



**77 Main Street North, Suite 205
Southbury, CT 06488
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Regular Meeting
Wednesday 9/4/2024, 5:30PM**

Voting Members in Attendance

Larry Ellis (Oxford, Vice Board Chair)
Casey Flanagan (Sharon)
John Michaels (Southbury)
Jack Kelly (Southbury)
Dean Sarjeant (Washington)
Deb Fuller (Woodbury)

Non Voting Members in Attendance

Amy Bethge, MPH (Director of Health)

Voting Members Not Present

Fred D'Amico (Oxford, Board Chair)
Chris Cosgrove (New Milford)
Michael Crespan (New Milford)
Dr. Jerme Levin (New Milford)

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order- Larry Ellis – 5:35 pm

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve 7/16/24 meeting minutes

Ms. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes

Second: Mr. Kelly

All in favor

Motion Carries

Finance Subcommittee Report

Mr. Micheals reported that the Finance Subcommittee has a meeting in two weeks to review and discuss the year end financial reports. The information that has been distributed is substantially correct, with some technical revisions to be discussed during the meeting. All of the District's funds are currently earning interest at a rate that mirrors STIF. Mr. Micheals asked Ms. Bethge how the District was doing with regard to budgeting now that we are two months into the new fiscal year. Ms. Bethge responded that the District planned well during budget development and everything is currently on track.

Chairman's Report

None

Director's Report

Ms. Bethge shared that as discussed during the July meeting, NOAA's prediction of an above average hurricane season has implications for Connecticut, including floods, well inundation, sewer back-ups, and power losses. HVHD continues to support our communities that were impacted by the flooding by disseminating health and safety information post-flood, attending local events to distribute well water testing kits, and providing guidance and directives to food service establishments impacted by flooding. To date HVHD has distributed over 450 test kits (and counting!). Additional information can be found on HVHD's website: <https://hvhdct.gov/guidance-for-residents-impacted-by-flooding/>. Ms. Bethge shared that early results from the lab showed an unprecedented number of tests coming back with e. coli, emphasizing the importance of well water testing after events such as flooding.

Ms. Bethge shared that In partnership with HVHD, York Labs has agreed to share the results of water tests with EMDs from impacted towns, which may assist in the process to obtain additional FEMA funds for homeowners with contaminated wells.

Mr. Michaels asked Ms. Bethge to share information regarding the impacts of flooding on groundwater. Ms. Bethge agreed to report on this impact during the next meeting.

Ms. Bethge reported that DPH announced the first case of West Nile virus infection this year. Symptoms include fever, headache, myalgia, arthralgia, rash, or gastrointestinal symptoms for non-neuroinvasive disease while neuroinvasive signs and symptoms can include high fever, headache, stiff neck, and decreased consciousness.

West Nile virus has been detected in Connecticut every year since 1999 and is the most prevalent mosquito-borne disease in the US. Most people infected with WNV do not develop symptoms. About one in 5 people who are infected develop West Nile fever, an illness which includes a fever and other symptoms such as body aches, joint pain, headache, or a rash. About one out of 150 infected people develop a severe illness affecting the central nervous system. About one out of 10 cases of severe illness are fatal. People over the age of 60 are at highest risk of serious illness.

Residents can find tips for reducing mosquitoes around homes on HVHD's website: <https://hvhdct.gov/dph-announces-first-case-of-west-nile-virus-infection-this-year/>

Ms. Bethge reported that in August, our Community Health Nurses provided support and guidance to first-time parents at a local community baby shower. In addition to distributing thermometers, HVHD provided Purple Crying Program information, an evidence-based shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma prevention program.

Ms. Bethge shared that on August 25th, HVHD participated in a community conversation with law enforcement officials and local representatives regarding overdose awareness and recovery. During that conversation, Ms. Bethge was presented with a Certificate of Recognition for work on the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee, which has successfully passed two proposals to date.

Ms. Bethge shared that on August 27th HVHD hosted our pilot back-to-school event in partnership with Connecticut Institute for Communities (CIFC). CIFC is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center located in Danbury, and recently licensed a mobile van that can be utilized for a variety of medical services. The center provides pediatric and adult services in internal medicine, dental, and behavioral health to all patients regardless of insurance status. CIFC provided back-to-school physicals and vaccinations from their mobile van to students who would not be able to return to school without the required vaccinations, many of whom were non-English speaking. HVHD is seeking to expand this event in future years.

Ms. Bethge discussed that in advance of the upcoming respiratory virus season, emails to promote HVHD's flic clinics were rolled out earlier this week. She encouraged board members to share information regarding our public flu clinics within their communities.

Ms. Bethge noted that tuberculosis cases continue to increase state-wide. Local health provides directly observed therapy (DOT) to patients to ensure medication adherence. During DOT, the patient is observed swallowing each dose of the prescribed drug. DOT typically lasts six months but can last longer in cases of retreatment or drug resistance.

Finally, Ms. Bethge shared that in August, HVHD launched their new monthly newsletter. She encouraged board members to keep an eye out for September's edition, which will be disseminated on September 5th. The September newsletter will focus on National Recovery Month.

Board members were encouraged to review changes to HVHD's revamped website:
<https://hvhdct.gov/>

Mr. Kelly asked how HVHD was doing with regard to the increased number of lead cases under the District's jurisdiction. Ms. Bethge replied that the decrease in threshold for intervention has led to an increased workload. The board discussed some of the challenges of lead investigation including time necessary to complete investigation and follow up. Mr. Michaels noted that these types of activities take up a lot of staff time, but are non-remunerative. He asked if there was a way to maintain our remuneration such as a fee structure. Ms. Bethge stated that she would look into whether this was done elsewhere.

Mr. Michaels stated that for the November meeting HVHD should recommend a BOD meeting schedule for the 2025 calendar year. He suggested that this may include moving to quarterly meetings from bi-monthly meetings, but that would be up to the full board to decide.

Old Business

Ms. Bethge shared that HVHD is in possession of a trailer that was purchased through a grant and cannot be sold for profit. As the trailer is currently taking up space in the Playhouse Corner parking lot and is sitting unused, Ms. Bethge would like to recommend donating the trailer to a local organization in need.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to give Ms. Bethge the authority to donate the trailer at her discretion.

Second: Mr. Ellis

All in favor

Motion Carries

Ms. Bethge recommended that the language regarding vacation buyout be removed from the employee handbook to eliminate the option for employees to request financial compensation for unused vacation time. Ms. Bethge also recommended that the following language be added:

“Employees are entitled to take the vacation time they have accrued. Employees are encouraged and expected to take an annual vacation for health and renewal. This vacation time must be scheduled and approved by their supervisor.”

Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the changes to the employee handbook as outlined.

Second: Ms. Fuller

All in favor

Motion Carries

New Business

Ms. Bethge presented the board with a proposal for waiving fees for building additions and shed applications for homeowners impacted by the flooding that occurred in August. In order to waive the appropriate application fee, residents must meet the following requirements:

- Verify flood damage through photographic evidence
- Town must have declared a state of emergency
- Replacement of any sheds, decks, renovations must stay in same location and remain the same size
- HVHD will still require an application and plans submitted
- Application must be submitted before December 31, 2024

The building application fee is currently \$125.00 and the shed application fee is \$50.00.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve HVHD's proposal for waiving fees for building additions and shed applications for homeowners impacted by the flood (not applicable to new construction).

Second: Mr. Michaels

All in favor

Motion Carries

Meeting Adjournment – 6:32pm

Motion to adjourn: Mr. Ellis

Second: Ms. Fuller

All in favor

Motion Carries

Recorded by:

Amy Bethge

Amy Bethge