing efforts, and are putting a liaison position in place. We are trying to provide as much support as possible and streamline processes to avoid delays.

Ms. Gutman: Thank you. A liaison role sounds important. I just want to appreciate all of this work. We represent 58 thousand homecare workers and in Boston around 5,000. We'd love to work with you on booster vaccine clinics.

Ms. Gutman: Is there a testing option for the employee vaccine requirement you described?
Presenters: Yes; and testing is made available by the Commission.

Valdez: Compliance is vax or test and submit.

Ms. Laptiste: With vaccinated staff, have you done any reports on race and ethnicity. Velvet Butler: That's something that we've been talking about and will be looking into doing.

Mr. Lopes: Congratulations to you and your team. Thank you for all your work.

Adjournment

Lopes: Hearing no other questions I'll accept a motion to adjourn. Thank you again to Dr. Lo and congratulations to our new leadership hires and Bisola.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to adjourn.

Attest:

/s/ PJ McCann

Board Secretary