

# NorthEast Public Health Alliance

## May 21st, 2024 Meeting Minutes

<b>Time:</b> <b>9-10:30AM EST</b>
<b><u>Meeting Location</u></b> Zoom: <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87934426809">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87934426809</a>

### **Voting members in attendance:**

Kristel Bennett, Billerica  
Donna Greenwood, Chelmsford  
Shannon Gillis, Tewksbury  
Kerri Oun, Tyngsborough

### **Non-voting members in attendance:**

Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies  
Angela Lemire, Tyngsborough

### **Opening**

The special meeting of the NorthEast Public Health Alliance was called to order by Cynthia Baker at 9:06AM on May 21st, 2024.

## **I. FY24 Spend-down Review and Vote**

BME shared an update on the digitization contracting process following the coalition's last meeting. Based upon review of vendor proposals, the coalition examined increasing the spending threshold for this project with FY24 funds from \$100,000 to \$128,000. The group agreed this was an advantageous use of FY24 funds that benefits the group. The coalition discussed the possibility of leveraging some FY25 funds towards project completion should the work extend beyond June 30th, 2024.

Kristel Bennett made a motion to update coalition allocation of FY24 funds towards digitization (\$128k). Shannon Gillis seconded.

### **Vote**

Billerica: Y  
Chelmsford: Y  
Tewksbury: Y

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Tyngsborough: Y

*Motion passes.*

The coalition reviewed the FY24 spending tracker and walked through contingencies to allocate remaining funds towards requested and necessary inspection and nursing supplies. The coalition also discussed strategy for purchasing SSA uniforms, and decided to consolidate a prospective order with PK Health Gear.

BME shared updated DPH guidance regarding the purchase of noise meters and suggested moving forward with purchase of the Grainger SKU rather than the MassDEP recommended model. Other items requested by the group included alternative slip-resistant boot SKUs for inspectors, a full Tyvek suit for housing inspections, and backpacks for inspectors.

Municipalities will send BME their final lists of requested items based on the spending tracker list ASAP. In the event of insufficient funding to accommodate all requests, the group will prioritize nursing and inspection supplies first.

Donna Greenwood made a motion to approve purchase of discussed and requested items with prioritization of nursing and inspection supplies should funding become constrained. Shannon Gillis seconded the motion.

### **Vote**

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

*Motion passes.*

## **II. FY25 Work Plan Discussion**

BME provided an overview of the updated FY25 workplan template and requirements. Coalitions are required to complete 3 grant requirement objectives based on the scope of engagement, encompassing Governance, Grant Administration, and Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Review. SSAs must also complete a minimum of one Sustainability objective, 3 Performance Standards objectives, and are recommended to complete an Elective objective of their choosing. Each objective must include a Racial Equity Consideration, and at least one activity

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related to a racial equity focus. Finally, all PHE-funded staff must be linked to specific work plan objectives in FY25.

BME presented the results of the self-paced capacity assessment. Overall, the coalition as a whole saw an 8% increase in their aggregated percentage of performance standards met between 2022 and 2024. Encouraging increases were demonstrated in Administration, Community Sanitation, Disease Control & Prevention, Environmental Protection, Food Protection, and the Other category. Housing remained flat, and Tobacco Use Prevention saw a small decrease of 5% of aggregated performance standards met.

	BCA Response	FY2024	
Subject Area	Aggregated % of Performance Standards Met	Aggregated % of Performance Standards Met	Percent Change
	% of applicable Performance Standards met = Yes/(Total-Not applicable)	% of applicable Performance Standards met = Yes/(Total-Not applicable)	
Administration	74%	82%	8%
Community Sanitation	82%	88%	6%
Disease Control and Prevention*	79%	100%	21%
Environmental Protection	74%	97%	23%
Food Protection*	75%	85%	10%
Housing	91%	91%	0%
Tobacco Use Prevention	97%	92%	-5%
Other*	73%	83%	10%
Total	81%	89%	8%

The group discussed alignment of workplan objectives and thematic focus based on the capacity self-assessment results. The group agreed to prioritize Housing as an objective based on the capacity assessment. Activities associated with this objective will include sourcing a housing court training for coalition staff, hoarding training support, and buildout of an SOP to support case management and resource connection for community members with hoarding and cluttering behaviors (recycled from the FY24 work plan).

The group also discussed a drilldown of the results from the Community Sanitation category. Despite demonstrating improvement between the baseline capacity assessment (BCA) and the 2024 self-assessment, Tewksbury reported a need for staff to support tanning inspections, and Chelmsford reported a need for staffing and training to complete policy and plan review for camp inspections.

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The coalition discussed the results of the Tobacco Use Prevention standards. Billerica's individual assessment reported needing staff to assist with regulatory enforcement for sale of electronic nicotine delivery devices, which may account for the group's decrease in performance from 2022 to 2024. Other municipalities reported not needing additional Tobacco Control support due to ongoing assistance from contractors and regional coalitions. Therefore the group decided not to focus on Tobacco Use Prevention as a standalone objective.

The group also discussed the prospect of hiring a 0.5 FTE or contractor to support Food Protection. Chelmsford indicated an interest in leveraging additional inspection capacity for camp inspections, and the group discussed providing additional support to Billerica for Tobacco Control per the self-assessment. The coalition decided to prioritize expansion of inspectional capacity as a primary Performance Standard objective.

The coalition also agreed to pursue a Performance Standard objective related to inspectional documentation improvements based on the FY24 SME documentation audit.

The group reviewed Elective and Sustainability Objective options. The coalition agreed on a Sustainability Objective related to internal communication plans to assist in management of shared staff. The coalition also expressed interest in an Elective Objective exploring connections and expansion of services regarding Maternal, Child, and Family Health.

BME will continue to workshop the workplan based on coalition direction and provide an updated draft for group review. NEPHA plans to approve the final workplan at the June coalition meeting.

### III. FY25 Budget Discussion

*This agenda item was not discussed due to timing constraints.*

### IV. Other Items

*This agenda item was not discussed due to timing constraints.*

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### V. Adjournment

Shannon Gillis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kerri Oun seconded the motion.

#### Vote

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

*Motion passes.*

The meeting adjourned at 10:49AM.

#### **Documents and exhibits used by the public body in the meeting:**

NEPHA FY24 Spending Ideas and Tracker

NEPHA FY25 Workplan Template

NEPHA Self-Assessment



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