

**Hamilton County General Health District
PUBLIC HEARING – BOARD OF HEALTH
November 13, 2023 – 3:30 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 3:30 p.m., Elizabeth A. Kelly, President, called to order the public hearing of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District.

2. Roll Call of Members

Members Present: Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., President
Dan Meloy, Vice President
James Brett
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Felicia Erwin, Director of Water Quality

Guests Present: Ryan Davis, Kevin M. Eagan, Cory Lehmann, and Roy T. Skaggs Jr.

3. Proposed Sewage Treatment System License Fees Presentation

Commissioner Kesterman began by outlining the agenda and the process of making public comments.

Assistant Health Commissioner, Craig Davidson, presented the proposed sewage treatment system (STS) license fee adjustments and the process for implementing cost methodology study. pursuant to Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes. The proposed fee adjustments were distributed to all individuals that would be affected via mail as required by Ohio Revised Code.

Mr. Davidson detailed the proposed STS fee adjustments noting the last fee increase was five years ago. Mr. Davidson outlined that approximately 20,000 operational sewage treatment systems are licensed and inspected through this program and that the proposed fee adjustment would offset recent cost increases such as employee compensation and other expenses. The proposed fee adjustments are in line when compared with other programs in the state of Ohio.

There was a Frequently Asked Questions page provided on the agency's website to uniformly and transparently address the main questions and points of feedback collected from a survey on the same page. The survey link was provided via the mailed notification. Survey feedback key themes included percentage increase relative to other cost of living increases, ability to connect to sewers, difficulty for those on a fixed income, and general questions about how inspections are conducted and the cost methodology process. Mr. Davidson answered all the questions of the Board.

4. Public Comment:

There were three public comments made. The first comment was regarding inspections. The homeowner is currently working with a service/maintenance contractor and asked if that would be suitable proof of compliance and proper operation in lieu of inspections. The second comment was regarding the overall increased price. The third comment was regarding the frequency of inspections. There was concern in the communication of how these proposed updated fees were being sent out and if affected individuals had ample time to respond.

On the first comment, Mr. Davidson clarified that there is a process regarding contractor inspections and Director of Water Quality, Felicia Erwin, detailed the plan that would allow homeowners to contact HCPH regarding their own contractors and inspectors. A handout regarding this process was made available at the hearing registration table.

Mr. Davidson and Ms. Erwin provided details concerning the notice of inspections that are sent, the legal process conducting the cost methodology and raising of fees, and the range of increase in the fees. Commissioner Kesterman answered questions regarding rising expenses.

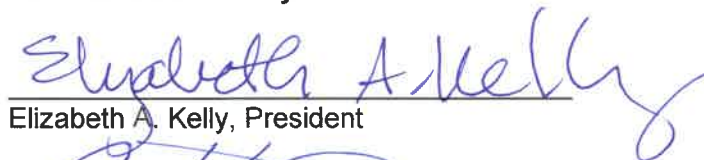
Mr. Davidson outlined the budget of HCPH with its current project costs and how this increase would keep it cost neutral. He presented that the Frequently Asked Questions page on HCPH's website provides further details. Commissioner Kesterman added that certain counties have a tax levy that assists in Public Health's budget compared to Hamilton County which does not. Ms. Erwin pointed out the inspection service fees are comparable to other counties.

5. Adjournment

Dr. Kelly moved to adjourn the public hearing at 3:56 p.m.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote - All Aye



Elizabeth A. Kelly, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner