



**MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE
BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
Monday, March 25, 2013**

A special meeting of the Board of the Boston Public Health Commission (“Commission”) was held on Monday, March 25, 2013 in the Hayes Conference Room at the Commission’s offices at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd floor, Boston, MA 02118.

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD
Harold Cox
Jack Cradock
Kate Walsh
Celia Wcislo

Also Present Were:

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, John Townsend Fatema Fazendeiro, Kathy Hussey, Chuck Gagnon, William Kibaja, Paul (PJ) McCann, Jim Hooley, Jim Montgomery, Jeanne Cannata, David Pia, David Susich, Ellen Hatch, Dianne Cavaleri, Brendan Kearney, Liam Day, Lisa Conley, Beth Grand, Pam Jones, and Natalie Wittenburg.

Proceedings:

Chairwoman’s Comments

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH

- Dr. Johnson thanked everyone for attending and then gave the floor to Dr. Ferrer.

Executive Director’s Report

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd

- Dr. Ferrer thanked the Board for coming to the special meeting. She recognized that the last meeting raised a lot of questions but that today management is prepared to answer those questions and present a slightly altered budget in light of the concerns that were raised at the last meeting.
- Dr. Ferrer updated the Board about a phone conversation she had with Secretary Polanowicz. Dr. Ferrer restated that the Mayor had written a letter to him and the Governor reiterating our need for assistance regarding Boston EMS transports of uninsured residents and our expectation that the State has some obligation to help us. Dr. Ferrer said she has a meeting with Secretary Polanowicz and it

would be helpful if the Interim Commissioner of Massachusetts Department of Public Health was also present at that meeting.

- Dr. Johnson wondered when or if the Board should become involved and decided to wait and see how the meeting with the Secretary goes and then consider how the Board should respond to the Secretary and to Dr. Harris regarding our request for funding to EMS.
- Dr. Ferrer stated Secretary Polanowicz has been on the job a month and has had a lot of issues to deal with. She has had a good relationship with him in the past and hopes this was just a situation where he did not have all the information. It is also possible Dr. Harris, who has only been in that position since last fall, doesn't have enough information. Dr. Ferrer wants to use the meeting to make sure everyone understands the issues we are facing and what our suggested strategies are to get assistance from the state. Dr. Ferrer will report back to the Board and ask for its assistance if necessary.
- Mr. Cradock asked what the amount of the request to the state is and Dr. Ferrer responded we didn't have an exact dollar amount but that we had been receiving \$6.4 million from the state and that Mr. Townsend would present a budget that closes that gap somewhat.
- Dr. Ferrer believes that for us to have a sustainable EMS program, assuming we receive \$1.5 million from additional claims, we would need an additional \$3 to \$4 million dollars. She is confident we can implement strategies at EMS to make it more efficient. She does not anticipate that the percent of uninsured is going to dramatically decrease over the next few years. In fact, she expects it to increase and is concerned because 25% of the uninsured people transported last year were from outside of Boston.

Presentation/Vote: BPHC FY 2014 Budget

John Townsend, Esq., Director of Administration and Finance

William Kibaja, Budget Director

- Mr. Townsend quickly recapped the budget timeline with a culmination in May or June, 2013 after favorable approval by the City Council.
- Mr. Townsend discussed the budget framework that included: level city funding for bureaus; the projected loss of \$6.4 million in EMS revenue; cost of living increases for union and non-union employees; decreases in pension and health insurance costs; a \$531,000 decrease in grant funding for FY14, although there are a number of grant applications in process; and BPHC's general obligation debt decrease of 60% in FY14.
- Mr. Townsend described proposed resolutions to the \$6.4 million deficit for EMS starting with additional funding: a Medicaid supplemental payment of \$1.5 million which we are currently working with the state to collect; ambulance restoration funds in the amount of \$602,000 from the City of Boston, which is a slight increase from our last submission; a onetime funding of \$120,000 for community programs to cover the "CPR Anytime" and child seat safety programs for a year while we identify community partners who can assume those responsibilities from EMS; and lastly, a 5% (as opposed to 10%) cut in grants to community health centers to be explained in more detail by Mr. Townsend.
- In addition to the proposed funding for EMS, Mr. Townsend indicated there will be administrative cuts in the form of approximately 9 layoffs, but there will not be layoffs on the operations side; the largest of the equipment cuts will come from the delay in purchasing of ambulances for the upcoming year. These reductions total \$3.8 million.

- Mr. Townsend then provided a breakdown of the funding sources for FY14: 43% comes from Boston City appropriations; 32% comes from billing sources; 14% is from federal grants; and the remaining 11% is from state grants. Mr. Kibaja noted the new adjustments to the EMS and Community Health Centers portions of the budget which change the entire budget to \$151,943 million.
- Mr. Kibaja described the city funding fluctuations, commenting that the approximate \$800k change was due to the ambulance restoration funds of \$602k and onetime funding for community programs of \$120k. Mr. Kibaja explained that there were no changes in the FTEs from FY2013 vs. FY2014.
- Mr. Kibaja indicated that there would be a slight change to the cut in the community health centers to 5% with the exception of two: the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers will be getting a 10% cut as well as the Roxbury Comprehensive Community Center.
- Ms. Wcislo had a question regarding the Martha Eliot health center. She asked if Martha Eliot had changed from an adult center, shouldn't the numbers be changed? Dr. Ferrer replied we had to wait and see since they hadn't yet relinquished their license to run a health center, whereas Roxbury Comprehensive Community Center lost its licensure. She added it's unclear just what they intend to do with the Martha Eliot at this time. Dr. Ferrer commented it was a good point to bring up the potential of an additional \$40k.
- Ms. Fitch stated that she believes that Martha Eliot intends to keep its pediatric practice, but not the adult practice. Dr. Ferrer mentioned the Commission intends to speak to representatives at Martha Eliot to get a sense of what it intends to do before the beginning of the next fiscal year. Dr. Ferrer said she would report back to the Board if they indicate one way or another there will be a big change there and ask for approval.
- Mr. Cradock asked if we had a specific contract with Mass League. Dr. Ferrer confirmed we've always had a general support contract with them for not much money. She feels they can handle the 10% cut.
- Mr. Townsend indicated the 5% cuts to the community health center would total \$330,854. He stated this, plus other savings and additional funding previously discussed, would address some of the \$6.4 million loss to EMS. Dr. Ferrer continued by noting the number we were trying to get to was \$950,000. The \$950,000 would allow us to not curtail EMS operations and keep the same number of field staff and ambulances running. Dr. Ferrer wanted to acknowledge the Mayor for being understanding of the tight timeframe and giving the Commission additional money to account for EMS's community services.
- Mr. Cox asked if the City's grant of more money represented a onetime deal. Dr. Ferrer stated that the money is there as a place holder until other funds become available. The onetime ask was for the community programming dollars. We need to use the coming year to either raise some money for that programming or identify community partners to take it over.
- Ms. Wcislo asked if there was any data about the impact of EMS services on communities of color. Dr. Ferrer responded that due to the nature of their service, at this point EMS isn't able to collect complete data on race and ethnicity. The proxy we use for that is the neighborhoods; we have some neighborhoods that are predominantly neighborhoods of color which make it possible to look at the data by neighborhood. We'd like to be able to get race/ethnicity data from hospital records at some point, since they have to collect it by law.

- Ms. Wcislo suggested for the Board to look at who is being affected by the cuts to services as well as the closing of some area health centers to make sure that the neighborhoods of color are not disproportionately impacted. Dr. Johnson agreed with the suggestion.
- Mr. Cox had a process question around the Determination of Need (DoN) dollars and how they actually come to the Commission. Dr. Ferrer replied it was different process depending upon the hospital. She said the State DPH is charged with administering the DoN dollars and has been very good about inviting us to the table. However, Dr. Ferrer indicated that there needs to be a better framework that can provide the Commission with money for the community services as needed.
- Ms. Wcislo asked if any thought had been put into the Mayor using the PILOT program as a way of funding. Dr. Ferrer explained that most hospitals have been really good about PILOT payments and helping us with other programming.
- Dr. Johnson clarified that the budget the Board votes on today is the budget that will be submitted to the Mayor. Dr. Johnson also thought that the work that was poured into revising the budget was well done given a difficult year and thanked Dr. Ferrer and the Mayor for coming back with what she thinks fundamentally is a good budget given the circumstances.
- Dr. Johnson asked Ms. Fazendeiro to read the Resolution/Vote into the Minutes. Ms. Fazendeiro stated before you is a resolution to:

**APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES BUDGET FOR
SUBMISSION TO THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BOSTON**

WHEREAS the Board has considered the Boston Public Health Commission's public health services budget for fiscal year 2014, prepared pursuant to our enabling statute for submission to the Mayor of the City of Boston;

WHEREAS a copy of said Commission's public health services budget is attached and part of your packet;

THEREFORE, the Board approves and adopts, the attached public health services budget, for submission to the Mayor. Ms. Fazendeiro then asked Dr. Johnson to make a motion to vote.

- Dr. Johnson made the motion to vote. Ms. Fitch seconded the motion. There being no objections, the Board unanimously passed the Vote to Approve the Fiscal Year 2014 Public Health Services Budget.

Adjournment

Dr. Johnson called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Walsh, Ms. Fitch and Mr. Cradock seconded that motion with no objections. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Submitted By:

Kathy Hussey, Secretary