

## Advisory Board Minutes - Meeting 2

**Location:** Essex Town Hall

**Date:** Tuesday April 29, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

**Location:** Essex Town Hall, 30 Martin St, Essex, MA 01929

### Participants

- ☐ Paul Vernucci
- ☐ Jessie Palm
- ☐ Dennis Palazzo
- ☐ Jeff Thomas
- ☐ Erin Kirchner
- ☐ Barbara McCarthy
- ☐ Peter Mirandi
- ☐ Ray Cahill - **Zoom**

~~David Smith~~

~~Kate O'Hara~~

~~Andrew Ting~~

~~Joseph Pessimato~~

### Meeting Minutes and Recording Access

The group discussed the importance of each town posting meeting minutes individually, either on their website or a local bulletin board. Before determining how minutes will be posted long-term, agendas must be posted in each town prior to any official vote. A more formal and consistent format for minutes was recommended, with 24/7 access available to the public.

### Meeting Structure and Roles

The group emphasized the need for a structured meeting format, including a clear agenda and defined leadership roles. A chair needs selected to help coordinate meetings, and the group will consider appointing a co-chair as well. Concerns were raised about ensuring proper agenda posting before meetings are held.

## **Advisory Board Structure**

The Advisory Board structure was reviewed. Each participating municipality has one vote, and a quorum requires a majority of voting members to be present. The roles of the chair and co-chair will include organizing and facilitating meetings. It was suggested that the group operate by consensus rather than using Robert's Rules, given the small and collaborative nature of the coalition. The group also discussed hosting responsibilities for future meetings.

## **Revising the Regional Liaison Job Description**

The group finalized updates to the job description for the regional public health position. To expedite approval, the title was changed from "Liaison" to "Epidemiologist." The role was designed to be broad and open to public health professionals from various backgrounds. Key duties include collaborating with local health personnel, investigating communicable diseases, and participating in regional public health efforts. The job posting is expected to go live by the end of the week.

## **Grant Funding Overview**

The group reviewed three sources of funding:

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** – Federal
- **Federal Infrastructure Grant (FIG)** – Federal
- **State "Homegrown" Funding** – State

## **Utilizing Funds for Opioid Prevention**

Discussion focused on using opioid-related funds for impactful projects rather than smaller items like Narcan boxes. Suggestions included:

- Transportation options for opioid treatment (e.g., hybrid staff position or vehicle)
- Expanding prevention programs into Hamilton schools, which currently lack participation
- Funding school-based training
- Basing all programming decisions on community health needs assessments and Hamilton-specific data

## **Regional Grant and Coalition Updates**

The coalition's goal of aligning public health services across communities was reiterated. Regional staff are supporting varying local needs—focusing on schools and law enforcement in some towns and working more with seniors in others. The group confirmed that regional staff could support opioid prevention initiatives in Hamilton as part of their role.

The coalition's new website (EERPHC.com) is in development, and suggestions were made to include resources and a calendar of events. The group discussed whether the domain should be a .com or .org. Microsoft Teams was proposed as a preferred platform for internal communication.

## **RSW Update**

An upcoming Youth Mental Health First Aid training will be offered in Essex and Rockport. Office hours continue at various libraries and senior centers to support residents. A QR code is being used to broaden outreach, and support has included financial guidance and caregiving assistance.

## **Emergency Management Plan and Budget Discussion**

The group reviewed updates to the emergency management plan, including the integration of social workers and mental health clinicians in emergency response. The well-being of responders during prolonged emergencies was also discussed.

The coalition still has available funds that could be used for:

- \* iPads for inspections
- \* Software licenses (e.g., Food Code Pro)
- \* Training and professional development

## **Rewriting Plastics Bylaws and Noise Ordinances**

The need to update Rockport's plastics and noise ordinances was discussed. Suggestions included hiring support and referencing model regulations from other towns. Short-term rental regulations were briefly mentioned, along with recent town actions like the reversal of a leaf blower ban. The importance of centralized documentation for inspections was highlighted.

## **Inspection Binders and Festival Season Help**

Dennis (regional inspector) introduced inspection binders in Rockport to consolidate key documents and certifications. The group acknowledged the

value of shared services and discussed the need for more help during festival season and on weekends. Monthly meetings were proposed until systems are well established. Additional equipment will be provided to support inspections, and offers to assist were made contingent on scheduling availability.>)

Respectfully submitted as approve  
at the 17 June 2025 Board  
meeting by :

DAVID B. SMITH, Chair  
Eastern Essex Regional Public Health  
Coalition Advisory Board

DSmith  
6/30/2025