



EAST CHICAGO HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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ANTHONY COPELAND, MAYOR

Dr. Paula Benchik Abrinko, Health Officer

Diana Garcia-Burns, Health Director

MINUTES

Health Finance and Board Meeting

October 5, 2022 at 5:00 pm

Health Department Lobby Conference Room

100 W. Chicago Ave

East Chicago, IN 46312

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87034251100?pwd=TmlKcjhtaGUxaE1WRzhnMXFtMER6UT09>

Meeting ID: 870 3425 1100

Passcode: 029737

One Tap Mobile

312-626-6799

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Natalie Adams called the meeting to order at 5:20pm.

II. ROLL CALL:

Roll call was taken and in attendance were Natalie Adams (in-person), Dr. Matthew Libiran (telephone), Loretta Parker (in-person) and Dr. Rev. James Wade (in-person). Also in attendance were Dr. Paula Benchik-Abrinko (in-person), Diana Garcia-Burns (in-person), and Attorney Jewell Harris (in-person). Arrival after roll call was taken was Dr. Sabrina Reed (virtual) 5:40pm. Absent was Brenda Walker.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- Review and approve minutes from following meeting:
 - i. Health Finance and Board Meeting minutes from September 7, 2022
 - ii. Health Board Special Meeting minutes from September 13, 2022
 - Natalie Adams requested a motion for approval of Health Finance and Board Meeting minutes dated September 7, 2022 and Health Board Special Meeting minutes dated September 13, 2022.
 - Dr. Rev. James Wade made a motion to approve Finance and Board Meeting minutes dated September 7, 2022 and Health Board Special Meeting minutes dated September 13, 2022. Loretta Parker second the motion. With no questions or concerns, vote was taken, all in favor, the motion carries.
- Review and approve the following payroll warrants:
 - i. Payroll Warrant 091622 dated September 16, 2022 in the amount of \$19,674.84
 - ii. Payroll Warrant 093022 dated September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$18,874.62
 - Natalie Adams requested a motion for approval of Payroll Warrant 091622 dated September 16, 2022 in the amount of \$19,674.84 and Payroll Warrant 093022 dated September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$18,874.62.

É Dr. Rev. James Wade made a motion to approve Payroll Warrant 091622 dated September 16, 2022 and Payroll Warrant 093022 dated September 30, 2022. Loretta Parker second the motion. With no questions or concerns, vote was taken, all in favor, the motion carries.

- Review and approve the following claim warrant:
 - i. Claim Warrant 092922HB dated September 29, 2022 in the amount of \$158,013.29
 - Natalie Adams requested a motion for approval of Claim Warrant 092922HB dated September 29, 2022 in the amount of \$158,013.29.
 - Dr. Rev. James Wade made a motion to approve Claim Warrant 092922HB dated September 29, 2022 in the amount of \$158,013.29. Loretta Parker second the motion.
 - Natalie Adams requested Diana to continue explanation of this claim warrant. Diana stated the Indiana Department of Health issued a \$160,000.00 grant during the lead crisis here in East Chicago. Those funds were put into the wrong account so they were paying the lead nurses out of the General Fund instead of the Health Maintenance Fund. Alicia found that error and now she is replacing the money back into the General Fund. Also after drilling down more, funds were found that Alicia had misplaced. Because she said we were not being paid by the state, we started making calls and we just found \$6,200.00 that was for the Immunization Grant that she told us was for the Reimbursement Insurance and it was not. The state sent us a letter stating that was money they sent for the Immunization Grant in January that she put into the General Fund. Natalie asked if they have sat down with Alicia and created the documents that we talked about. Diana said yes. Diana said Alicia realizes that she has received money from the state and it has not been placed in the proper account. Natalie asked if they have captured them all. Diana stated no, we have not, because we do not know what has come because Alicia says we are deficit in or we have not received, but we do not know what they have received until we start drilling down into each. Natalie stated she did not understand that when the state sends money Diana does not get copied? Diana stated they do not ó like when the state sent the \$195,000.00 to the Controllers she did not even know it was there. Natalie asked why the state doesn't copy the department they sent the money for. Diana stated she could not answer that. Natalie said no, she thought maybe she had asked them because that just makes sense. Diana said she guess this is the way they having been doing it ó it has been going to the Controller's as a direct payment. She didn't know because it was an insurance payment for Covid ó Covid never happened before so she does not know if the state accounting department didn't know to reference it, she could not answer that. Diana stated they are supposed to get more money and she asked Val if there was any way that they could let us know just in case there is more insurance money that way we know so that we could notify the state and ask. Natalie asked why they could not notify them for any type of money. Diana stated they usually know, just like this one for \$6,200.00 it was for immunization and I guess it was listed, because when we notified the state and we told them that the Controllers said that we are short money on this Immunization grant she immediately replied back to Jasmine and Arnita and said no, we sent that January blah, blah, blah, blah and Alicia said oh ok well. Natalie said then they obviously send you money not related to Covid, not related to reimbursement - they don't copy you on any money they send? Diana said no it goes to the Controllers. Natalie stated she understands where it goes, but when she gets money she still gets an email from somebody saying we sent this to the Controller's Office. Diana stated no. Natalie explained that is what she needs to request from her people ó that's what is called checks and balances. Diana said she understands, but they don't. She said they can request it, but she doesn't know if it is going to happen ó just like this money they are going to be getting. She has already asked the gentleman out of finance and has already made Val aware that there is money. She cannot control what they do at the state level, but I can at least let Val know we may get more money, I do not know how much it is going to be ó it is going to be a reimbursement for Covid again. Natalie said that is her only question, if she had met with Alicia and resolved all of them, but I guess not. Dr. Benchik stated they

pointed fingers at the Health Department when they had the money in the wrong place the whole time. Dr. Libiran had a question, the way he understands it (he just wants clarification). When we get money from the state, our Covid money is allotted expenses? Diana replied yes. Is it through a grant or Covid reimbursement? Diana stated it was Covid reimbursable money from the insurance. Is there any way that we could be able to know exactly how much was given whether it goes to the general fund or whichever and then we should basically know what really goes to our expenses activities we do for our Covid activities whether immunizations or salaries. That is money that needs to be allotted, there needs to be a good checks and balance for it. Diana stated when they did receive that money and were notified by the Controller, because the Controller was asking more departments and then we asked the state, and they said this amount was for this and this was for this and then we asked what it could be used for and they sent back an email what it can be used for so we know what it can be used for via their email to us. Dr. Rev. Wade stated the question still is how are you going to be able to identify money that comes in for a specific cause and it has an accountability that it goes to this and this and that it goes to the Health Department. Diana stated like Emergency Preparedness we already know, because that says it; the Immunization grant for the nurse ó that says it, but Diana still does not get copied but like the immunization grant that money has not changed so when we resubmit it is an amount of what they would give us. They do not copy us ó they will say your grant has been approved; they will send an email for that and that amount has not changed. Natalie stated your grant being approved and your grant being in an account are two totally different things so your grant being approved and it being in your account, the transaction happening. I mean it is just like you putting money in the bank account and you never get a statement - that is just ridiculous. Diana stated right, you would think the Controller's Office would say we have received this grant fund for the Health Department. Natalie stated both of them, the Controller's Office should say it and the state should tell you we sent you your money - it is called checks and balances. Dr. Benchik stated that it is just assumed that someone is going to put it in funds and then it disappears. Natalie stated it has nothing to do with assumption; you are sending it to a municipality that has multiple departments, that has one small Controller's Office and you are sending funds for this department - the state sends for a lot of departments. Rev. Wade stated it is not about the state controlling, it is about the Controller's Office. Attorney Harris agreed that we should make the request that if the state could copy us on all that correspondence, but I agree it is out of your control if they don't do it, they don't do it. It is out of your control there is no ramifications. Natalie agreed both should do it because the Controller's Office could say you received \$50,000.00, but at least if I had an email or something from the state saying we sent you \$60,000.00 then you could say hey I'm missing ten - there is no check and balance. Attorney Harris agreed that we should make the request of the state, but I'm just stating the reality of it that they may or may not comply with it and if they do not comply with it that you have no way of enforcing it, but the checks and balance idea is right and I think the checks and balance comes locally. So if all the Health Department related funding was segregated into a separate account you could have reconciliation meetings with the Health Department and the Controller's Office and do it monthly or quarterly or whatever is appropriate and whether you got an email notifying you or not you are going to reconcile the actual account and you won't have an issue so that is within your control and that is something you can do. Diana stated just like our beach grant they know once IDEM tells them how much money they are going to give East Chicago to test the beach water we know that; we send that information over to the Controller's Office and then for the beach grant it is reimbursable so we send that P.O. to IDEM for the city to be reimbursed. So there is a check and balance right there, but just like this immunization grant when we have done our deliverables and the state sent the money and it is supposed to go into the local health maintenance account, because that is what it is called, it did not go into that account ó they put it into the general fund. Natalie stated that is just the same conversation and you guys should still have a meeting ó that is all I can suggest, time is

ticking. Dr. Benchik stated the local health maintenance account is sitting on \$500,000.00 right now. Diana stated almost that, but some of that has to be transferred because the beach money is in there, the nursing immunization grant. There is a bunch of different things that has been dumped into that and it doesn't belong there. Natalie asked if we had not paid the final payment - they are done. Diana stated they are done. Natalie stated, but you said you sent a P.O. so if you sent a P.O. and a claim warrant so if it has been sitting in the wrong account how is the claim warrant being paid? Diana stated that is why she is transferring money. Natalie asked so the beach grant has not been paid since May? Diana replied, "No, I think it finally has been paid." Natalie stated she has told them they need to ask for a meeting with Val, Kim, and Alicia and that's it and that's all. We can discuss this every time we have a meeting but it isn't going to go anywhere. Dr. Benchik stated they aren't going to do it; she talks to these people. Natalie stated she didn't ask for a meeting because I told her to copy me. She hasn't asked for a meeting because if you asked to meet with Val, Alicia and Kim. Diana stated she has not asked for meeting because I'm going to tell you all this: I am one person. I am working every department in this department including Animal Control. I help the Inspectors. I help the nursing. I am out there testing. I am out here doing vaccines. I am running around the city. Natalie stated let some of that fall down and get your money straight, let it fall down; if the dogs don't eat today, they are not going to die from not eating one day. Diana stated it is not just the dogs - what you have to understand is there are multiple facets within this health department. Natalie stated she is not saying that, I am just using the dogs as an example. When I was talking to you the other day you said I had to go over there to feed the dogs. They aren't going to starve for one day, even for two days. I am just saying, Diana, if you want to just take a minute to get this meeting or we have been talking about this for months. Diana said we are going to get a meeting, but to try and get Alicia pinned down and to try and get Val, but I need them. I have talked to Val, but they are all busy. Natalie stated you are too. Diana stated she can talk to Val easier than she can talk to Alicia so she needs to be sitting at the table. I know she is busy, but when you want to point at us and say that money from the Health Department is all over when you are miss placing our money into other accounts and we have to take hours and days to drill down to find it. Natalie stated and you could put that in the email, "Alicia you have pointed your finger at us and said we have done this, this and this. (You can put that in the email.) Now we see that you guys have put the money in appropriate accounts like we said can we please have a meeting with Val, Kim, Alicia, Sandra and copy me. I can reiterate what we have done at these meetings for months - that is all I am saying. You can have conversations with them on the phone all you want to, but until you want to point the finger back at them in that email and request the meeting it isn't going to be serious. Diana stated she is not trying to point fingers, nope. Val controls that department. He knows there are issues - I will request it to Val. Natalie stated she needed to request it to all of them. Rev. Wade asked this is a Health Department Board and we have certain rights to request what we are asking for? Natalie stated she is not going to do that or you all can, because it is up to that department. When I have something I am pissed off about with that Controller's Office, I send a long email and I call everyone to the table. Rev. Wade asked we can request to have a meeting Diana and every person you named then why should we have a problem when we are asking as a board? Natalie stated there is no problem, but she has been asking Diana to send an email to make that request for the last three or four months that we have been talking about it, but she wants to talk to the people on the phone. Diana stated when you came back and said they said there are some issues with the Health Department that is when we started drilling down. Natalie stated, but even before they said that I said you guys need to sit down and have a meeting and you need to send an email and copy all of us so we can jump in there with you. Diana stated we didn't even know there was an issue until you came back to us and said that they were pointing fingers back at us saying we had issues and we own that, but that is how we found that it was not only on the Health Department it was on the Controller's Office and that was at the last meeting. Natalie stated, but we have been

saying there is a problem even if you didn't know what the problem was. The initial time I told you was to figure out what the problem is. Diana stated you have to know what the problem is in order to sit down and talk to them. Dr. Libiran asked if he could make a statement. This is not going anywhere so first of all let's realize that our roles here as board members are to help support the operations of Diana and Dr. Benchik; our role is not to get into their day-to-day activities. We are not the managers that were assigned to that - that is the role of Diana and that is the role of Dr. Benchik. Diana is telling us the problem that is causing some operational issues and could compromise some of the services that we are offering and our role is to help find ways to help her out. I think the main issue right now for the department is funding - you can't find funding for the people who are supposed to work for her and that is why you are holding people back. Am I correct Diana? (Dr. Libiran joined via phone and was fading in and out which made it difficult to hear.) Natalie explained that she was not sure if he heard at the beginning of the meeting that Diana and she had to leave to go to their finance meeting regarding their budgets so as she appreciates what he is trying to say no one has a clear understanding of what he said - Diana said couldn't understand it either. Dr. Benchik requested Dr. Libiran call her cellphone and she could put him on speaker and he said he would do that. Natalie stated if there are no more questions, there may be conversations or statements, but if there are no more questions; vote was taken, all in favor, the motion carries.

- ii. Claim Warrant 100522HB dated September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$21,242.69
 - Natalie Adams requested a motion for approval of Claim Warrant 100522HB dated September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$21,242.69.
 - Dr. Rev. James Wade made a motion to approve Claim Warrant 092922HB dated September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$21,242.69. Loretta Parker second the motion. With no questions or concerns, vote was taken, all in favor, the motion carries.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- East Chicago Health Department Bylaws Draft:

Attorney Harris stated he has been dealing with the Law Department and for a little more than a month he has had their attention on this issue that we were just talking about and that is the grant funding. The Law Department would really like to see us get that issue resolved before we tackle the issue of the composition of the board and kind of come into a clean slate in terms of what those appointment dates are. Those are pretty heavy issues too, not in terms of controversial, but they are fairly heavy issues. The Law Department wants us to focus on this issue and kind of interject ourselves when it gets back to a point where the lawyers can start to draft something. Right now we are not there. There are still conversations you need to have about how will it work and what is the problem, because if we don't do that and we draft something that is too much or a little off base or not really speaking to what the issue is and we do not want that to happen again. We really want the next version of whatever documents are necessary to really hit home as to what these issues are. It sounds like you are kind of getting there slowly, but. Diana asked if he was talking about the bylaws or pertaining to the grant funding. Attorney Harris explained the bylaws are on hold for the grant funding reason - the Law Department is saying take care that first and then we will get to the bylaws. Natalie asked when he is talking about the Law Department who is talking about. Attorney Harris stated he is talking about Joe. He understands that as to the grant funding that those discussions between the Health Department staff and the Controller's Office are going on and just waiting to hear back if there is some resolution of what the issues are so that maybe we can come to the table and help document whatever it is that has been discussed and agreed to.
- Memorandum Regarding Issues Pertaining to Grant Funding
- Resolution 090722-1HD Regarding Permissible Use of Grant Funding
- Resolution 090722-2HD Regarding Policy for Grant Approval and Fund Appropriation

Natalie stated she felt she just needed to say on record that the agenda was incorrect where the resolutions with those numbers cannot be under old business - now we could put them under discussion. Attorney Harris stated the question would be what the purpose of old business is.

Natalie stated she is just going from the purpose of that is something is tabled then it does not go back on the agenda as new or old unless someone makes a motion to bring it off the table. It cannot be on here in this way and in that way it is on here incorrectly. Attorney Harris stated he doesn't necessarily disagree with that. Normally, when a board member, unless the issue is controversial, they are asking for it to be tabled for something to happen and they want it to come back so that they can address it so it doesn't fall by the wayside. He agrees though technically though when you are talking about Robert's Rules it is a different story. It all depends on what the intention is of the person making the motion to table it. Some people really understand that what they are making a motion for to table it and that is the strict reading of Robert's rules - most local boards, that is not what they are doing, they are just saying we are not ready to do anything with this and to bring it back when it is ready. Natalie stated we understood what we wanted. Attorney stated you understood what you understood. Natalie stated no, so did he and so did Brenda and so did Loretta, because I talked to them. Attorney Harris asked and that is what? Natalie stated that it is being tabled until it gets resolved with these meetings and figure all that out and then we would make a motion and bring it back on the agenda. Attorney Harris agreed and stated he was not expecting that we would come back to this meeting and vote for it. If that is the case, but it needs to be on there. Natalie said it could be under discussion, but it doesn't even need to be under discussion if you are not ready to discuss it if the meetings have not happened and we have not fine-tuned these things then there is no reason to keep discussing it. Attorney Harris asked how else will you know whether the meetings took place or not unless someone can report on it during discussion. Natalie stated because they can report on it - they do a report, that is the Director update and the Health Officer update it doesn't have to be under Discussion. Attorney Harris stated, but there is nothing wrong with it being under Discussion. Natalie stated and remove the resolution numbers - there should not be a resolution number. So if we want to start putting them under Discussion I am fine with that as long as we remove these resolution numbers because that makes them official like we are ready to vote on them and then we could that. Attorney Harris stated to another point that she made, in the end what is on the agenda you need to play a role in and if you want it on there fine and if you don't that is fine too. I am not trying to tell you what to go on the agenda, I am only pointing out it is appropriate to have it under Discussion, it is appropriate to have it under someone's report but in the end that chair it is your agenda so I am not debating whether it should be on the agenda. Natalie stated it has always been like that, she is supposed to approve the agenda before it goes to the masses. We just never drilled that because it is normally claim warrants and payroll warrants, but when you get into things this heated about it she can't do it. Dr. Benchik asked why is this heated? Natalie stated because it sounded heated to her so we are going to move on.

V. DIRECTOR UPDATE:

Natalie stated she kind of already gave her update ó Alicia moved some money and you all will be meeting and talking about it soon and then once they do that then she will be able to create the checklist thing they have been talking about in the first place. Diana said right.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business, Dr. Rev. Wade made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Loretta Parker second the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.