

Western Hampden County Public Health District (WHCPHD)

Advisory Board

Town of Southwick

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MINUTES

February 11, 2026

OPENING: The regular scheduled meeting of the Western Hampden County Public Health District opened at 5:32 p.m.

Members in attendance:

Nicole Berndt - Town of Granville

Scott Bergeron- Town of Granville

Jennifer Girard- Town of Blandford

Valarie Bird- Town of Tolland

Trisch Labieniec- Town of Southwick

Wayne Precanico- Town of Russell

Shared Staff members in attendance:

Caileen Simonds- District Shared Service Coordinator/ Interim Southwick Health Director

MaryAnn Deming- District Public Health Nurse

Minutes

Dr. Labieniec made a motion to accept the December 17th minutes with no additional edits. Mrs. Bird seconded the motion. The roll call of the Board was unanimous in favor to approve.

Financial Report/Workplan Updates

Ms. Simonds reported that the shared service agreement to date has spent \$126,238.41 of grant funds. Term two meeting with state program coordinator occurred on 2/6/2026. The state is happy with our progress and helped to brainstorm spending ideas and hiring concerns.

Ms. Simonds also shared an update on the status of the future of the Public Health Excellence grant. Confirmed grant funds are available through FY27. After that the status of where grant funds will come from is unknown for now, Ms. Simonds shared governor Healy is working on setting money aside in the upcoming budget for public health. When more updates are available staff will share with board members as soon as possible.

Nurses

Nurse Deming asked if there were any questions regarding the nursing reports. No board members had questions.

Ms. Simonds shared a confirmed date of April 3, 2026, was set by Nurse Sedelow for her retirement. Ms. Simonds sharing Nurse Sedelow was unable to attend the meeting tonight. Ms. Simonds asked if the board had any questions or edits to the public health job description sent to the board prior to the meeting. Mrs. Berndt asked when the board would be posting the job, Ms. Simonds responding they were waiting on the final payout for retirement amount from the accounting office. From there she would work to ensure there was enough in the nursing salary line of the budget. So ideally edits to job description will be sent early March, and the job posted mid- March.

In the interim period Ms. Simonds shared the need to add an addendum to Nurse Deming's contract from her original 15-19, to 0-32 a week. To ensure all work is completed following Nurse Sedelows retirement as the district tries to hire. Ms. Simonds shared transparency hiring with only one-year guaranteed grant funding will be challenging.

Mr. Precanico made a motion to approve the addendum to Nurse MaryAnn Deming's contract to 0-32 hours in the Interim Period. Dr. Labieniec seconded the motion. The roll call of the Board was unanimous in favor to approve.

American Heart Association Partnership Update

Nurse Deming said all the towns are actively participating in the blood pressure program. As well as the partnership with AHA, has opened the doors to more public health topics including nutrition.

Ms. Simonds shared this has been an excellent partnership, and the program coordinator Andrea is a great resource with knowledge to public health.

Communication and Engagement Working Group

Ms. Simonds shared she met with other Shared Service Agreements and their shared service coordinator to discuss this workplan item. The meeting helped to discuss successes and challenges they are facing regarding communication and engagement. Exploring newsletters, and the wording other SSA's used to

get spending approved by the state, other communication trainings, and TRAINMA. Ms. Simonds shared her satisfaction with the WHCPHD website, stating residents are able to log on to the website, see where nurses are and when program and presentations are running.

Spending Approvals

Ms. Simonds and shared staff continue to come up with projects and programs to run to benefit residents. Each new spending needs approvals for state spending, Ms. Simonds continues to work through this. Sharing if any board members have ideas or projects to please share with staff so we can work on it with the state.

Shared Service Coordinator Job

Ms. Simonds shared a new draft of the shared service coordinator job description would need to be created, since the nature of the grant and job had changed. Ms. Simonds shared an update as the Interim Health Director of the host town of Southwick, would hopefully be becoming permanent in March. Similar to the prior director prior to Ms. Simonds hiring, Ms. Simonds will work as both the director and shared service coordinator for the grant. Mr. PRecanico asked since the grant is only confirmed for one more year, should the board wait to hire until the status is known more. Ms. Simonds shared she is happy to keep the role and wait until grant status is known.

Ms. Simonds will still create a draft of the job description and get edits from board members and discuss more at the next April meeting.

New Business

Ms. Simonds shared following Nurse Sedelows email, a new grant opportunity. The Massachusetts HEalth and Healthy Aging Funds Grant. The grant looks to address health equity, and the opportunity for residents to be as healthy as possible. Each town is able to propose a population and project to focus on health equity and the social determinants of health. Ms. Simonds asked those interested to reach out to her, and she would be happy to start working through the process.

Mr. Precanico asked following the last meeting it seemed a survey to change the time of the WHCPHD meeting. Ms. Simonds shared following the original survey board members had very divided times during work hours or after. For now, it seems the Wednesdays at 5:30 are when the board is able to get quorum. With the next FY27 workplan the board can review time and date of meetings.

Next Meeting

Next anticipated meeting is April 8, 2026, at 5:30 PM

Adjournment

Mr. Bergeron made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 PM. Mr. Precanico seconded the motion. The roll call vote of the Board was unanimous in favor to adjourn the meeting.