

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
December 11, 2023 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Elizabeth A. Kelly, President, called to order the regular session of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call of Members

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

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

Guests Present: Brianna Mariani, Little Arrows Childcare
Janeine Williams Borden, Little Arrows Childcare

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of six Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Representatives from Little Arrows Childcare Center at Forest Park were present to receive their award.

5. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Rippe abstained.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2023, Public Hearing meeting.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Rippe abstained.

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman began his report with an update on Hamilton County Public Health's (HCPH) website which has a fresh look. The new site is able to be fully translated and was designed to ensure that the public had easy access to records and frequently accessed / needed information. Commissioner Kesterman then provided an update on the 5050 Section Avenue construction. He provided pictures of different areas of the new property for the staff including lockers, break areas, and the overall design of the clinic. Staff are excited and looking forward to moving in soon.

Commissioner Kesterman presented the results of the employee satisfaction survey that was conducted of all staff. Commissioner Kesterman presented the methodology of how the survey was conducted and noted that they received a 70% response rate. He noted the combined years of service to HCPH is 829.9 years and the average length of service for an employee is 6.69 years. Commissioner Kesterman noted specific employee survey question results and these results are included in the Board packet.

In the survey Commissioner Kesterman noted multiple reasons why staff may look for a new job. These reasons included higher pay, ability to work remotely more often, opportunity for advancement, a shorter commute, and less stress. He was very pleased overall with the employee satisfaction survey. Overall themes for improvement were training, professional growth/advancement, technology, and standardization of agency-wide practices.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, began his report noting his team is very appreciative of the new clinic and are excited about the move. He noted that there will be clinic downtime due to the move from December 15 to January 8. During this transition, Dr Feagins highlighted the different local partners that will provide clinical coverage. For sexually transmitted infection patients, especially newly diagnosed syphilis patients, they will be referred to the Cincinnati Health Department Ambrose Clement Health Center. As a backup, patients may be referred to the Mercy Health Care Clinic. During the transition, ten doses of Bicillin LA have been shared with Cincinnati Health Department. He also noted that tuberculosis patients will be seen at the University of Cincinnati by Dr. Moises Huaman.

Dr. Feagins provided an update on syphilis infections and outlined a statistics table with infections by year for Hamilton County. He answered questions from the Board regarding education of and contact tracing for congenital syphilis.

Dr. Feagins outlined statistics for influenza-like illness and pneumonia emergency department visits. He also noted that certain health systems are evaluating mask requirements. Dr. Feagins noted that the COVID-19 updated vaccinations for Ohio nursing home patients are currently lower than the national average. Dr. Feagins highlighted the dangers of menthol cigarettes and described those that smoke will smoke less but receive more toxins.

The monthly Communicable Diseases Epi report was provided in the Board packet.

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Ms. Lindner, began her report with an update on the Harm Reduction team. She highlighted from her report in the Board packet the new harm reduction vending machines that contain safety kits, fentanyl test strips, and first aid kits. When someone wants to access these supplies, they call a number and receive a code to access them. Ms. Lindner noted that there will be a press release that will promote these harm reduction vending machines. A third machine will be placed at the UC Emergency Department in the coming weeks.

Ms. Lindner stated the WeTHRIVE! event was a success noting that over 110 people came, and she thanked the Board for their proclamation and Mr. Brett for reading it at the event.

Ms. Lindner also shared that staff are very excited about the new clinic.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, began his report by highlighting a presentation that Christa Hyson presented on Emergency Preparedness at Xavier University. Information shared with the students included: public health emergencies, planning, exercises, and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Davidson reviewed the emergency preparedness items HCPH covered with mentee Springfield-Green County Health Department in Missouri. HCPH is also mentoring them on harm reduction efforts through the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) grant.

Mr. Davidson noted a local franchisee of a national home remodeling contracting firm requested plumbing inspectors to complete their inspections on the same day. To accommodate this firm, Mr. Davidson noted that the inspectors developed standard operating guidelines to establish a uniform process for same day inspections for bathroom fixture replacements during a remodel. Mr. Davidson described this process, and the details are in his full report.

Mr. Davidson highlighted the Little Miami River Water Quality forum hosted by Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD). The forum was in-person and online. HCPH's Eric Bartl, Registered Environmental Health Specialist, presented and did an excellent job.

Mr. Davidson concluded his report with the environmental health enforcement updates included in the Board packet.

8. Finances

The November 2023 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Brett abstained on White Water expenditures.

Greg Varner, Finance Officer, outlined projected 2023 year-end results and budget variances. Mr. Varner reviewed the 2024 Revised and 2025 Estimated Budgets in the Board packet. The total expenditure in the proposed 2024 Revised Budget is \$11.77M. He

spoke to the different budget variances and reminded that actual fund balances for 2022 and 2021 exceeded budget with favorable variances.

Mr. Varner detailed the 2024 budget objectives including strengthening the general fund & specific restricted fund balances while investing in salary structure and pay ranges for industry equity and staff retention. Mr. Varner explained space costs and moving expenses. Mr. Varner requested an increase in death certificate fees that would match the City of Cincinnati Health Department's fees.

Mr. Rippe asked a question regarding personnel costs and the history of increases. Mr. Meloy echoed the need for retention balanced with sustainability. Commissioner Kesterman indicated that the proposed budget includes a pay scale adjustment intended to continue to ensure HCPH remains competitive with the current market while spreading out the pay scale to help create equity between positions. The budget also eliminates the bonus and provides one merit-based increase with a four percent funding allocation. Mr. Varner discussed the budget projected decreases and reminded that the Board has suggested evaluating fee increases every year. Mr. Varner also gave an overview of grant revenue and the multiple grants that are being extended and the total expenditures attached to them.

9. New Business:

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve Resolution G-2023: Southwest Ohio Preparedness Mutual Aid Agreement.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Meloy moved to approve the proclamation recognizing the long-time service of Jim Brett.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve Resolution 6-2023: Vital Statistic Fee Adjustments

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Dr. Kelly had to depart the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Mr. Meloy moved to direct staff to seek a five percent increase to the fees paid by villages, townships and cities during the next District Advisory Meeting which will have an impact on the 2025 budget.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; Mr. Brett abstained.

Mr. Rippe moved to approve Resolution H-2023: 2024-Revised Budget and 2025-Estimated Budget for the Hamilton County General Health District.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Brett is stepping down at the end of this year and Mr. Rippe indicated that he would not be renewing as a Board member at the conclusion of his term ending March 2024. The Board discussed a Board recruitment plan. There was discussion about the Board's interest

in having an opportunity to manage the process and it was important to find Board members who would be collaborative and bring value to the Board. Commissioner Kesterman indicated that if the Board sent resumes of potential candidates, he would compile them and redistribute to the Board. Additional discussion can occur at the January meeting.

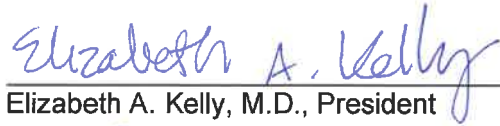
10. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: January 8, at 4 p.m.


Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., President


Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

