

**NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors was held on September 25, 2025, 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	absent
	Cynthia Ball, D.O.	
	Scott Williams	
	Nancy Rangel	
	Pam Cunningham	absent
	Mike McCrady	

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	
Interim Laboratory Director:	Amanda Catlin	
WIC Director:	Tecora Smith	absent
Legal:	Sharon Roberts	
Recorder:	Janie Jolly	

Alex de Ravel	
Dr. Jeff Levin	
Dr. Jose Serpa	
Dr. Liz Villalobos	
Dr. Srishti Goel	
Dr. Fariba Yazdanpanah	
Judge Neal Franklin	
Jason Phung, MD	absent
Gold Uzochukwu, MD	
Kharl Wright, MD	absent
Dusty Gonzalez	

The meeting was called to order by Laura Newsome, Chair, at 5:04 p.m.

INVOCATION- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

VISION/MISSION

The Vision and Mission of the Northeast Texas Public Health District was recited by all in attendance.

SWEARING IN OF JOSE SERPA ALVAREZ, SMITH COUNTY HEALTH AUTHORITY

Dr. Jose Serpa Alvarez was sworn in as Smith County Local Health Authority by Judge Neal Franklin. Dr. Serpa is Professor and Vice Chair for the Department of Medicine at the UT Tyler School of Medicine. He is an Infectious Disease physician with extensive experience in patient care research, and medical education. Additionally, he holds a Doctoral degree in Healthcare Management and Health Policy and has significant experience in educational and public health leadership roles. Before joining UT Tyler, he was a tenured faculty member at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, where he directed the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Training Program and served as the Medical Director of HIV Services at Harris Health (Harris County). Dr. Serpa has made key contributions to various national scientific society committees and was a member of a study section for a federal agency. He has published 40 papers in peer-reviewed journals and written more than 10 book chapters.

We are happy to have him associated with NET Health.

HEALTH AUTHORITY REPORT by VALERIE SMITH, MD & SRISHTI GOEL, MD

Dr. Srishti Goel gave her portion of the Health Authority Report to the Board. She stated that the respiratory illnesses reported at the emergency departments have recently decreased, although COVID-19 showed a slight increase in September. Influenza showed a slight increase as well; however, RSV has decreased significantly. In August 2025, the CDC reported a Salmonella outbreak in eggs and in July 2025, in frozen sprouted beans also with Salmonella.

Dr. Goel reported on the new DSHS anti-tobacco and vaping program now available online at no cost to young Texans. Texans under the age of 21 in possession of tobacco products who have been referred by courts or schools will benefit from this new program. The program is E-Cigarette and Tobacco Awareness Program, (ETAP).

DSHS has added four Lysosomal Diseases testing to State's newborn screening panel.

Lysosomal Storage Disease causes rare genetic conditions which lack certain enzymes that break down fats, sugars, etc. This causes toxic material buildup in body cells and organs. This screening panel is being added to newborns for early detection and treatment, symptom management and less damage. The Newborn Screening Panel now tests for 59 conditions. The heel stick sample is collected from newborns at 24-48 hours of age and then again age 7 to 14 days old.

DSHS is reporting a health alert associated with 7-hydroxymitragynine, (7-OH). This is an Opioid-like chemical from Kratom plant. With high concentration of this chemical, health problems and addiction risk can occur as 7-OH has up to 13 times potency of morphine. Symptoms include Nausea/vomiting, Respiratory depression, High Blood Pressure, Increased Heart Rate, Difficulty Breathing, Seizures, Sweating, and Confusion. The Board thanked Dr. Goel for her report.

Dr. Valerie Smith gave her report to the Board speaking about Pediatric Public Health. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, (ACIP) updates include:

1. MMRV combination vaccine no longer approve/recommended/funded for children under 4.
2. No decision on Hepatitis B.
3. The U.S. Health and Human Services, (HHS) Autism Report states Tylenol is a causative agent.
4. Leucovorin treatment FDA approved. Leucovorin, also known as folinic acid, is a medication used to reduce the harmful side effects of certain cancers and other drugs, as well as to treat specific medical conditions. It is an active form of folic acid that can be used directly by the body's cells.

Dr. Smith stated it's a great time to be a kid! Globally the mortality rate in 1950 was 27% and today the mortality rate is 4.3%. The highest mortality rate occurs in Africa and Latin America, the lowest being in North America and Europe. Dr. Smith stated that the leading causes of death among children and adolescents in the United States, 1999 through 2020 are motor vehicle accidents, firearm related injury, drug overdoses, malignant neoplasm, congenital anomalies, heart disease, drowning, fire or burns, and chronic respiratory disease.

Dr. Smith reported that new research reveals alarming decline in U.S. children's health. A comprehensive 17-year study finds rising mortality, chronic illness, and mental health challenges among U.S. children and youth. Dr. Smith also stated that teen birth rates are on the rise in Texas/Northeast Texas. Prematurity rates in Northeast Texas are also on the rise according to new research.

Dr. Smith asked the question, What Comes Next? She stated the expansion of clinical pediatric services geographically and for specialties are beginning. Training the next generation of pediatricians in East Texas is happening and a better understanding of our East Texas child population through research is beginning. Dr. Smith stated that deepening our community

partnerships is extremely important.

At the conclusion of Dr. Smith's report, Mr. Roberts presented her with a plaque recognizing her service to NET Health as Smith County Local Health Authority. The Board thanked Dr. Smith for her service and she received a standing ovation.

MINUTES

Motion made by Scott Williams to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2025, regular meeting; seconded by Kent Boozer; motion carried; approved as presented.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

For the month of August 2025, we had revenues of \$1,330,461 which was \$124,230 over budget. Expenses were \$1,349,503 which was \$103,543 over budget. Our net income for the month of August 2025 was \$19,042, which was \$20,687 under budget.

For FY 2025, we have revenues of \$11,868,714 which was \$287,386 over budget. Expenses were \$11,552,397 which was \$294,149 over budget. Our net income for the first 11 months of FY2025 was \$316,317, which was \$6,763 under budget.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the August 2025 financial report; seconded by Scott Williams motion carried; approved as presented.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 FINAL BUDGET REVISION

Lawanda Owens, Chief Financial Officer, stated that a Fiscal Year 2025 budget review was conducted with projected changes as of September 2025. The proposed revised budget for FY 25 shows \$15,170,138 in revenues and \$15,124,299 in expenses, with a net income of \$45,839. The main reason for the increase in revenues was due to an additional \$556,197 increase in the WIC Grant, and \$50,000 for the Sustainable Food Program. The additional expenses correlated with the increased revenue. Compared to the amended mid-year budget totals for FY 25, the overall increase in revised budget revenues was \$615,214 and the overall increase in revised budget expenses was \$597,839. The revised budget result was a net income increase of \$17,375 over the FY 25 mid-year budget.

Motion by Kent Boozer to approve the fiscal year 2025 final budget revision; seconded by Scott Williams; motion carried; approved as presented.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

Lawanda Owens, Chief Financial Officer, stated the proposed budget for FY 2026 shows \$13,836,425 in revenue and \$14,073,639 in expenses, with a net income of \$(237,214). The proposed budget for FY 26 projects a salary increases for staff, Leadership and CEO of 3%. Any

additional adjustments needed will be factored into the mid-year budget to be presented to the Board in March or April 2026. Employee medical and dental was budgeted for an increase of 15% beginning March 1, 2026. The WIC Program may receive additional funding at mid-year, but we will not know about that until early 2026.

Motion by Mike McCrady to approve the fiscal year 2026 budget; seconded by Nancy Rangel; motion carried; approved as presented.

ELECTION OF NET HEALTH BOARD OFFICERS

The NET Health Board nominations committee recommended the following slate of Officers for FY 2026:

Chair – Laura Newsome
Vice Chair – Scott Williams
Secretary – Kent Boozer

Motion made by Scott Williams, to approve the election of Board Officers as recommended by the nominating committee, for the term period October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026, as presented; seconded by Kent Boozer motion carried; approved as presented.

NET HEALTH NEPOTISM POLICY

The Northeast Texas Public Health District's Personnel Manual is periodically reviewed by management for any necessary revisions and or additions to be approved by the Board. The policy being presented at this meeting is the Nepotism Policy.

Nepotism is the practice of public officials using their authority to show improper favoritism toward relatives, especially in hiring, promotions, and contracts. NET Health's goal is to maintain trust, transparency and fairness in provision of all public health related services and benefits and to ensure policies mirror state law mandates for compliance with the state law governing conflicts of interest while serving local governmental entities.

The Nepotism policy applies to employees, contractors, board members, vendors, volunteers and others who represent NET Health. The policy covers decisions about hiring, procurement, and contracts. NET Health's Nepotism Policy ensures no one can supervise, evaluate, or make decisions involving a family member as defined by state law. Family members are not prohibited from applying for jobs or serving NET Health, but they must go through the same fair process and are subject to the prohibitions and restrictions as described in this policy.

Motion made by Scott Williams, to approve the addition of the HR – Conduct – 14 Nepotism Policy to the NET Health District Personnel Manual, as presented; seconded by Mike McCrady, motion carried; approved as presented.

UPDATES TO NET HEALTH RETAIL FOOD PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE

At the August 28, 2025, Northeast Texas Public District Board meeting, the Board approved Resolution R-2025-1 which adopted the Retail Food Permit Fee Schedule to align with the mandates required by SB 1008 amending Chapter 437 of the Texas Health & Safety Code. Ginger Points, Director of Environmental Health, has continued to receive updates regarding the changes in Texas law. Based on these clarifications, there are 2 fee adjustments proposed to make to Exhibit A based on clarifications we have received from the Texas Department of State Health Services, (DSHS).

- DSHS does not want local health departments to prorate mobile food unit permits that expire June 30, 2026. Therefore, NET Health will now be charging a single flat fee of \$258.00 to permit mobile food units to align with DSHS as required by SB 1008. The August 28, 2025, Fee Schedule for mobile food units listed fees based on level of risk versus a flat fee.
- Reinspection Fees - We are requesting to charge one base inspection fee for all types of requested inspections or compliance inspections. Therefore, Reinspection Fees are increasing from \$100.00 to \$150.00.

Motion made by Mike McCrady, that the Board approve the updated Northeast Texas Public Health District Retail Food Permit fee Schedule, as presented; seconded by Scott Williams, motion carried; approved as presented.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Roberts gave his report to the Board. Mr. Roberts stated that the Strategic Planning session had been scheduled for October 6th with Dawn Franks and the Leadership Team. He thanked the Board for their participation in the Strategic Planning session during the August Board meeting.

Mr. Roberts again thanked Dr. Valerie Smith for her service as Smith County Local Health Authority and he wished her well in her new role as Chief of Pediatrics, UT Tyler School of Medicine. He stated that we are excited to have Dr. Serpa as the incoming Smith County Local Health Authority.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting of the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board of Directors adjourned at 7:02 p.m. and Laura Newsome, Chair, stated the Board would immediately convene in Executive Session. Any vote or action taken will be made when the Board returns to open

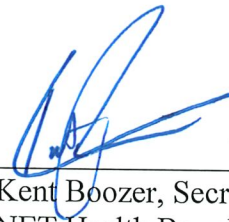
session.

The Board reconvened in open session at 7:32 p.m. and Mrs. Newsome stated no vote or action was taken. The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

THE NEXT NET HEALTH BOARD MEETING IS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025.



Janie Jolly, Recorder



Kent Boozer, Secretary
NET Health Board of Directors