

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
December 03, 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.  
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 absent  
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  
WIC Director: Tecora Smith  
Legal: Sharon Roberts  
Recorder: Janie Jolly  
Guests: Dr. Aala Rihan  
Raquel Villоторo, Tyler Morning Telegraph  
Ghulam Ali, Restauranter  
Raymond Ramsey, Kim's  
Claire De Guzman  
Ray Knight  
Alex De-Ravel  
Dr. Liz Villalobos  
Dr. Srishti Goel  
Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:06 p.m.

## **INVOCATION**

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

## **PUBLIC HEARING – REVISION OF DISTRICT ORDER 2023-1 FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS**

At 5:07 pm, Laura Newsome stated that pursuant to Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 341.064, the Northeast Texas Public Health District would conduct a Public Hearing to discuss proposed amendments and revision of District Order 2023-1 Food Establishments.

Ms. Newsome invited Ginger Points, Director of Environmental Health, to give a presentation on the proposed revisions to District Order 2023-1, Food Establishments.

Ginger Points gave her presentation titled “Retail Food Protection Program”. She made the following points:

- Discussion of the main changes addressed in the District Order Revision
- Discussion of the types of food establishments, including Self-Service Food markets, vending machines, central preparation facilities, farmer’s markets, mobile food units, and traditional brick and mortar facilities
- A review of the 5 NET Health Risk Categories – very low, low, medium, high, very high
- A review of the proposed changes in permit fees
- Discussion of the risk of food borne illnesses, and how to prevent these
- Efforts to mobilize community partnerships
- Environmental Health’s work with the FDA Retail Program Standards
- Discussion of customer service improvements
- The work underway to assure a competent and adequate Environmental Health Workforce

Ms. Newsome asked for individuals to address the Board. No one addressed the Board.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:51 pm.

## **REVISION OF DISTRICT ORDER 2023-1 TO BE ADOPTED AS 2024-2**

One of the core services provided by the Northeast Texas Public Health District, (NET Health) is Environmental Health and the permitting of retail food establishments and mobile food units. To do this, the NET Health Board adopts the Northeast Texas Public Health District food establishment rules, regulations, fees, and orders to establish the enforcement of state law and state rules for food service establishments, retail food stores, mobile food units, roadside food vendors, and temporary food service establishments. NET Health has the responsibility to issue, deny, suspend or revoke food establishment permits pursuant to Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapters 431-438 and amendments.

The NET Health Board approved the current District Order 2023-1 in October 2023. The proposed District Order 2024-2 will update several of the rules as well as update the permit fees. The overall purpose of the proposed NET Health District Order 2024-2 is to safeguard public health and provide consumers food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented.

Motion by Kent Boozer, to approve the proposed amendments and revision of District Order 2023-1 Food Establishments, to be adopted as District Order 2024-2 Food Establishments, authorizing the District to issue, deny, suspend, or revoke food establishment permits and the adjustment of fees in NET Health jurisdiction; seconded by Jeremy Butler; motion carried; approved as presented.

## **MINUTES**

Motion made by Pam Cunningham to approve the minutes of the October 30th, 2024, regular meeting; seconded by Kent Boozer motion carried; approved as presented.

## **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

Lawanda Owens, Chief Financial Officer, gave the financial report for October 31, 2024. NET Health had \$1,271,742 in revenue and \$1,160,791 in expenses for October 2024, the first month of Fiscal Year 2025. There was a net income of \$110,951 for the month of October.

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

## **ANNUAL AMENDMENT TO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN CITY OF TYLER, SMITH COUNTY AND NORTEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT**

George Roberts, CEO, stated the Cooperative Agreement between the City of Tyler, Smith County and the Northeast Texas Public Health District set forth the respective budgets of the operating members toward funding the Northeast Texas Public Health District. An amendment to this Agreement is needed annually to approve funding for each fiscal year. The City of Tyler approved funding for the Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of \$200,000. Smith County approved funding in the amount of \$200,000 for Fiscal Year 2024.

Motion by Jeremy Butler to approve the annual amendment to the Cooperative Agreement between the City of Tyler, Smith County, and the Northeast Texas Public Health District for Fiscal Year 2024; seconded by Scott Williams; motion carried; approved as presented.

## **INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**

George Roberts, CEO, stated that the Northeast Texas Public Health District contracts annually with the City of Tyler for some city services, such as legal, maintenance, mail pick up, property

disposal, and prosecution of NET Health citations. This Interlocal Agreement is brought to the Board for approval.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the Interlocal Agreement between Northeast Texas Public Health District and the City of Tyler for Fiscal Year 2024; seconded by; Scott Williams motion carried; approved as presented.

### **LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE NORTHEAST TEXS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT**

Since the creation of the Health District the City of Tyler has provided legal services. Deborah Pullum, Tyler City Attorney informed me in September that the City of Tyler will no longer be able to provide our legal services due to a conflict-of-interest situation.

Mr. Roberts reached out to Sharon Roberts who previously worked for the City of Tyler legal department and served as our attorney. Mrs. Roberts' history with the Health District goes back to the early 1990's when she authored our Cooperative Agreement. Mrs. Roberts has a vast knowledge of the inner workings of the Northeast Texas Public Health District and is eminently qualified to serve as our legal counsel.

Motion by Jeremy Butler to approve Legal Counsel for the Northeast Texas Public Health District; seconded by; Kent Boozer motion carried; approved as presented.

### **HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT**

Dr. Smith gave the Health Authority Report to the Board. She stated that respiratory virus Emergency Department visits are trending downward, however we are in the season for an increase in RSV, Influenza, and Covid-19. Presently, there is a very low rate of Covid-19. In the month of November, the hospitalizations for incidences of Influenza and Covid-19 are very mild and leveling out.

Dr. Smith gave a Mpox update, stating that the first case has been reported in California, however, the risk to the public is still low at this time. The World Health Organization has approved the first Mpox vaccine for children due to the 130% increase in pediatric cases. The vaccine will be given to those who are high risk.

The increase of Pertussis is up 3X's in 2024 than 2023, and nationally there is 5X's more cases. There is a huge promotion of the DTaP and Tdap vaccination for people of all ages, including pregnant women during the 27-36 week of each pregnancy. Dr. Smith stated that the Department of State Health Services reported the first locally acquired case of Dengue fever in Texas, Cameron County. There have been 106 travel associated cases in 2024 with one reported death. The first case of H5N1 has been reported in California. This virus has mild symptoms and recovers with antivirals. H5N1 has been detected in raw milk in California and there has been a recall from dairy.

Dr. Smith concluded her report with an update on Mycoplasma, which is typically referred to as Waking Pneumonia. In young children, this represents with diarrhea, wheezing, and vomiting. It is spread through respiratory droplets with an incubation of 1-4 weeks. Currently, there are increased cases, especially among young children. Mycoplasma is treated with antibiotics.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT**

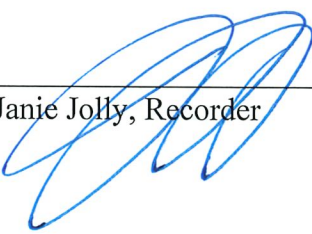
Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. He spoke about the ramp up of 2025 Lighten Up East Texas and the weigh out at the end of April. He also informed the Board about the Health & Wellness Expo on Thursday, January 16 at the WT Brookshire Conference Center.

Mr. Roberts updated the Board regarding the Academic Public Health Partnership Grant, stating the grant is being re-worked at this time and hopefully will have encouraging news to report at the next board meeting. Mr. Roberts concluded his report by inviting the Board to the Christmas Party, on Friday, December 13, 11:30 – 1:00 at Eagles Bluff Country Club.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

**THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS THURSDAY, January 30, 2024.**



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Janie Jolly, Recorder



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Kent Boozer, Secretary  
NET Health Board of Directors