

August 7th, 2025 Meeting Minutes

11:00 am - 1:00 pm EST

Virtual: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87533291697>

Voting members in attendance:

Kristel Bennett, Billerica (partial attendance)

Darcy Beall, Chelmsford

Shannon Gillis, Tewksbury

Kerri Oun, Tyngsborough

Non-voting members in attendance:

Christine West, Billerica

Haleigh Schultz, BME Strategies

Taryn Angel, Chelmsford

Siobhan LaFreniere, Tewksbury

Ashley Pavlakos, Regional Public Health Nurse

Elise Pierce, Regional Inspector

Angela Lemire, Tyngsborough

Voting members absent:

Donna Greenwood, Chelmsford

I. Opening

4/4 voting members present, quorum was met.

Motion to start the meeting

Kerri Oun made a motion to start the meeting. Kristel Bennett seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

All in favor.

Haleigh Schultz called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

Approval of outstanding June meeting minutes

Kerri Oun motioned to approve the June 12th and June 17th meeting minutes. Kristel Bennett seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y
Chelmsford: Y
Tewksbury: Y
Tyngsborough: Y
All in favor.

Approval of outstanding July meeting minutes

Kerri Oun motioned to approve the July 28th meeting minutes. Siobhan LaFreniere seconded the motion.

Billerica: Abstain - not present at July 28th meeting
Chelmsford: Abstain
Tewksbury: Y
Tyngsborough: Y
All in favor.

II. Announcements & Reminders

A. Tier 2 Training Opportunities

The Training Hub recently announced upcoming Fall Tier 2 Food and Housing courses. Rather than an application process, spots will be filled from the waitlist. The dates and times have been released for the Food course, but more information is expected for the Housing course. If coalition members or town partners are still seeking Tier 2 training completion, please email Mark Takakjy at lphttrain@be.edu to confirm completion of Tier 1 coursework and confirm enrollment on the waitlist. For further questions, reach out to Haleigh Schultz or the Training Hub.

B. Fall 2025 Conferences

The group participated in early-bird registration for the MEHA and MHOA Fall 2025 Conferences. Haleigh confirmed the following attendees:

- MEHA: Kerri Oun, Mark Masiello, Elise Pierce, Shannon Gillis, Siobhan LaFreniere
- MHOA: Siobhan LaFreniere, Donna Greenwood, Darcy Beall, Taryn Angel, Elise Pierce, Shannon Gillis, Ashley Pavlakos (pending)

As a reminder, the PHE Grant can reimburse hotels and travel up to the Federal GSA rate. For the MHOA Conference in Springfield, the rate is \$128/night, and for the MEHA Conference in Plymouth, the rate is \$126/night. More information can be found on the MHOA and MEHA websites. Reach out to Haleigh with any questions.

C. IMA Expiration & Proposed Amendment

NEPHA's original IMA, signed and executed in January, 2023, listed a term of three years. Given that the group has executed two amendments since, the last signed in December, 2024, the expiration date is unclear. Representatives at the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) proposed a third amendment to extend the term of the IMA for an additional three years. Haleigh will work with Rich Mucci to draft language, which will then be circulated to each town for review and signature. Kristel Bennett noted that Billerica does not have a Town Manager, but she will work with the acting representative to formally review and sign the agreement.

D. Inspection Coverage

As of last week, the group has officially contracted with MoJin Solutions for additional inspection coverage in FY26. Towns are invited to leverage MoJin as necessary while the coalition seeks a second full-time Regional Inspector hire. To inform the hiring process, the group discussed need and capacity. Given that Elise Pierce's time is split between three communities, Chelmsford, Tewksbury, and Tyngsborough confirmed that they would need additional coverage in lieu of contracted services. Haleigh will work with the Tyngsborough team to repost the Job Description to the appropriate sites, and she'll reconvene the Hiring Subcommittee in the coming weeks to align on the hiring process. All towns confirmed that inspections have been going well with MoJin.

III. Regional Inspector Progress Update

A. Update from Elise Pierce, Regional Inspector

Elise Pierce provided an update on her training, onboarding, and inspection progress over the past couple of months. She has now completed all Tier 1 coursework for Food and Housing, as well as the Foundations in Local Public Health course. She recently connected with the Training Hub to confirm her position on the Tier 2 waitlist, and they were able to add her to the FoodShield resource platform. Elise has been shadowing inspectors in Chelmsford, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and on the MoJin team, where she's gained important exposure to Food, Housing, and Pool inspections. She's also learning how to conduct Lake Water Testing, as well as shadow other Health Department commitments and witnessing events. She's now comfortable with FoodCode Pro and Permit Eyes, and is learning how to write Orders to Correct and explore plan reviews. The towns confirmed that they are so glad to have her!

IV. FDA National Voluntary Standards Introduction - Siobhan LaFreniere

A. Introduction to the FDA National Voluntary Retail Food Program Standards

Siobhan LaFreniere provided an introduction to the FDA National Voluntary Retail Food Program Standards, which the Town of Tewksbury is exploring as a potential opportunity moving forward. The program operates through a grant, which provides support for towns seeking to standardize their inspection processes and adopt the National FDA Standards. The Standards provide a framework for inspectors, based on a preliminary self-assessment and audit. Once towns apply, they

can opt into specific standards to work towards, with the goal of achieving all 9 program standards. As Elise Pierce continues her onboarding process, this could also be a great opportunity to standardize inspections across the four member communities. Kerri Oun confirmed that the Town of Tyngsborough originally signed up for the program, but the initial workload was too heavy. They would be interested in learning more as the Town of Tewksbury explores initial steps. The Town of Billerica would also be interested, but Kristel Bennett expressed concern around the time commitment. Given that the program requires the transition to risk-based inspection, the Town of Chelmsford is not interested in participating. Siobhan and Haleigh Schultz will do some more research and report back to the group with any important information or updates.

V. FY25 Summary

A. Key Accomplishments

Haleigh Schultz highlighted some key accomplishments from FY25, including:

- Participation and completion of the FPHS Shared Services Review
- Translation of the Community Resource Guide into 6 languages
- Welcoming and onboarding NEPHA's new Regional Inspector, Elise Pierce
- Investment in training, including the Housing Court Training and Hoarding Training Series
- Contracting with MoJin Solutions to support inspectional coverage and capacity
- Participation in the Maternal, Child, and Family Health Community of Practice
- Successful spend-down efforts despite unexpected staffing turnover throughout the year

B. Spending Summary

In FY25, NEPHA spent \$435,761.43, or 93.4% of the total grant award. All reporting was completed and submitted to the group's Program Coordinators by Haleigh Schultz.

C. Workplan Activities Summary

The group made impressive progress on NEPHA's FY25 Workplan Activities. The vast majority of activities received "Complete" status. Some activities were noted as "In-Progress," most of which are reflected in the FY26 Workplan. Few activities were "Stalled," all of which were assigned to dedicated regional staff members who no longer serve that role within the coalition.

VI. FY26 Kickoff

A. Workplan Overview

Haleigh Schultz provided a reintroduction to the FY26 Workplan, which has now received approval from the Program Coordinators. The group committed to the following workplan objectives:

- Sustainability Objective 1) Communication and Engagement: Raise community awareness of shared services and benefits to residents.

- Sustainability Objective 2) Community Partnership Development: Complete a partner mapping process to identify new partners and expand partnerships to fill gaps/build capacity.
- Performance Standards Objective 1) Improve Inspection Processes: Identify areas for improvement in inspection processes and provide targeted training to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of inspections across all municipalities.
- Performance Standards Objective 2) Targeted Training Opportunities: Facilitate targeted training opportunities for staff members to address gaps in meeting the Performance Standards.
- Performance Standards Objective 3) Tobacco Use Prevention: Create and implement a plan for meeting tobacco control and prevention needs.
- Elective Objective 1) Maternal, Child, and Family Health: Support caregivers and newborns.
- Elective Objective 2) Retention & Job Satisfaction: Enhance staffing retention and job satisfaction by implementing targeted initiatives and fostering a supportive work environment.

B. Dashboard Walkthrough & Upcoming Priorities

Similar to last year, the group will be reorienting throughout the fiscal year with the Workplan Dashboard, which outlines each Objective, the primary activities, upcoming priorities, due dates, and objective statuses. Haleigh Schultz provided a walkthrough of the FY26 Dashboard and the activities for each program area. The group presented no questions or comments.

As the group kicks off FY26 programming, upcoming priorities include:

- Conducting the initial regional staff feedback session
- Documenting each town's approach for Tobacco Compliance Checks
- Reconvening the Regional Inspector Hiring Subcommittee
- Convening the Maternal, Child, and Family Health working group for Community Baby Shower planning
- Reviewing the FPHS Results at an upcoming coalition meeting
- Reviewing, signing, and executing the IMA Amendment

Haleigh will reach out to the Hiring Subcommittee and MCH working group in the planning weeks to schedule initial meetings.

VII. Community Updates

Towns provided voluntary updates on their latest programming and public health-related activities. The Chelmsford team recently hosted their College-Ready community event, which went well. They are interested in hosting the event again in future years. The Tewksbury team has been working on

substance use resources and preparing for upcoming flu clinics. The Billerica team has been busy with farmers markets, recently helped with the Health & Wellness fair, and is preparing for fall flu season.

VIII. Adjournment

The next regular coalition meeting will be held on Thursday, September 4th, from 11AM-1PM in Chelmsford.

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Kerri Oun motioned to adjourn the meeting. Darcy Beall seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Absent

Tyngsborough: Y

All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 12:33 PM.

Documents used by the public body during the meeting:

- NEPHA August 7th Meeting Slides
- Introduction to FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Program Standards Slides

NEPHA Coalition Meeting



August 7th, 2025



BME STRATEGIES

Meeting Opening

Agenda

- I. Opening
- II. Announcements & Reminders
- III. Regional Inspector Progress Update
- IV. Introduction to the FDA National Voluntary Retail Food
Regulatory Program Standards
- V. FY25 Summary
- VI. FY26 Kickoff
- VII. Community Updates
- VIII. Adjournment

Meeting Minute Approval

June 12th Meeting Minutes - Workplan Introduction

June 17th Meeting Minutes - Workplan Approval

July 28th Meeting Minutes - MoJin Contract Award

Announcements & Reminders

Welcome back, Shannon!

Announcements & Reminders

Upcoming Tier 2 Training Opportunities

The Training Hubs recently announced the upcoming Fall Tier 2 course.

- Rather than an application process, all spots will be filled from the waitlist
 - *Any participants?*
- If you or your inspectors are still in need of Tier 2 training, contact Mark Takakjy at lphttrain@bu.edu to confirm your completion of Tier 1 coursework and confirm your spot on the waitlist
- More information on the Fall Tier 2 Housing course coming soon

Please reach out with any questions!

Announcements & Reminders

MEHA & MHOA Registration & Accommodations

So far, we have confirmed and paid the registrations for the following:

- MEHA: Kerri, Elise, Mark
- MHOA: Siobhan, Elise, Darcy, Taryn, Donna

For those who did not sign up early-bird, or if there are additional folks in your towns who are interested, please let Haleigh and the Tyngsborough team know!

- Hotel accommodations can be reimbursed up to the Federal GSA Rates - \$128/night in Springfield (MHOA), and \$126/night in Plymouth (MEHA)

Announcements & Reminders

IMA Expiration & Proposed Amendment

In preparation for the year, I touched base with Rich Mucci to assess the expiration of our IMA, which was originally signed in January 2023 with a 3-year term.

- Given that the group has signed and executed two amendments since, the latest in December 2024, the expiration date is less clear
- Rich proposed a third amendment to extend the IMA for an additional 3 years
- To cover our basis, the goal is to execute the amendment by 12/31/25

Stay tuned for updates! Rich is currently drafting the IMA amendment language. If you anticipate any challenges or obstacles, please let Haleigh know.

Announcements & Reminders

Inspection Coverage

We have officially contracted with MoJin Solutions for inspectional coverage in FY26. Please continue to assess your need and request inspections as necessary.

Regional Inspector hiring:

- Have any needs changed over the past couple of months?
- Does a second full-time hire (with an initial focus on Food Protection) still feel the most appropriate?

Regional Inspector Progress Update

Elise Pierce

Introduction to the FDA National Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards

Siobhan LaFreniere

FY25 Summary

FY25 Key Accomplishments

We have so many things to celebrate from FY25! Some accomplishments to call out:

- Participation and completion of the FPHS Shared Services Review
- Translation of the Community Resource Guide into 6 languages
- Welcoming and onboarding our new Regional Inspector, Elise
- Investment in training, including the Housing Court Training and Hoarding Training Series
- Contracting with MoJin Solutions to support inspectional coverage and capacity
- Participation in the Maternal, Child, and Family Health Community of Practice
- Successful spend-down despite unexpected changes throughout the year!

FY25 Spending Summary

Budget Status

Total Spent to Date

\$435,761.43

% Spent to Date

93.4%

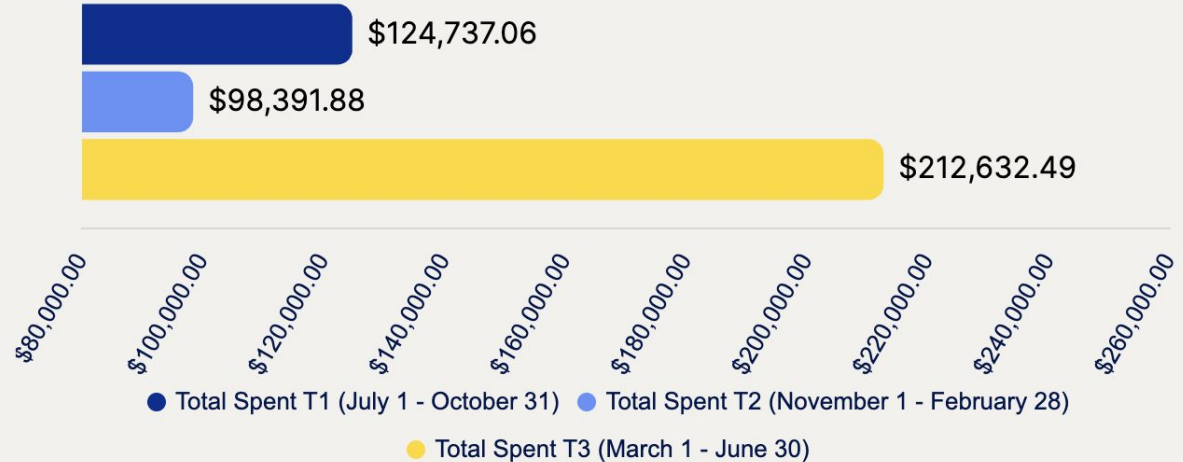
Remaining Budget

\$30,894.80

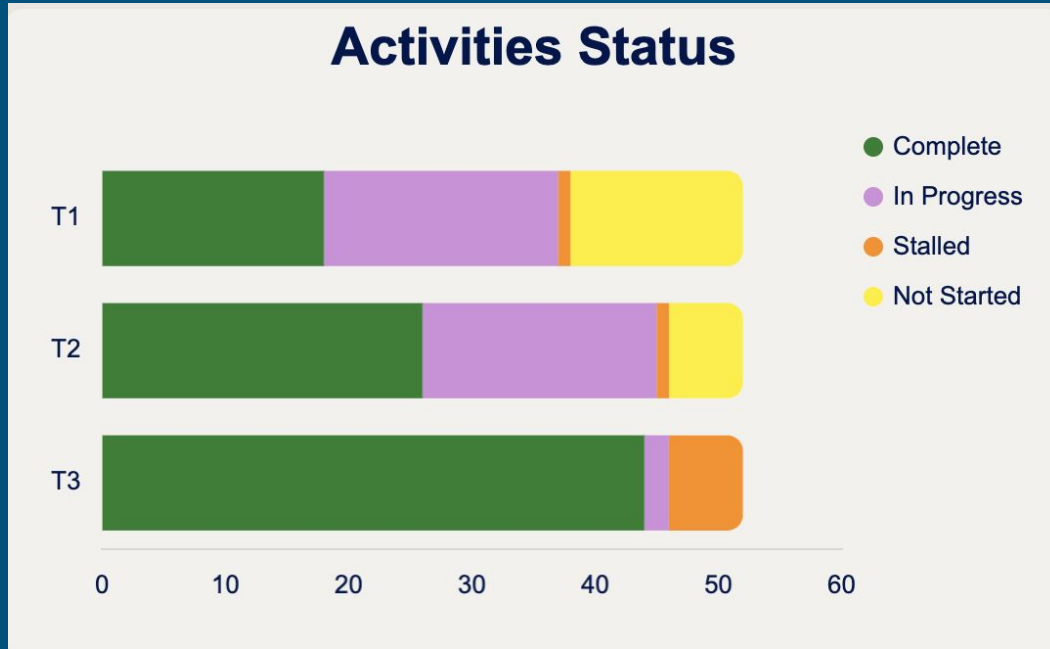
Contract Amount

\$466,656.23

Budget Tracking



FY25 Workplan Activities Summary



Notes:

- All “In Progress” activities are incorporated into our FY26 Workplan
- “Stalled” activities were typically assigned to Regional Staff who are no longer in those positions

FY26 Kickoff

FY26 Workplan Overview

Sustainability Objective 1	1) Communication & Engagement: Raise community awareness of shared services and benefits to residents.
Sustainability Objective 2	4) Community Partnership Development: Complete a process to identify new partners and expand partnerships to fill gaps/build capacity.
Performance Standards Objective 1	2) Improve Inspection Processes: Identify areas for improvement in inspection processes and provide targeted training to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of inspections across all municipalities.
Performance Standards Objective 2	3) Targeted Training Opportunities: Facilitate targeted training opportunities for staff members to address gaps in meeting the performance standards.
Performance Standards Objective 3	5) Tobacco Use Prevention: Create and implement a plan for meeting tobacco control and prevention needs.
Elective Objective 1	3) Maternal, Child, and Family Health: Support caregivers and newborns.
Elective Objective 2	11) Retention & Job Satisfaction: Enhance staffing retention and job satisfaction by implementing targeted initiatives and fostering a supportive work environment.

FY26 Workplan Dashboard

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Next Steps	Due	Status
S1: Improve awareness of NEPHA	<div>Improve awareness of the NEPHA coalition among participating communities</div> <div>Fact Sheet</div> <div>Translate</div> <div>Distribute Fact Sheet on website, HDs, and at coalition events</div>												Develop a coalition Fact Sheet describing NEPHA, the PHE Grant, and the coalition's efforts and impact	8/31	On Track
S2: Community partnership development	<div>Review FPHS</div> <div>Develop outreach strategy</div> <div>Collaborate with partners and address gaps</div>												Review the FPHS Shared Services Review results, identify opportunities	9/30	On Track
PS1: Improve inspection processes	<div>Connect with Training Hub</div> <div>Compile and organize ready-made materials for inspectors</div> <div>Translate</div>												Connect with the Training Hub and other partners to identify trainings	9/30	On Track
PS2: Targeted training opportunities	<div>Review FPHS</div> <div>Identify training resources and ensure all staff complete relevant trainings</div> <div>Identify and coordinate a Health Equity Training</div> <div>Feedback system</div>												Review FPHS results to target training opportunities	8/31	On Track
PS3: Tobacco use prevention	<div>Town's checks</div> <div>Seek assistance from MHOA for tobacco inspections and compliance checks</div> <div>Research statewide tobacco and nicotine policies</div> <div>Create educational materials on the health implications of tobacco and nicotine use</div>												Document how each town conducts Tobacco inspections and compliance checks	8/15	On Track
E1: Maternal, child, & family health	<div>Plan and coordinate a Community Baby Shower in partnership with local organizations and providers</div> <div>Conduct outreach to community members and community partners</div> <div>Explore additional funding opportunities</div> <div>Design interactive stations and information for the event</div> <div>Feedback</div>												Begin planning and explore additional funding opportunities	12/31	On Track
E2: Retention & job satisfaction	<div>Establish regular check-ins with the Training Hub and other partners</div> <div>Conduct initial assessment with current staff, create space for ongoing discussion and feedback</div> <div>Design performance assessment and feedback system for staff</div> <div>Pilot performance reviews</div>												Meet with regional staff for initial feedback, design performance review and feedback systems	12/31	On Track

Upcoming Priorities

Upcoming Focus Areas:

- Conduct initial regional staff feedback session
- Document each town's approach for Tobacco Compliance Checks
- Reconvene the Regional Inspector Hiring Subcommittee
 - *Donna, Kerri, others?*
- Convene the Maternal, Child, and Family Health working group for Community Baby Shower planning
- Review the FPHS Results at an upcoming coalition meeting
- Review, sign, and execute the IMA Amendment

Community Updates

Meeting Adjournment

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is currently scheduled on Sept. 11th, which conflicts with the MEHA Conference.

- Thursday, Sept. 4th?

Volunteer to host?