

**Board of Health Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 11, 6:00 PM, Via Zoom**

Present: Chair, Dr. Darnell Young, Commissioner, Dr. Ada Fenick, Commissioner, Dr. David Cantonwine, Commissioner; Dr. Greg Gonsalves, Commissioner, Dr. Tamiko Jackson-McArthur, Commissioner, Dr. Alice Forrester, Commissioner

Absent: None

Staff: Maritza Bond, MPH, MDiv, Director of Health

Guest: Matthew Kane (student journalist, Southern Connecticut State University)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by Dr. Darnell Young, Chair Board of Public Health Commissioner. A quorum was confirmed.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the January 7, 2026, meeting were presented for review. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded by Dr. Ada Fenick, and approved unanimously.

III. Public Comments or Statements

The Board welcomed guest Matthew Kane, who stated he was attending as a student journalist for a class.

IV. Updates: Maritza Bond, Director of Health

A. Health Administration Updates

Personnel Updates:

Director Bond requested approval of the personnel report “approved without reading,” noting it had been distributed in advance.

A motion was made to approve the personnel report, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Administration, Funding, and Planning:

- Grant contracts: Department continues awaiting execution of certain grant contracts; updates pending.
- State tobacco campaign: NHV Health agreed to participate in a CT DPH statewide tobacco campaign and will coordinate with the state vendor.
- ARPA initiatives: ARPA-funded health administration initiatives are underway and in final stages as the department enters the last year of reporting/closeout.

- Budget: NHV Health submitted its budget; it passed initial review by OMB and the Mayor's Office and will proceed to the next phase. Director Bond anticipates the Mayor's recommended budget announcement in late February/early March, followed by Finance Committee hearings.
- Board request: Director Bond asked Commissioners to provide testimonials/support during the budget process to strengthen the department's funding request, particularly given federal grant sunseting and reduced renewal opportunities.

B. Policy Updates

- Legislative session has begun; a short session concludes in May.
- Priority: maintain stable per-capita funding for local health; longer-term concern noted about urban vs. district funding distinctions.
- Defend Public Health: Director Bond met offline with Dr. Gregg Gonsalves regarding opportunities for collaboration; plan to connect Defend Public Health with the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health.

C. Department Program Updates

School Health & Wellness Center:

- School compliance campaign: Nursing is proactively conducting outreach on physical and vaccine compliance with support from BOE communications, including video messaging and bilingual (English/Spanish) flyers; staff participated in a school fair and community outreach.
- Wellness Center labor/raises: Director Bond met with OMB and the Wellness Center team and submitted management recommendations related to proposals for raises to Labor Relations for union negotiations.
- Sexual health programming: Wellness Center working toward a comprehensive sexual health program inclusive of PrEP access and improved reporting processes for HIV and Hep C results, partnering with Anchor as a conduit for PrEP accessibility.
- TB services transition: With the ELC-funded TB position sunseting in Spring, the department plans to transition TB direct observation treatment and intake/new case management into the Wellness Center clinic team.
- Wound care services exploration: Department exploring expansion of services to include wound care, with particular attention to community needs including individuals affected by substance use.

Discussion:

TB Clinic Capacity Collaboration: Dr. Ada Fenick raised concern about increasing TB (particularly latent TB) and capacity issues at the Winchester Chest Clinic; suggested exploring collaboration to offload demand.

Dr. Tamiko Jackson McArthur asked whether wound care services would be walk-in and/or referral-based and how staffing would work. Director Bond responded it would be a combination of walk-in and referral, staffed by a combination including the department's APRN and clinic team.

Smoke Shop Enforcement/Licensing: Dr. Jackson asked if Director Bond could name smoke shops that were closed/enforced. Director Bond identified two recent closures: Mi Favorita Grocery and Howard Avenue Mini Mart.

Dr. Jackson asked about caps on smoke shops; Director Bond explained zoning restrictions make it difficult to open new shops, but existing locations may continue under certain circumstances (i.e., can reopen as smoke shops if they closed as smoke shops, depending on zoning/continuity).

Dr. Jackson asked about the difference between a corner store selling cigarettes vs. a smoke shop; Director Bond clarified these involve different licenses, and all tobacco retailers now require a tobacco license that enables inspection authority (via sanitarians).

Epidemiology/Communicable Disease Monitoring:

- Continued surveillance of infectious diseases; influenza noted as high with expected downward trends.
- Monitoring respiratory illness-related ED visits (combined and individual RSV/flu/COVID-19 trends).
- Tuberculosis: Reported 5 active TB cases (3 female, 2 male); all in compliance.
- Continued tracking of gun violence indicators and leading causes of death by demographic factors.

Health Programs/Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction:

- OD2A navigators continue targeted outreach based on hotspots.
- Harm reduction supply distribution increasing; xylazine test strip requests rising.
- Linkage-to-care needs highlighted (resource books, food pantry needs, employment supports).
- Continued monitoring of suspected overdoses, ED visits by demographics, and fatal overdoses (using Chief Medical Examiner data), including regional grant town-based tracking.

Environmental Health – Lead/Inspections:

- Continued response to lead cases; recruitment ongoing for lead inspectors and sanitarians.
- Lead Advisory Task Force: next meeting forthcoming to identify a chair; Board designees expected to participate.
- Healthy Homes program sunseting; drawdowns underway with deadline noted as April 15.
- HUD lead abatement grant progress reported (progress toward goal noted in slides).
- Tobacco/smoking product retailer enforcement: Director Bond noted recent closures and referrals; one appeal pending at the state level for a public hearing.

Vital Statistics:

- Follow-up on Dr. Fenick’s question about making the first birth certificate free:
- Director Bond reviewed requirements and noted it is not state statute, but would require Board of Alders process historically.
- Estimated revenue impact: \$25,000–\$30,000 reduction annually (approximate).
- Director Bond plans to discuss with OMB and senior leadership and intends to propose as a policy ask.

D. Emergency Preparedness Plans for Board Review:

- CBRNE Response Annex (Annex K) updated and provided to Board.
- PHEP Training/Exercise/Readiness (FERT) Plan updated for 2024–2028 with requirements for mandatory exercises and trainings; Board members invited to participate in exercises.
- Plans aligned with accreditation efforts; Emergency Preparedness work recognized, including staff support and coordination.

E. Strategic Planning/CHNA & CHIP

- Awaiting results of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which will inform future departmental goals.
- Sections have been asked to review both the external plan and internal strategic plan implementation monitoring.
- Epi and clinic teams working to develop baseline metrics aligned with strategic plan clinical goals; Director Bond anticipates presenting a more digestible goal-tracking format to the Board in the coming month.
- Ongoing work with billing vendor related to revenue tracking, credentialing, and documentation alignment.

F. Communications/Branding:

- Branding plan in development; Director Bond requested revisions before formal presentation next month. Signage/branding adjustments must consider shared building space with DPW and potential additional tenants.
- Newsletter engagement increasing; strategic plan announcement had strong engagement.
- Yale School of Public Health - Health Equity Fellow: NHV Health selected to receive a summer fellow to support website and school compliance messaging; stipend paid directly by Yale.

V. Old Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

VI. New Business

- Dr. Tamiko Jackson McArthur raised ongoing concerns about public smoking near facility entrances and public spaces. Director Bond stated grant funding will support capacity to review and strengthen policies, including ordinance review and recommendations, but emphasized reporting complaints now via SeeClickFix for tracking and resolution.
- Dr. Ada Fenick asked whether new ordinances could be suggested to Alders; Director Bond confirmed this is possible and aligned with future policy work.
- Chair Dr. Young raised interest in incorporating oral health/dentistry into public health services (e.g., dental exams alongside physicals for school readiness). Board members discussed benefits across the life course and connections between oral health and broader health outcomes; Director Bond acknowledged the idea and discussion.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2026.

Director Bond announced a Board of Alders Meet & Greet on March 11, 2026, 4:30–6:00 PM, to strengthen relationships, provide an overview of NHV Health, and support budget season engagement. Dinner will be provided. Dr. Ada Fenick noted she would be in California and would join via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM. Chair Dr. Young moved to adjourn, and Dr. Forrester seconded the motion.

Action Items

Director Bond to share Finance Committee schedule when available and coordinate Board support/testimonials for budget hearings.

Dr. Fenick to facilitate introduction to pediatric infectious disease specialist/ Winchester Chest Clinic contact re: TB collaboration.

Director Bond to explore first birth certificate fee waiver proposal with OMB/higher administration and determine Board of Alders process.

Director Bond to distribute formal invitation for March 11 Board of Alders meet & greet (4:30–6:00 PM).

Board encouraged to report smoking violations/concerns via SeeClickFix; future ordinance review to be considered under grant-supported policy work.

Lorraine Reed

Lorraine Reed
Administrative Assistant

February 13, 2026

Date

Approved:



Dr. Darnell Young, Chair
Board of Health Commissioners

March 11, 2026

Date