



Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
January 10-11, 2021  
11-4:30 p.m. ET

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Deanna Wathington welcomed everyone, and a quorum was established.

PRESENT

Anne E. Dressel, PhD

Brittany Marshall, DrPH

Benjamin H. Hernandez, MBA

Catherine L. Troisi, PhD, MS

Charlene Cariou, MHS

Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH

Donna K. Beal, MPH

David Reyes, DNP, RN, MN/MPH

E. Oscar Alleyne, DrPH, MPH

Georges C. Benjamin, MD

Heather Walter-McCabe, JD, MSW

Hope M. Rollins

José Ramón Fernández-Peña, MD, MPA

Jeanie L. Holt, MPH, MS

Jeffrey E. Hall, PhD, MSPH, MA

Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN

Lisa M. Carlson, MPH

M. Aaron Guest, PhD, MPH, MSW

Nandi A. Marshall, DrPH, MPH

Rachael N. Reed, DrPH, MPH

Sarah Gareau, DrPH

Shontelle L. Dixon, MPH

Samantha H. Xu, MPH

Teresa Garrett, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC

*Sunday, January 10, 2021*

**I. Administrative Affairs — Deanna Wathington, MD, Chair**

**A. Approve the Meeting Agenda.**

The agenda was amended to include an executive session during the Personnel Committee update on Monday, Jan. 11 at 3:40 p.m. ET.

**Motion: To approve the Executive Board Jan. 10-11 meeting agenda.**

**Outcome: Approved by acclamation.**

**B. Consent Agenda**

- Oct. 22-23, 2021 Executive Board Meeting Minutes
- New Agency Members
- Leadership Appointments
- Approval of the APHA Parliamentarian
- Approval of the Governing Seat Allocation

**Motion: To approve the consent agenda.**

**Outcome: Approved by acclamation.**

**II. Discussion**

**A. Executive Board Fiduciary Training & Responsibilities – Jackie Henson, JD, Baker Donelson Law Firm**

Ms. Henson provided the Executive Board with an overview of their fiduciary responsibilities under Massachusetts state law where APHA is incorporated. Board members are subject to three fiduciary duties: duty of care, loyalty, and mission. Under these duties, board members should review all board materials, specific attention should be given to financial documents, members should stay informed on the organization's bylaws and policies, vote and attend all meetings to the best of their abilities. She said 80% of fiduciary lawsuit cases are brought due to financial mismanagement and misuse of assets. Board members should treat all information with confidentiality while putting the interests of APHA first and are obliged to disclose any conflict of interest. Board members are not the spokespersons of the Association and should exercise caution when speaking on behalf of the organization. Only an officially appointed staff/spokesperson of APHA should discuss matters with the public/media.

In summarizing Ms. Henson's presentation, it is important to note that the role of the Executive Board is to oversee the hiring of the executive director, setting the mission/vision of the organization,

providing program oversight, ensuring compliance with the law, managing the organization's finances and engaging in strategic planning. Ms. Henson's full presentation can be accessed [here](#).

**B. Discuss the June 2020 E-Cigarette issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* — Alfredo Morabia, MD, *AJPH* Editor-in-Chief, & Paul Gilbert, PhD, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Section Chair**

Dr. Benjamin invited *AJPH* Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Alfredo Morabia and Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Section Chair Dr. Paul Gilbert to share their views with the board about concerns (from anti-tobacco advocates and some APHA members) over one of the 13 commentaries that was included in the *AJPH* June 2020 E-Cigarette issue. Dr. Morabia stated that this journal topic was motivated by the FDA, which in spring 2020 published a guidance for industry, a document called “Enforcement Priorities for Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Other Deemed Products on the Market Without Premarket Authorization.” The goal of the journal was to obtain a perspective on harm reduction of nicotine, and to learn what positions the regulated industries are taking on this issue. With the full support from the *AJPH* Editorial Board, Dr. Morabia expressed his view that in this one narrow instance it was important to get the industry view in this situation. He expressed the importance of an inclusive academic debate on this issue. The journal does not publish scientific research from the industry, no funding was accepted, and conflicts of interest were noted in the journal for all authors. He stated his view that the inclusion of this commentary does not violate historical *AJPH* principles and is not a change in overall policy. He also noted that he did not accept an opinion letter from one group that is concerned about the inclusion of the commentary. The journal did receive many opinion letters regarding this issue, and by its policy it doesn't publish opinion letters that are not about data clarification on any recent *AJPH* articles. That is the rationale for his not accepting the commentary from the concerned anti-tobacco advocates. Dr. Benjamin pointed out he joined in the response letter in his role as publisher of the journal in defense of the editorial independence of the journal. APHA, as an originator and supporter of the Framework Convention, has not changed its policy, and this instance does not represent a change in policy.

Dr. Gilbert reaffirmed the ATOD Section's commitment to WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and said he believes that the tobacco industry has no part in public health. He also expressed the Section's strong disagreement with *AJPH*, including the commentary from an author from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World.

After a full and transparent debate, the board acknowledged that it understood the issues involved and concluded to reconfirm that the *AJPH* does have editorial independence and that the decision to publish the full scientific debate was appropriate in this instance. In addition, the *AJPH* Editorial Board appropriately reviewed the issue as well. The Executive Board also reaffirmed APHA's anti-

tobacco position and its continued support for the Framework Convention. Dr. Benjamin will also express this decision on behalf of the Executive Board to the appropriate parties.

**C. Executive Board Business — Deanna Wathington, MD, Chair, & Donna Beal, MPH, Vice Chair**

As the chair of the Executive Board, Dr. Wathington restated her goals for the board this year. Ms. Beal discussed the Executive Board mentorship program and the liaison assignments, which are designed to improve communication between the board and other APHA leaders.

**D. Association Update — Georges Benjamin, MD, Executive Director**

*2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Debriefing and 2021 Annual Meeting Plans*

Dr. Benjamin was happy to announce that the actual number of the 2020 virtual Annual Meeting registrants and revenue exceeded expectations. The actual revenue was greater than budgeted, and the actual expenses were lower than expected. The Association brought in \$4,360,115 in revenue, which is \$1,519,105 more than projected. A contribution of \$741,695 from the California Endowment was a significant factor in this unexpected revenue.

Dr. Benjamin then discussed plans for the 2021 Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. Currently, the Association is looking into three meeting structures: 1) an in-person meeting providing purposeful networking, access to the public health expo as well as access to all virtual sessions; 2) an all-virtual meeting with lower registration fee with some networking opportunities, access to all virtual sessions and a virtual expo; 3) a hybrid meeting — in-person featured sessions and some virtual sessions. Large meetings such as the Governing Council will have to be either all in-person or all virtual only.

Currently, in-person cancellation penalties are about \$1.5-2 million, hence the Association is carefully monitoring the pandemic, vaccination efforts, travel restrictions, social distancing, staffing requirements and extra costs before finalizing its meeting structure.

Dr. Benjamin then discussed the upcoming virtual [Policy Action Institute](#) scheduled for April 8-9. The theme of the conference is: Building Bridges: Creating Health. Registration is currently open. The conference is during the National Public Health Week which runs from April 5-11. Dr. Benjamin encouraged board members to sign up for the *Keep It Moving Challenge* on the [nphw.org](http://nphw.org) website.

*Operational Activities*

The Association is undergoing a series of website updates that will improve analytics and the back-end functionality of the website. The iMIS membership database is continuing to be enhanced for better member and staff experience. APHA staff are also working on updating the donation pages of the website, and the accounting staff are working on a process to allow donors to buy APHA membership as a gift for individuals.

APHA continues to be interviewed by major news outlets and has become the go-to public health source on various social media platforms with about 1 million followers. In 2020, APHA had about 5 million visitors to its APHA websites and about 13.5 million-page views.

Dr. Benjamin was delighted to announce various new partnerships and collaborations such as the [Alliance for Disease Prevention and Response](#), YouTube collaboration, Sustainability Forum and the GW Podcast series with Frank Sesno, an Emmy-award winning journalist. The organization has begun planning for major activities for APHA's 150th anniversary, starting at the end of 2021 Annual Meeting and leading up to the 2022 Annual Meeting in Boston. In concluding his presentation, Dr. Benjamin let the board know that he will be working on APHA's business plan to examine current programs and grow new opportunities and will present it to the board later in the year.

#### **E. Understanding APHA's Financial Profile — Kemi Oluwafemi, MBA, CPA, APHA Chief Financial Officer**

APHA uses a zero-based budgeting system in which all expenses are justified and approved for each period. Ms. Oluwafemi emphasized that APHA budgets expenses and revenues conservatively (on the lower side for revenue and higher side for expenses) and accounts for any unexpected expenses while ensuring some amount is put aside for reserves every month. APHA uses an accrual method to keep financial reports in balance, recognizing expenses when committed, not when paid.

For the fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, major sources of APHA funding came from membership (18%), conventions/Annual Meeting (43%), publications (14%), government and contracts (19%) and from other various sources (6%). Ms. Oluwafemi noted that APHA balances its budget sheet every month by maintaining its main funds: operations (unrestricted), Section enrichment funds, awards, (temporarily restricted) and endowments (permanently restricted). The organization also balances its budget sheet with monthly summary financial analyses and goes through its statement of income activities. APHA finances are audited annually as required by the federal government.

For the upcoming 2022 fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), the budget process has just begun. APHA unit directors will prepare work plans and budgets. After thorough discussion, evaluation and approval by senior management, the budget plan will be presented in April 2021 to the Finance and

Audit Committee for their review and approval. The proposed budget will then be presented to the Executive Board for approval during the May 2021 board meeting.

#### **F. Treasurer’s Report — Benjamin Hernandez, MBA, Treasurer**

Mr. Hernandez was delighted to share that APHA received a clean audit for fiscal year 2020 that closed on June 30, 2020. APHA had revenue of \$16,577,505 while expenses were \$16,236,543 leading to a positive change in net asset of \$340,962 from operations. Investment income and appreciation were \$423,773 which resulted in \$764,735 in overall change in net assets. Mr. Hernandez then gave an overview of the Finance and Audit Committee and its role and responsibilities which include reviewing budget process and activities, monitoring APHA’s financial operations, providing oversight to the audit process, and recommending financial policies.

He then discussed the status of fiscal year 2021. Five months into fiscal year 2021 that is by end of November 2021, APHA’s total revenue was \$9,914,626 (68% of the budget) while expenses were \$7,907,280 (47% of the budget), resulting in a net income of \$2,007,346 from operations. The following notable revenue streams haven’t met their targeted goals: membership (under by \$73,796); subscription, fees, and royalties (under by \$123,231); advertising (\$98,735). Revenue from contracts/grants and Conventions were over budget. He noted that the expenses and bills always lag behind and therefore lower expenses to-date do not equate to savings to-date. At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Hernandez made a motion for the board to accept the fiscal year 2020 audited financial report.

**Motion: Approve APHA’s fiscal year 2020 audit report.**

**Outcome: Approved by acclamation.**

#### **G. Development Committee & 150th Anniversary — Donna Beal, MPH, Vice Chair & Committee Chair**

Ms. Beal presented the Development Committee’s mission, whose main goal is to oversee, expand and support staff on the Executive Board fundraising goals. The Committee’s work plan consists of ensuring leadership giving by the Executive Board and the Governing Council, supporting growth of programs on planned giving, major gifts, relationship building with donors, and Giving Tuesday Initiatives, and planning for APHA’s 150th anniversary. The Development Committee is also working on creating a special lounge (green room) at future Annual Meetings. The lounge would be a space for major donors to relax and mingle. Ms. Beal then shared the committee’s dashboard that shows the growth of development activities, major gifts, planned giving and trends over a five year period.

Ms. Beal asked board members to consider sponsoring an Early-Career Professional or Student member to attend the Policy Action Institute and thanked those board members who had already made that commitment. Ms. Beal then reminded them about the give or get policy for board members, and the addition of non-Executive Board members to the committee composition in order to have members with experience in major planned giving as the committee starts to plan for APHA's 150th anniversary in 2022. The committee is also looking for APHA leaders to work on fundraising efforts for the 150th anniversary.

#### **H. 2021 Governing Council Plans — M. Aaron Guest, PhD, Governing Council Speaker**

Dr. Guest began by providing an overview of the 2020 virtual Governing Council meeting survey results. Out of about 300 Governing Counselors, 90 took the survey. Overall, results showed high satisfaction with the content, time, pre-meeting communication/materials, reports, meeting platform and voting. Yet many were dissatisfied with the ease of speaking from the "floor," and had difficulty logging-in and engaging in discussions. Most watched the pre-recorded candidate forums but not as much other pre-recorded reports. In terms of attendance, many found that the greatest barrier was the cost of the meeting. The majority of survey respondents also preferred one day, 6-7 hours, Governing Council meeting format (piloted in October 2020 Annual Meeting) as compared to the typical 1.5 day Governing Council meeting.

In terms of the counselor's perception of their work, the majority of survey respondents felt valued and understood their role within their member unit. However, there were many who were not clear of the role of the Governing Council in APHA and how it directly influences the field of public health. Additionally, many counselors expressed that they want to engage more than twice a year. To address these concerns, Dr. Guest will be leading two Governing Council orientations this spring; the first one in March will be on the role of the Governing Council, the second one would be on the parliamentary procedures.

Dr. Guest's other spring 2021 Governing Council plans include leading a 'speaking with the speaker series,' meeting with APHA member groups, and working on creating a central repository where Counselors can access materials throughout the year. He is also working on gathering APHA committees and boards work plans at the beginning of the year so that the GC can better evaluate end of the year progress. The Governing Council continues to work with the Joint Policy Committee and the Nominations Committee and is looking forward to working with APHA on disseminating information on the Member Unit Effectiveness Project recommendation report. At the conclusion of his presentation, Dr. Guest encouraged board members to remind their Inter-Sectional Council and Council of Affiliates liaisons of Governing Council activities and encourage their participation. For the Governing Council mid-year meeting on June 14, he noted that the deadline for agenda items is April 5 and that any materials that can be voted on at the mid-year meeting should definitely be voted

on at the June meeting so Governing Councilors have plenty of time in October to discuss the Member Unit Effectiveness Project recommendation report.

*Monday, January 11, 2020*

## **Welcome and Meeting Called to Order — Deanna Wathington, MD, Chair**

### **I. APHA Member Unit Effectiveness and Engagement Project — Elizabeth Scott, PhD, CEO, Payal Martin, MPH, Managing Director, Brighter Strategies, and Alan Baker, Advisory Committee Chair**

Dr. Scott began by reiterating the objectives of the project, which are to assess the composition, organizational structure, internal governance and operational process of APHA's 39 member units, including the Student Assembly. The project will examine capacity, performance, motivation, learning, professional environment and member experiences and recommend how to organize member units to address the needs of APHA members while maximizing efficiency. This does not include reviewing Caucuses, Affiliates or internal staffing and is not a comprehensive infrastructure assessment. However, the consultants will share information with APHA about Caucuses and any other areas not covered in the project. Mr. Baker summarized the work of the Advisory Committee whose main goal is to advise and comment on Brighter Strategies work on this project.

Dr. Scott then highlighted results from a recent member survey and the five Falletta specific focus groups that looked into: 1) communication and technology; 2) volunteer leadership; 3) measures and rewards; 4) growth and development; and 5) structure and decision rights. Dr. Scott and Ms. Martin also shared key findings for each of the five above topics and provided sample recommendations.

Key findings from the focus groups and the survey include better bi-directional communication, a need for user-friendly web tools, more support from APHA staff for member unit volunteer leaders, continued engagement outside the Annual Meeting and ongoing networking opportunities across member units/professions, local affiliates and regions.

There was a consensus among members that the work of APHA's member units be aligned with APHA's strategic plan and there be a clearer value being an APHA member. Brighter Strategies has begun drafting a recommendation report which will be presented at the March 15 board meeting. The full Brighter strategies presentation can be found [here](#). APHA staff will share the project's talking points with board members.

### **J. Overview and Discussion of APHA's 2021 Advocacy Priorities — Don Hoppert, Director of Government Relations**

Mr. Hoppert provided a brief overview of APHA’s six 2021 advocacy priorities. They are:

- Increase and protect funding for vital public health agencies and programs and strengthen the nation’s public health infrastructure
- Uphold the Affordable Care Act and expand access to health coverage and services
- Address the health impacts of climate change
- Uphold critical public health laws and regulations and reverse damaging rollbacks
- Address the nation’s gun violence epidemic
- Advance racial equity

He then went through each of the priorities and discussed how APHA plans to work on these by advocating for policies and funding in Congress. For a detailed breakdown under each priority, Mr. Hoppert shared [APHA’s 2021 advocacy priorities](#) with the board. He also mentioned that APHA has brought these issues to the attention of President Biden’s transition team.

#### **K. Strategic Planning Committee Update — Cathy Troisi, PhD, Committee Chair**

Dr. Troisi provided the goals of the Strategic Planning Committee this year. The committee will work on creating a summary document highlighting strategic plan successes and challenges, and work on communicating this strategic plan with the board, the Governing Council, APHA members and staff. The committee is also looking forward to reviewing and/or updating the plan once Member Unit Effectiveness project recommendation report is out. The current strategic plan and data dictionary can be found on [APHA’s Strategic Plan webpage](#).

In terms of advocacy, the committee will continue to work on public health advocacy activities that can be incorporated into any institution’s training and curriculum. She also encouraged board members to use and share the [‘5 Ways to Use APHA Action Alerts’ Infographic](#) that the committee developed to highlight ways for APHA leaders, members and the public to engage in public health advocacy priorities. Lastly, Dr. Troisi asked the board to continue to call on their senators and representatives, and share the [#SpeakForHealth tools](#) in their advocacy efforts.

#### **L. Executive Session and Personnel Committee Update — Deanna Wathington, MD, Chair**

The board went into a closed executive session to discuss personnel issues.

*Meeting adjourned at 5 p.m. ET*

**The next meeting of the Executive Board will take place via zoom on March 15.**