

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 8, 2009

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH
Ruth Ellen Fitch, Celia Weislo,
Harold Cox, Elaine Ullian

Board Members Absent:

Hortensia Amaro, PhD, Vice Chair
Jack Cradock

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH
John Townsend, Maia BrodyField,
Nakisha Skinner, Isabelle Mathurin,
Timothy Harrington, Maddie Ribble,
Margaret Pless-Hunter, David Pia,
Sharyn Imonti, Jim Montgomery,
Rich Serino, Cindy Engler, William
Kibaja, Pam Jones, David Susich,
Anita Barry, Mark Campbell, Betty Holt,
Stephanie Doyle, Gerry Thomas, Nicole
Daley, Kate Sullivan, Rita Nieves, Dr.
Snehal Shah, Julie Webster, Rob Abromson

Guests:

Ellen Hatch

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM on Thursday, January 8, 2009.

Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, began by asking Maddie Ribble to speak regarding the 2009-2010 Legislative Session.

Maddie Ribble, Director, Intergovernmental Relations & PH Advocacy, stated that Boston Public Health Commission's deadline for submitting draft legislative bills had been met. Draft bills were sent to the Mayor and all recommended bills were included in the BPHC's package. The bill filing deadline is January 14, 2009. Mr. Ribble then gave a brief presentation on the various proposed acts for 2009-2010.

- **An Act to promote conflict resolution curricula in schools** (to teach students and their families the skills needed to negotiate peaceful settlements of conflicts that often escalate into violence);
- **An Act relating to substance addiction treatment** (would remove the exemption of this product and would dedicate the revenue to a Substance Abuse Health Protection Fund to provide substance abuse treatment, prevention education in schools, workplaces, and the community);
- **An Act to amend the Commonwealth's drug treatment program to allow for the diversion of low level offenders under court supervision** (to provide treatment options for non-violent drug offenders);
- **An Act establishing the Massachusetts Food Policy Council** (to establish a statewide food policy council for the purpose of enhancing the agricultural economy of the commonwealth and expanding the availability of fresh, healthy and locally produced foods);
- **An Act to ease the transition of ex-offenders** (Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) reform); and
- **An Act relative to the labeling of certain food products** (to ensure consumer access to nutritional information).

Dr. Johnson asked what the barrier was to approval of last year's submittal of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council Act. Mr. Ribble stated that the agricultural community had some concerns.

Dr. Ferrer thanked Maddie Ribble for all of his work on the various legislations. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commission has been working with the Mayor on getting a bill passed for group 4 retirement eligibility for emergency medical technicians. The bill finally passed in the House and Senate. Dr. Ferrer said that there is opposition from the firefighters union and the Governor has 10 days to sign the bill. Dr. Ferrer reported that the Governor is thinking of vetoing the bill as there is opposition from his administration and finance office.

Dr. Johnson asked whether the Governor directly gave a response in regards to his issues. Dr. Ferrer answered, no. Dr. Ferrer then went on to say that the attention now is devoted to working on the budget and thanked William Kibaja for all of his hard work on the budget. Dr. Ferrer acknowledged the Commission staff for all of their efforts.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair invited a motion to accept the December minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

FY10 Budget – John Townsend

John Townsend, Director of Administration and Finance, gave an overview on the proposed FY10 budget plan. Mr. Townsend began by saying that all budgets are bureau-based and were reviewed with each bureau head. Mr. Townsend also said that each program budget is project-based and all projects have been budgeted in three (3) year cycles.

Mr. Townsend reported that there has been a 7% cut in city funding and a reduction of external grant funding. Mr. Townsend spoke regarding the core principles in budget reduction and gave examples of increasing efficiency and effectiveness. One example would be to improve the data collection, data management, and analysis infrastructure to allow for improved program planning, management and evaluation.

Mr. Townsend then spoke on budget reduction strategies implemented by the Commission.

- Maximize revenue potentials;
- Continue reduction in extraneous spending on food, travel, equipment and supplies;
- Reorganize programs for greater efficiencies;
- Reduce duplication of program efforts;
- Aggressively seek new grant funding and grant opportunities.

Mr. Townsend stated that most of BPHC's funding comes from the City.

Dr. Johnson asked whether there is more revenue potential from Boston EMS. Mr. Townsend replied, yes.

FY10 Budget (Programs) – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, gave a breakdown of each bureau and spoke regarding BPHC's budget challenges and opportunities.

Challenges for FY10:

- Maintaining a skilled work force;
- Putting planned expansion of facilities and services on hold;
- Ensuring maintenance and upkeep of facilities;
- Addressing service loss as small community-based organizations cut budgets;
- Managing FY09 cuts; and
- Planning amongst uncertainty in Federal and State budgets in FY10.

Opportunities for Administrative/Public Service Centers FY10:

- Non-discretionary costs associated with maintenance and upkeep of facilities;
- Green initiatives including energy conservation;
- Increase in parking rates and rent.

Dr. Johnson asked if the green initiative requires an additional investment. Dr. Ferrer answered in the affirmative and cited the long-term benefit to BPHC.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

