



## PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2023

Zoom Meeting \* Princeton, NJ 08540

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### Board Members---Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH

Rick Weiss, MS

Mona Shah, PhD

Katherine Taylor, JD, PhD (Alt. 1)

JoAnn Hill, RN

Linda Schwimmer, JD

Kathleen Stillo, MBA

Rick Strauss, MD

Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

### Board Members---Absent

Elizabeth Dyeovich, (Alt. 2)

### Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS (*Absent*)

### Guests

Mayor Mark Freda

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Acting Chair, Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser, called the annual Reorganization meeting to order at 7:17 p.m. He recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health has been duly advertised and is being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”* Roll Call was completed.

### Election of Board Members

Officer Jeffrey Grosser initiated the election of BoH leadership for the 2023 year. He explained that in the event of a single nomination for a position, the nomination would stand; in the case of two or more nominations for a single position, a vote would be called. Self-nominations would also be allowed.

For the role of Chairperson, BoH member Rick Strauss, MD, nominated 2022 Chair Dr. George DiFerdinando. Dr. DiFerdinando deferred.

BoH member JoAnn Hill, RN, nominated Linda Schwimmer, JD. Dr. Schwimmer deferred due to limitations from her current workload.

Nurse Hill asked Dr. DiFerdinando if he would reconsider; he again deferred.



Dr. DiFerdinando suggested splitting the role of Chair into co-Chairs or rotating the role over the course of the year, to disperse responsibility.

Dr. Schwimmer nominated Kathy Taylor, JD. Dr. Taylor deferred because as an alternate, she is not a permanent BoH member and cannot hold an elected position. Dr. DiFerdinando raised a point of order: per state regulations, Board alternates are not in a position to take on leadership roles.

Board member Kathleen Stillo, MBA, inquired as to the responsibilities of the role of Chair. Officer Grosser explained that Chair duties do not often require direct interaction with the Princeton Health Department (PHD), as liaising and collaborating with PHD falls within his scope of responsibilities as Health Officer. The Chair would be tasked with efficiently and knowledgeably running BoH meetings and spearheading BoH projects. It is up to the Chair to determine how often the Chair, Health Officer Grosser and other members of the PHD would meet. The members Vice-Chair, Secretary and subcommittees would also be available for delegating responsibilities, in order to alleviate the demand on the Chair.

Dr. DiFerdinando explained that the last three years were unprecedented given the pandemic. Consequently, the Chair position was a more time consuming, but this should not reflect the demand in coming years. He also reminded the group that he would continue his involvement with the two BoH subcommittees (Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance and the Princeton Environmental Commission), reducing the workload on the Chair.

Unable to elect a Chair, the Officer Grosser elected to move on to the role of Vice-Chair. He explained that the Vice-Chair supports the Chair and steps in when the Chair is unable to carry out their duties.

Ms. Stillo nominated herself for the role of Vice-Chair. Nurse Hill nominated Dr. DiFerdinando as Vice-Chair. Dr. DiFerdinando expressed that he was open to the possibility. Council Liaison Leticia Fraga asked both nominees whether they would want to elect a Chair/Vice-Chair between the two of them. Ms. Stillo declined. Board member Mona Shah, PhD inquired if the two nominees would want to instead serve as co-Chairs. Ms. Stillo again declined, citing work-related travel. She also clarified that she would back out if the decision came to a vote. Board member Rick Strauss, MD, nominated Dr. Kathy Taylor. She again cited her role as an alternate and deferred. Dr. Schwimmer asked Dr. DiFerdinando if he would be willing to Chair for the next six months, to give the BoH time to find a new Chair. Dr. DiFerdinando asked Dr. Shah if she would take the role of Chair either now or after six months, but she deferred citing professional and personal reasons. Dr. Taylor suggested Dr. Strauss and member Rick Weiss, MS, as co-Chairs. Both nominees declined.

In response to Dr. Schwimmer's suggestion, Dr. DiFerdinando stipulated that in order for him to serve as Chair for six months, other members would need to attend PEC meetings. Dr. Shah suggested a previous approach, where each BoH member was assigned a month to attend the PEC meetings. Nurse Hill agreed.



Dr. Strauss, hearing no definitive response from the BoH, reiterated the idea of electing co-Chairs. Officer Grosser explained that because the leadership appointments go out to the NJ Department of Health, Office of Local Public Health, town and other governmental offices, the Board must elect a Chair, even if the meeting leaders rotate during the year.

Dr. Schwimmer suggested that BoH members would each take a month to attend PEC meetings and that Dr. DiFerdinando would serve as Chair until end of June. Dr. DiFerdinando agreed. Dr. Schwimmer requested the PEC meeting dates. Officer Grosser said that he would send a schedule to the Board, and once each member picked a date, that he would send out the finalized schedule.

Dr. Taylor inquired as to why Board members are present at PEC meetings, if they are not all qualified to answer public health questions. She suggested that as an employee of PHD, Officer Grosser would be more qualified to field those questions and that the BoH could instead serve as a consultative body. Dr. DiFerdinando explained that he had expressed this in the past but the PEC still requires members of BoH to attend the meetings.

Officer Grosser reiterated the nomination of Dr. DiFerdinando as Chair until end of June 2023. The standing nomination was approved by the Board, and Officer Grosser turned the meeting over to newly elected Chair DiFerdinando.

Chair DiFerdinando addressed the nomination of Vice-Chair. Dr. Schwimmer nominated Ms. Stillo, seconded by Dr. Strauss. Hearing no other nominations, the Board approved Kathleen Stillo as Vice-Chair.

Chair DiFerdinando nominated Dr. Linda Schwimmer as BoH Secretary. Having served as Board secretary during 2022, Dr. Schwimmer accepted the nomination and also opened the nomination to other members of BoH. Chair DiFerdinando offered the option to Dr.'s Shah and Strauss and Mr. Rick Weiss. All nominees deferred. Hearing no opposition, the Board approved Dr. Schwimmer as BoH Secretary.

### **Resolutions**

Chair DiFerdinando brought up the following resolutions for BoH Review: 2023-01 BoH Closed Session Resolution; 2023-02 BoH Newspaper Designation; 2023-03 BoH meeting dates. The vote of all three resolutions was carried out in sum: all were approved.

### **Appointment of Standing Committees**

Chair DiFerdinando stated that he would continue his involvement with the COVID-19 and Planning sub-committees. On discussion of the Structural Racism committee, Dr. Shah clarified that the BoH had consolidated the sub-committee with the Planning sub-committee. She also requested a description of the role of the Planning sub-committee. Officer Grosser explained that the Planning sub-committee would primarily handle the BoH reaccreditation process, as well as handling community health with the Greater Mercer Public Partnership. Dr. DiFerdinando clarified that each sub-committee can have up to three members: four or more members would require a quorum. Dr. Shah volunteered to join the Planning sub-committee. Chair DiFerdinando



suggested Dr. Taylor for the third member of the sub-committee, as alternates are able to join. She accepted the offer, but also opened the role to other members. Mr. Weiss deferred the offer, citing his role with the Vision Zero project, which is aimed at eliminating traffic hazards and fatalities. Secretary Schwimmer reiterated her ongoing commitment to serving as liaison to the Princeton Senior Resource Center.

**Finalized Standing Committee Appointments:**

- Planning: George DiFerdinando, Mona Shah, Kathy Taylor
- COVID-19: George DiFerdinando
- Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance: George DiFerdinando

**Related Commission Appointments:**

- Princeton Environmental Commission: rotating BoH members
- Pedestrian and Bike Safety: Rick Weiss
- Princeton Senior Resource Center: Linda Schwimmer

***Reorganizational Meeting Adjourned.***

Chair, DiFerdinando called the Regular meeting to order at 7:58 p.m. He recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health has been duly advertised and is being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”*

**Public Comment /Guest Speaker:**

Council Liaison Leticia Fraga reminded the BoH that the BCC goal setting process has begun. She encouraged the BoH to consider their 2023 goals. Mayor Mark Freda spoke, thanking the BoH for its continued dedication to its work. He reiterated his commitment to attend BoH meetings if whenever necessary.

**Minutes:**

Chair DiFerdinando opened the floor for any modification to the 11/8/22 and 12/13/22 meeting Minutes, reminding BoH members that they do not need to have attended the meetings in order to submit changes. Hearing no suggestions, Dr. Taylor motioned to approve the Minutes together, seconded by Dr. Strauss. Chair DiFerdinando approved the minutes as presented.

**Health Officer Report:**

Health Officer Grosser presented the Health Officer Report. On 1/9/23, the mayoral council passed several contractual agreements with vendors. Some contracts include two contract nurses: one nurse will focus on vaccination and disease case counts and the other nurse will focus on school immunization counts and compliance. There will also be a contracted medical director, responsible for providing vaccination orders and supporting the nurses.



Child Health Conferences update: with Coverall Kids coming into effect and the NJ public health expansion, the PHD hopes to redirect funds previously allotted for uninsured children towards uninsured adults. Officer Grosser met with leaders at Capital Health---which partners with PHD under the CHC---to work towards this goal. PHD staff conducted an ELL event at Princeton High School, to register students under Medicaid.

PHD has a Shared Services agreement with Hamilton Township and Montgomery Township. Services include collaboration with Montgomery's Health Educator, and Montgomery Animal Support Services backs up Princeton Animal Control, in situations such as deer carcass removal.

The CDC provided funds to NJDOH through the Enhancing Local Public Health Partnership cooperative agreement. The funds would provide resources to local public health departments. Instead of the DOH disbursing the funds, NJ Association of County and City Health Officers will direct them to local public health teams. Princeton would receive \$173,408.00. The timeline for fund usage is from October 2022 through June 2023. The PHD has submitted its application, awaiting acceptance.

Officer Grosser addressed a recent odor complaint from Agricola Eatery. The odor was said to have been of sewage or a natural gas leak. Inspection found neither gas leakage nor sewage, but rather a basement pump with an open seal. This was determined to be the source of the odor. The site was cleared by both emergency responders and health inspectors.

Officer Grosser addressed an ongoing effort within his PDH team to reprioritize resources, time and efforts. These meetings are recurring and a way for the PDH to keep its services effective and relevant.

PHD is finalizing implementation of OpenGov Software, an interdepartmental platform for licensure, permits and applications, which expedites interaction with the public. Members of the public can find birth, death or marriage certificates, business application resources or a complaint portal. This software is a consolidated site of communication, eliminating the need to email different teams. Finalization is set to occur late 2023.

PHD is finalizing the lead inspection ordinance. The current review of the ordinance done by the legal team is expected to conclude by Q1 of 2023. The ordinance is then planned to go into effect Q2 of 2023.

PHD continues to work with Cornerhouse and the Princeton Senior Resource Center; the current project of focus is better integrating existing services, such as Medicaid, into their public health goals.

PHD staff continue to work on finalizing the reaccreditation materials for this year's application. Staff are currently working on the 10 domains outlined in the application, for submission in late 2023 or early 2024.



Officer Grosser stated that he is preparing the annual health department document, to be finalized and presented to the BoH in the February meeting.

Dr. Strauss inquired about the status of influenza and COVID19 in the town. Officer Grosser explained that the flu declined in Mercer County over the previous week. The season primarily saw cases of Strain A, but the southern hemisphere saw more cases of Strain B. Though the worst part of the flu season has passed, a different version like Strain B might reappear. The PHD continues to be vigilant regarding this. Mercer County continues to rate high in COVID cases, as determined by hospitalization admissions and the number of staffed inpatient beds.

Hearing no further questions, Chair DiFerdinando concluded the Health Officer Report.

**Old Business:**

No discussion

**New Business:**

No discussion.

**Reports from Committees:**

No discussion.

**Related Commission Appointments:**

As PADA liaison, Chair DiFerdinando attended the most recent PADA meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to plan the upcoming April Mental Health Event, at Princeton High School. The attendees discussed the general structure of the event and the best way to reach young people. Based on anecdotal observations from nurses and teachers, the students are especially struggling with conflict management. The lack of direct interpersonal conflict over the past 3 years removed the opportunity for students to develop conflict management and resolution experiences. Consequently, youth are unable to deal with what was considered common conflict prior to the pandemic; to cope, more and more students are self-medicating in the form of alcohol and marijuana. The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report shows that between 2020 and 2021, there was a 109% increase in overdoses leading to death in ages 10-19. PADA will continue to focus on this public health issue.

Dr. Strauss raised the question of maintaining the virtual meetings or switching back to in person meetings. He also requested a update on hospitalizations due to cannabis use and abuse. In response to his first question, Council Liaison Leticia Fraga explained that BCC's have discussed the matter of virtual versus in person meetings. Most members prefer the flexibility of virtual meetings and will continue to hold them. However, in person meetings can occur if deemed necessary. In response to Dr. Strauss' second question, Chair DiFerdinando observed that there is no structured data collection process at the state or local level.



There was no update regarding the PSRC from Secretary Schwimmer.

Chair DiFerdinando reminded the BoH that the PEC meetings occur on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month.

**Adjournment:**

Vice-Chair Stillo moved to adjourn, seconded by Secretary Schwimmer. It was affirmatively carried by all members present. The meeting was closed at 8:26 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by,*

Shwheat Manna  
Recording Secretary  
Princeton Board of Health.