

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
October 30, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on October 30, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., 315 North Broadway, Genecov Room, Tyler, Texas with the following present:

Board Members:	Laura Newsome, Chair	
	Jessica Bowen, MSN, R.N.	absent
	Kent Boozer, D.D.S., Sec.	
	Jeremy Butler	
	Suman Sinha, M.D.	absent
	Cynthia Ball, D.O.	
	Scott Williams	
	Nancy Rangel	absent
	Pam Cunningham	

Chief Executive Officer:	George T. Roberts, Jr.	
Smith County Health Authority:	Valerie Smith, M.D.	
Chief Financial Officer:	Lawanda Owens	
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director:	Russell Hopkins	
Immunizations/TB Program Director:	Sylvia Warren, R.N.	
Environmental Health Director:	Ginger Points, R.S.	
Community Outreach Director:	Terrence Ates	
Vital Statistics Director:	Rosie Meza	absent
Human Resources Director:	Dawn Strickland	absent
Interim Laboratory Director:	Amanda Catlin	absent
WIC Director:	Tecora Smith	
Recorder:	Janie Jolly	
	Alex	
Guests:	Dr. Catherine Goetz	
	Dr. Liz Villalobos	
	Dr. Srishti Goel	
	Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah	

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:03 p.m.

INVOCATION

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was given by George Roberts.

Laura Newsome, Board Chair, welcomed Jeremy Butler, Pam Cunningham, and Cynthia Ball, new NET Health Board Members

MINUTES

Motion made by Scott Williams to approve the minutes of the September 26th, 2024, regular meeting; seconded by Jeremy Butler motion carried; approved as presented.

PRESENTATION: VACCINATION TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES AND EAST TEXAS, by Valerie Smith

Dr. Smith gave her presentation to the Board regarding vaccination trends in the United States and East Texas. She stated that US childhood vaccination rates declined during the pandemic, and they have not rebounded. In the years spanning 2019-2020 the US childhood vaccination rate was 95%. For the years 2021-2023 the rate has declined to 93%. The vaccination rates in East Texas School District, 43 of 96 districts are reporting less than 95%. Every county except Rusk and Cherokee has at least one district less than 95%. Dr. Smith stated that vaccination exemptions are increasing from 2.6% in 2021/2022 to 3.0% in 2022/2023. Exemptions have increased in 41 states with more than 5% in 10 states.

Adult vaccination rates have been traditionally low in the United States, with vaccine hesitancy increasing. Dr. Smith reported that this vaccine hesitancy in the broader context is due to decreased trust in expertise and authority, belief-based extremism, political polarization, and increase in alternative health advocacy. These are historical times of vaccine hesitancy also due to new vaccines released, new vaccine policy, and newly reported research. Vaccine specific hesitancy is broadening and is amplified by social media.

Dr. Smith concluded her report by commenting on the vaccine preventable diseases that are increasing. She stated that in 2023 there were 15 outbreaks of Measles, 422 cases of Meningococcal disease, the highest number since 2014, and 60,000 cases of Pertussis, 10 times more in the first quarter than in 2022 or 2023 with 19 deaths.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Lawanda Owens, Chief Financial Officer, gave the financial report for September 30, 2024. NET Health had \$1,499,316 in revenue and \$1,591,096 in expenses for September 2024, the twelfth month of Fiscal Year 2024. There was a net income of \$(91,780) for the month of September.

For FY 2024 year to date, we have revenues of \$14,979,131 which was (\$446,548) under budget. Expenses were \$14,757,728 which was (\$552,385) under budget. Our net income for the 12 months of FY 2024 was \$221,403, which was \$199,892 over budget.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the September 2024 financial report; seconded by Scott Williams motion carried; approved as presented.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF VALERIE SMITH, MD AS SMITH COUNTY HEALTH AUTHORITY

The Cooperative Agreement authorizes the Northeast Texas Public Health District Chief Executive Officer to appoint a Health Authority subject to approval by the Board and the governing bodies of each operating member (City and County). The Health Authority serves a two-year term and can be appointed to successive terms.

Motion by Cynthia Ball to approve the re-appointment of Valerie Smith, MD as Smith County Health Authority; seconded by Jeremy Butler.

NET HEALTH BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2024-2025

The Proposed Board Committee assignments for 2024-2025 are:

Finance/Audit Committee

Dr. Kent Boozer
Pam Cunningham
Dr. Suman Sinha
Scott Williams

Purpose: Provide financial oversight for NET Health.

Compensation Committee

Laura Newsome
Pam Cunningham
Scott Williams

Purpose: Provide oversight of the compensation of NET Health employees.

Fit City Tyler Committee

Jessica Bowen
Laura Newsome
Dr. Cynthia Ball

Purpose: Provide Board support for the action and activities of Fit City Tyler.

Marketing/Public Relations Committee

Jessica Bowen
Laura Newsome
Jeremy Butler
Nancy Rangel

Purpose: Work with NET Health Leadership to promote organization and its outreach activities.

Nominating Committee

Laura Newsome
Nancy Rangel
Bob Westbrook

Purpose: Prepare a slate of recommended nominees to serve on the Net Health Board of Directors and propose nominees for Board Officer positions.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the NET Health Board Committee Assignments for 2024-2025; seconded by Pam Cunningham.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. Mr. Roberts again welcomed the new Board Members. He then stated that we have been presented with an outstanding opportunity that will have a positive impact on the FY2025 budget. We will be partnering with UT Tyler on a Department of State Health Service's Academic Public Health Partnership Grant. We are working very closely with Dr. Theresa Byrd, Dean of The School of Health Professionals at UT Tyler. They have offered us a very generous share of their grant funding.

We have been in contact with the Department of State Health Services regarding the opportunity to increase our funding in the Epidemiological and Lab Capacity, (ELC) grant. We have made a proposal to the agency, and we await their response.

Mr. Roberts also announced that NET Health is working on an agreement with Sharon Roberts to provide our legal services. The City of Tyler has informed us that they are no longer able to provide this service to the Northeast Texas Public Health District.

Mr. Roberts stated that the Cooperative Funding Amendment from the City and County, and the Interlocal Agreement from the City will be presented at the next Board meeting which will be held on Tuesday, December 3, 2024.

Mr. Roberts concluded his report by inviting the Board to the NET Health Christmas Party on Friday, December 13, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors adjourned at 6:06 pm, and Laura Newsome, Chair, stated the Board would immediately convene in Executive Session. Any vote or action taken will be done when the Board returns to open session.


The Board reconvened in open session at 6:20 pm, and Ms. Newsome stated that no action was taken.

The FY 2024 Incentive Compensation plan for the Leadership Team and the CEO was reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at the April 25, 2024, Board Meeting.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the FY 2024 Incentive Compensation plan payment for the Leadership Team and the CEO as presented; seconded by Scott Williams; motion carried 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

THE NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING IS TUESDAY, December 3, 2024.



Janie Jolly, Recorder



Kent Boozer, Secretary
NET Health Board of Directors