

NEW JERSEY HEALTH OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES - FEBRUARY 27, 2020

Chris Merkel called the meeting to order at 11:32 am.

Approval of Minutes

Marconi Gapas asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November 2019. A Motion to approve by P. Tabbot and second by P Nwako. Motion passes.

President Report

M. Gapas advised that M. Avallone could not make meeting but a report update will be posted via the NJACCHO Forum. M. Gapas mentioned M. Avallone's work on the Hepatitis A grant initiative; identified counties that are participating and D. Richardson has been hired as a consultant to assist with this project.

M. Gapas also mentioned efforts with DCA to get monies out to local health departments; new collaborative effort between NJACCHO and the DCA.

M. Gapas mentioned new PHEP grant cycle. Ann Marie Ruiz, Gloucester County HD, stated that shelf kit should be updated; it has been a while and need updating (for preparedness, including fact sheets, etc.).

Treasurer's Report

M. Gapas advised of General Checking account (\$115,328.45) and Grant Checking (\$143,291). Motion to approve the report by P. Nwako; second by P. Tabbot. Motion passes.

The 2020 Budget was displayed for review. The NJACCHO EC has approved this budget at the January 2020 meeting.

Program update

C. Merkel advised of program schedule:

- April learning session, April 16 tentatively, at Morris County Public Safety Training Academy. Topic TBD, but likely will focus on climate change.
- June learning session – Topic will be advocacy and will coincide with legislative week in Trenton; date TBD, at Middlesex Fire Academy.
- September learning session will include open forum for membership.
- November will feature League of Municipalities conference.

Membership update

L. Brown advised that to date, 48 membership renewals from last year. L. Brown advised that as of March 31 is the renewal deadline set forth in the by-laws to avoid loss of forum access and/or program discounts.

Strategic Plan update

L. Brown advised that the new 3-year Strategic Plan was approved by the EC at its January 2020 meeting. A brief overview related to the activities used in the development of the plan was reviewed.

The 3 goals listed below were reviewed briefly.

1. Create an environment that encourages member engagement.
2. Improve the organizational effectiveness of the Association.
3. Advocate for the future of public health in New Jersey with a focus on equity.

Specific activities highlighted focused on communications and the plans for a new website and communication platform forthcoming in 2020. Advocacy was also mentioned, including mention of the need to build relationships and to solicit more participation in advocating.

Advocacy News/Updates

M. Gapas mentioned that the immunization/religious exemption bill did not pass, but that the NJACCHO leadership would continue to pursue revised legislation.

C. Merkel mentioned Cottage Food Bill and advised that Public Health Council postponed discussion until its March 9, 2020 meeting, encouraging PH professionals to attend this meeting and advise the NJDOH know our concerns about the bill.

PHACE update

M. Gapas delivered comments on behalf of K. Sumner. Tax exempt status for the organization is being pursued at this time. PHACE also continues to discuss possibilities to bring a public health institute to NJ.

NACCHO update

M. Gapas delivered comments on behalf of K. Sumner. The Annual Preparedness Summit is upcoming and all are encouraged to attend. The NACCHO annual conference scheduled in Denver, Colorado from July 7 – 9.

NACCHO has been in the process of updating its MOUs with state affiliates. Two significant changes have occurred:

1. There is an option to participate in a growth incentive program. For NJ, this would be larger benefits to the NJACCHO membership if NACCHO membership rates increase by 15% each year)
2. There is an option for NJACCHO to collect NACCHO dues and retain 3% of the dues.

Grant Updates

L. Brown mentioned the Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity grants and only 31 departments have applied to this point. A reminder that the applications are due by tomorrow with an encouragement for eligible departments to apply. The application has 3 parts, with a new addition/approval of fees, surrounding Coronavirus preparedness funding.

OLPH update

S. Semple was present to provide an update and did not have a formal report, but would be open to answering questions.

Questions:

- LHER and moratorium - S. Semple discussed the moratorium was due to the fact many different surveys are interconnected on Hippocrates, and one of the surveys in the report was overriding Redbook information. The LHER will not be reopened and apologies were issued to those who have already submitted reports/data. It was noted that Hippocrates is being defunded and the NJDOH will be moving to another platform/system for Redbook, etc.
- LHD's are reminded to check Redbook contacts and the importance of back up staff/emergency contact was stressed to ensure viable and quickly accessed.
- Site visit evaluations/audits are continuing despite Coronavirus issue, because local health capacities are critically important in such situations. OLPH will continuously evaluate the Coronavirus situation and will determine in future if changes to audits are necessary.
- S. Semple brought up Health Officers serving as contractors and cited section of Title 26: Health Officer being employed and appointed in accordance with Civil Service Act. She reminded all that Health Officer is not consultant or contractor, but government employee.
- Coronavirus – S. Semple lauded the CDS for getting out information as quickly as possible. If monitoring a traveler whose primary language is not English, S. Semple inquired how many HO's/Departments have access to language line. Those who do not have access were encouraged to seek access and/or partner agencies (County OEM's, local hospitals, court systems, etc) to share costs.
- Coronavirus continues to rapidly evolve, and additional questions are encouraged to be brought to S. Semple or J. Weller.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:25pm, motion by M. Gagas, second P. Nwako.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Brown, Executive Assistant

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