

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

January 6, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Missy Kakela-Boisvert - Mendon, Jeanne Gniadek and Neil Vaidya – Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Bill Fisher – Hopedale, Trish Parent - Upton

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Missy made a motion, seconded by Bill, to approve the minutes from the December 9 meeting of the BVPPH. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**2. Inspection Software**

The Towns are working to execute contracts with Relevant Systems and get other startup paperwork completed. Ipad have been purchased

**3. Staff Update**

Members noted that the inspectors were very helpful

**4. Contact Tracing Grant**

The group reviewed applicants and selected a top tier to interview in the coming weeks.

**5. Administrative Stipend**

Erin made a motion, seconded by Missy, to allocate \$10,000 of the grant's admin funds toward a stipend for Northbridge's Office Administrator for their increased responsibility and work in coordinating grant activities. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**6. Unanticipated business**

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve up to \$50,000 of FY22 grant funds toward the purchase of COVID Tests as allowable by the grant. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**7. Adjourn**

Erin made a motion, seconded by Missy, to adjourn. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

January 20, 2022 – 10am

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Missy Kakela-Boisvert - Mendon, Jeanne Gniadek– Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Trish Parent - Upton

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Trish made a motion, seconded by Erin, to approve the minutes from the December 9 meeting of the BVPPH. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### 2. Inspection Software

Ipads are ready for distribution and the Regional Inspectors will be trained next week. Once towns get the ipads, there will be trainings for the towns

### 3. Staff Update

Inspectors continue to do great work. They are also putting together a newsletter

### 4. Contact Tracing Grant

The group reviewed candidates and selected their top choices for Epidemiologist and Public Health nurse. Trish made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to offer the Regional Epidemiologist position to Prem Sai Nagabhyrava up to the max budget of \$65,000. Trish made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to offer the Regional Public Health Nurse position to Debra Vescera up to the max budget of \$75,000.

### 5. Unanticipated business

As towns prepare to distribute COVID Test kits, they prioritized the following distribution channels: Food pantries, Senior Centers, Libraries, Churches, Housing Authorities, Senior Housing, Police/Fire Departments, and Boards of Health

### 6. Adjourn

Erin made a motion, seconded by Missy, to adjourn. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

March 23, 2022 – 10am

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Missy Kakela-Boisvert - Mendon, Jeanne Gniadek and Neil Vaidya – Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Trish Parent – Upton, Colleen Strapponi – Blackstone, Daniel Markman - BVPPH, Danielle Edmands - BVPPH, Deb Vescera – BVPPH, Prem Sai Nagabhyrava - BVPPH

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Missy made a motion, seconded by Erin, to approve the minutes from the January 20 meeting of the BVPPH. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### 2. Inspection Software

Staff are now trained on Food and Housing Inspection Software and it is being implemented in Towns.

### 3. Staff Update

Inspectors continue to do great work on inspections and regular newsletters.

### 4. Epidemiologist Updates

Prem Sai Nagabhyrava presented a regional data report for COVID and will continue to update it. She also presented the Greater Milford Community Health Needs Assessment which set priorities for member towns.

### 5. Public Health Nurse welcome and set priorities

Deb Vescera has officially started at the BVPPH as an employee of the Town of Northbridge. Deb spoke about potential projects including public health education, wellness checks, and others in addition to contact tracing.

### 6. Age Friendly Plan

CMRPC is embarking on a regional Age Friendly Plan and is seeking a representative for the Blackstone Valley Towns. Jeanne made a motion, seconded by Trish, to designate Deb Vescera as the BVPPH's representative and Daniel Markman as their alternate. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

### **7. Unanticipated business**

Connor provided a budget update and indicated there is around \$25k in unbudgeted funds that need to be spent by June 30. The group will prioritize training for regional staff and additionally, at the next BVPPH meeting, towns will come with their “wish lists” for training and equipment in order to get the group’s approval.

### **8. Adjourn**

Erin made a motion, seconded by Missy, to adjourn. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

April 27, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Jeanne Gniadek and Neil Vaidya – Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Daniel Markman - BVPPH, Danielle Edmands - BVPPH, Deb Vescera – BVPPH, Premsai Nagabhyrava - BVPPH

**1. Approval of Minutes**

There was no quorum and no action was taken

**2. Inspection Software**

No update

**3. Inspection Staff Update**

Inspectors continue to do great work on inspections and regular newsletters. In order to encourage all towns to utilize inspectors, they will be helping to cover vacations for staff this summer.

**4. Epidemiologist Update**

Premsai Nagabhyrava presented a regional data report for COVID and will continue to update it. She noted that cases have seen an uptick

**5. Public Health Nurse Update**

Deb Vescera reported that cases are up and most of her time is currently dedicated to contact tracing.

**6. Budget Update and proposed expenditures**

CMRPC reviewed the status of the budget and encouraged towns to add equipment and training requests to the purchasing list by mid-May so FY22 funds could be spent down.

**7. Unanticipated business**

None

**8. Adjourn**

## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

The meeting concluded at 2:35pm.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

May 17, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Jeanne Gniadek and Neil Vaidya – Northbridge, Diane Tiernan – Upton, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Daniel Markman - BVPPH, Danielle Edmands - BVPPH, Deb Vescera – BVPPH, Prem Sai Nagabhyrava - BVPPH

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve the minutes from the April 27 and March 23 meetings of the BVPPH. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### 2. Inspection Software

No update

### 3. Inspection Staff Update

Inspectors continue to do great work on inspections and regular newsletters. In order to encourage all towns to utilize inspectors, they are helping to cover vacations for staff this summer.

### 4. Epidemiologist Update

Prem Sai Nagabhyrava presented a regional data report for COVID and will continue to update it. She noted that cases have seen an uptick

### 5. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb Vescera reported that cases are up and most of her time is currently dedicated to contact tracing.

### 6. Budget Update and proposed expenditures

CMRPC reviewed the status of the budget and a proposed budget for FY23. Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve the FY23 Budget. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### 7. Unanticipated business

None

# **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 2:43pm.



# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

June 14, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas, Jeanne Gniadek - Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Bill Fisher – Hopedale, Jack McLellan - Mendon, Daniel Markman - BVPPH, Danielle Edmands - BVPPH, Deb Vescera – BVPPH, Prem Sai Nagabhyrava - BVPPH

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve the minutes from the May 17 of the BVPPH. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### 2. Inspection Software

There was some debate about whether to continue with HousingCode Pro. Connor will discuss options with Relevant Systems.

### 3. Inspection Staff Update

Inspectors reported they are keeping up with inspections. Dan noted his monthly Health Tips email.

### 4. Epidemiologist Update

Prem Sai Nagabhyrava presented a regional data report for COVID and will continue to update it. Several members requested various changes to the report's formatting and content.

### 5. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb Vescera reported that most of her time is dedicated to contact tracing. She also noted a disease that seems to be spreading via backyard chickens and ducks.

### 6. Budget Update and proposed expenditures

CMRPC reviewed the status of the budget and year end spending

### 7. Unanticipated business

None

### 8. Adjourn

## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

The meeting concluded at 2:35pm.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

July 14, 2022 – 10am

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud – CMRPC, Jeanne Gniadek and Neil Vaidya - Northbridge, Erin Hightower, Dr. David Tapscott – Uxbridge, Bill Fisher – Hopedale, Daniel Markman - BVPPH, Deb Vescera – BVPPH, Prem Sai Nagabhyrava – BVPPH

NO QUORUM

**1. Approval of Minutes**

As there was not a quorum of the BVPPH, no vote was taken.

**2. Inspection Staff Update**

Dan reported progress with the food standardization project

**3. Epidemiologist Update**

This was the last BVPPH meeting for Prem Sai Nagabhyrava. The group wished her the best in medical school. She presented her last weekly data dashboard. She also left the group with Standard Operating Procedures, contacts, and other useful documents so the next Epi can pick up where she left off.

**4. Public Health Nurse Update**

Deb Vescera reported on COVID and Monkeypox. She is covering for Agnieszka in Douglas while she is out of the office.

**5. Unanticipated business**

None

**6. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 10:27am.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

September 8, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud and Ethan Melad – CMRPC, Jeanne Gniadek - Northbridge, Erin Hightower – Uxbridge, Kristin Harris – Douglas, Jack McLellan – Mendon, Diane Tiernan – Upton, Deb Vescera – BVPPH,

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve the minutes of the July 14 and June 14 BVPPH meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Inspection Staff Update

The shared inspectors will be holding a serve safe class. The food regulation standardization project is also well under way.

### 3. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb provided updates on COVID and Monkeypox. She will also be taking the lead on a Hoarding Task Force project as it aligns with some of her current coursework.

### 4. Epidemiologist Hiring Decision

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to hire Jack Sullivan at 19hrs per week, with a salary prorated from full time at \$75k, and no benefits as it is a part time position. This offer will be contingent upon a reference check. The motion passed unanimously.

### 5. Unanticipated business

None

### 6. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 2:36pm.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

October 4, 2022 – 2pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud– CMRPC, Jack McLellan – Mendon, Jeanne Gniadek - Northbridge, Erin Hightower and Dr. David Tapscott – Uxbridge, Kristin Harris – Douglas, Diane Tiernan – Upton, Danielle Edmands Dan Markman Jack Sullivan and Deb Vescera – BVPPH, and Ethan Melad

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Jeanne made a motion, seconded by Erin, to approve the minutes of the September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 BVPPH meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Inspection Software – Housing Code Pro

The group has found Food Code Pro to be very helpful but Housing Code Pro has been more of a challenge. Relevant Systems, the provider, has offered to provide a 6 month refund for FY23, allowing for continued access to the software for the remainder of the fiscal year. Erin made a motion to accept the 6 month refund, with continued access to the software through FY23. The motion was seconded by Jeanne. The motion passed – Diane abstained.

### 3. The Town of Medway expressed interest in joining BVPPH

Medway is not currently involved in any shared service regions and I've reached out to 2 nearby regions, one of which is BVPPH. They could use some support on inspections, especially when their agent is on vacation, and would welcome any services from a Public Health Nurse or Epidemiologist, though they already contract with Salmon VNA.

Jeanne and Erin noted that they are not an adjacent town, not part of the Blackstone Valley, already spreading inspectors thin. If we could hire another PT inspector, maybe but it's already a challenge to make this work. Jeanne made a motion to deny Medway at this time, Erin seconded, passed unanimously.

### 4. Inspection Staff Update

The shared inspectors will be holding a serve safe class – hoping for 25 registrants total. The food regulation standardization project is also well under way. Dan is looking for housing resources for a recently evicted family.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

Northbridge now pays a monthly mileage stipend based on average travel last year. For travel to conferences, there is a policy to pay if it is more than a typical commute.

## 5. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb reported an uptick in COVID cases, most recently a school cluster of 5 kids. They are mostly unvaccinated. She will also be distributing a purpose statement for the Hoarding Task Force as it aligns with some of her current coursework. She is reaching out to providers for social work services

## 6. Epidemiologist Hiring Decision

He noted that it's a difficult time to monitor COVID given the lack of testing data being collected but there are alternatives to collect data. Uxbridge is the only town that monitors wastewater. Towns that monitor wastewater are noticing a large spike in COVID infection, estimated to be 1.5-2% of the population. He noted absenteeism for schoolchildren is significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. He also inquired about outreach on social media. There is an option to send test results without any individual identification information to the Broad for sequencing – this would allow us to know whether test samples are related and identify the index case. They can also sequence for other infectious diseases. The group had some concerns about logistics – collecting materials. Other towns could utilize Biobot wastewater testing with state funding. Jack shared a template COVID tracking presentation for the group to consider.

## 7. Shared Staff Annual Reviews

Connor provided a summary of the review process and FY23 goals. Jeanne outlined the process to be used in FY23 and a new form.

Danielle was reviewed as an asset to the BVPPH, going above and beyond for a number of inspections. Her goals are to pursue her RS, soil evaluator training, and provide SERV Safe training to local restaurants.

Deb was recognized as extremely helpful, especially given her depth of knowledge and experience in Public Health Nursing. Reviews cited her as responsive and dedicated to public health. Goals for FY23 include more community events, a SMART Plan for Hoarding, and connections with school nurses, and helping onboard Jack

Dan received great feedback on his knowledge of the code but also some feedback that his communication style on inspections should prioritize education, empathy, and professionalism. Goals for FY23 included a number of trainings on interacting with the public and improving communication.

There will be a new review form, drafted by Northbridge, that will allow for numerical and responses. The following verbiage will also be part of the form:

## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

"Beyond these annual performance reviews, should issues arise during the year, Towns should discuss these issues with the Shared Services Coordinator. The Shared Service Coordinator will then confer with the Host Town and determine whether a group discussion is warranted at an upcoming BVPPH meeting. Any disciplinary action will be taken with guidance and input from the BVPPH."

Dan and Danielle, as they've been in Northbridge for a full year, are now eligible for a salary increase. In July they received 2% of that increase comes in the form of a COLA.

Jeanne made a motion for a 1% merit increase for Danielle Edmands and 1% merit increase for Dan Markman, effective on their 1 year anniversary, Diane seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting November 1 at 2pm.

### **8. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 3:29pm.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

November 1, 2022 – 2pm

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Attendees: Connor Robichaud– CMRPC, Jack McLellan – Mendon, Jeanne Gniadek - Northbridge, Erin Hightower– Uxbridge, Kristin Harris – Douglas, Sherry Grant - Millville, Danielle Edmands Dan Markman Jack Sullivan and Deb Vescera – BVPPH

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Jeanne made a motion, seconded by Kristin, to approve the minutes of the October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 BVPPH meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Inspection Staff Update

The shared inspectors will be holding a serve-safe class – they have filled all 25 registrant slots. Dan has Soils Evaluator, and Danielle is working on her soil evaluators. They went to the MHOA conference last week.

### 3. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb is keeping up with COVID cases in coordination with Town nursing support, though the numbers still seem up. She is prioritizing young children for Contact Tracing.

She also completed an update for the Hoarding Task Force, with Uxbridge serving as the pilot community.

### 4. Epidemiologist Updates

Jack reported that Taylor from the Broad has the okay to give us shipping supplies for covid sequencing. These would be voluntary for those taking covid test kits.

Jack suggested doing his weekly breakdown internally and a monthly pattern of weekly COVID reports for the public, each week providing one of four regular reports. Reports on vaccinations, case numbers, percent positivity, and test numbers per capita.

He is working on community-specific overview PowerPoint presentations.

Towns interested in Wastewater testing can reach out to Jack for a connection to BIDLs.

### 5. Unanticipated business

### 6. Adjourn



## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

The meeting concluded at 3:29 pm.

The next meeting will be in person on December 13<sup>th</sup> at noon.

# Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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## MINUTES

December 13, 2022 – 12pm

*This meeting was held remotely pursuant to the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021*

Attendees: Connor Robichaud– CMRPC; Jack McLellan – Mendon; Jeanne Gniadek – Northbridge; Erin Hightower– Uxbridge; Kristin Harris, and Agnieszka Podstawka – Douglas; Trish Parent, and Diane Tiernan – Upton; Danielle Edmands, Dan Markman, Jack Sullivan, and Deb Vescera – BVPPH

### 1. Approval of Minutes

Erin made a motion, seconded by Jeanne, to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2022, BVPPH meetings. Agnieszka noted that she was present at that meeting. The motion to include this adjustment and approve the minutes passed unanimously.

### 2. Inspection Staff Update

The shared inspectors held a serve-safe class – they held the event at the Uxbridge Senior Center and had 23 attendees. 18 passed, and 5 have the option to retake the test. They plan to offer another class. Danielle has her lead determinator certification now. Dan is going for a septic certification.

### 3. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb noted an uptick in COVID, Flu, and RSV.

Beyond contact tracing, Deb worked with Blackstone Valley Nurses and identified her top priorities: 1) Food Access, 2) Mental Health, and 3) Substance Use. The group agreed that these were appropriate and important topics for her work.

She also completed an update for the Hoarding Task Force and will be writing a paper on the topic for a class she is taking.

### 4. Epidemiologist Updates

Jack reported an uptick in COVID with new evasive Omicron variants dominating. He noted a report emphasizing the risk of a new strain from China that may linger in the air or on surfaces longer. Jack plans to draft a letter reminding folks to masks and take protective measures. Boards of Health can share this letter with schools or local newspapers as they deem fit.

## **Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health**

### **5. Unanticipated business**

None

### **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm.