

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**September 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 and a moment of silence in memory of September 11, 2001.

**2. Roll Call of Members**

Members Present: Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., 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  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Craig Davidson read the list of nine Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Brett** moved to approve the minutes from the August 14, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

**Mr. Rippe** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**6. Public Comment: None.**

**7. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman presented his report and began by thanking his team for their work to receive four grants that were awarded to HCPH. These grants will further enhance the community. The grants were described by Commissioner Kesterman and were included in the Board packet. Mr. Varner also described the impact of these grants on the financial statements.

Commissioner Kesterman informed the Board that the Norwood Health Department reached out and stated that their Environmental Inspector team member was stepping away for an undisclosed time. Norwood is requesting HCPH provide environmental service inspections

during this period of vacancy. Commissioner Kesterman explained that Norwood is interested in an hourly contract but there would be benefit to a contract that provided full services, including licensure. Mr. Kesterman stated that it would be in the best interest of the residents for a full environmental services contract rather than an hourly service contract.

Mr. Kesterman asked Mr. Varner to address the 2022 State audit. Due to the confusion of multiple questionnaires sent by the auditors this year, Mr. Varner explained the fiscal audit questionnaire and the audit processes.

Commissioner Kesterman described Issue 2: Marijuana Legalization Initiative that will be on the November ballot and was seeking the Board's policy directive. The Board authorized a statement:

**Issue 2: Marijuana Legalization Initiative**

Hamilton County Public Health currently holds no position on Ohio Issue 2 -- Marijuana Legalization Initiative. Similar to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we will continue to monitor trends, follow research, and continue our partnership with health systems, healthcare providers and addiction specialists.

From a public health perspective, the initiative is complicated. Legalizing marijuana will help to eliminate the disproportionate incarceration rates for minorities and cannabis offenses; provide the ability to regulate growth and distribution, which will help eliminate the potential for adulterants (such as fentanyl); and generate revenue for Ohio. The initiative also legalizes the use of another intoxicating substance, ignores the health threats of smoking & use, and requires the building of infrastructure and regulation necessary to bring marijuana to the market.

**Staff Reports**

**(a) Medical Director's Report**

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director began his report with an update on the Epic Electronic Medical Record (EMR), which is now live at HCPH. Dr. Feagins described how this EMR system, new to HCPH, connects all health systems and that it has been successful thus far. Dr. Feagins explained how this new electronic medical record is an excellent teaching and education tool. Dr. Feagins shared work being done on SmartPhrases and highlighted the ability of MyChart, a feature of Epic, that patients and clinicians can use. Dr. Feagins described the benefits of MyChart and remarked that it streamlines information and communication. Northern Kentucky Health Department went live on Epic this summer and other health departments are interested in joining in the future.

Dr. Feagins gave information on the COVID-19 vaccine that will be available mid-September. He remarked that while not mandated, this vaccine is highly recommended for healthcare workers. There is no local health system or health department that currently has plans for mass vaccine clinics. Many employers are excited for this new vaccine due to many employees contracting COVID. Dr. Feagins then reviewed the last influenza season statistics and what the estimated influenza season would be based on current data. All graphs were included in the Board packet for review.

Dr. Feagins also presented the data on Hamilton County deaths from suicide and unintentional overdoses since 2017. All graphs and data were presented in the Board packet.

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

**(b) Department of Community Health Services**

Assistant Health Commissioner Ms. Lindner thanked Dr. Feagins and remarked that the Epic system is a positive change for staff members due to its efficiency and ease of access.

Ms. Lindner also recognized HCPH staff for their hard work for the grants that were awarded, and they look forward to the next chapter of work at HCPH.

Ms. Lindner and Commissioner Kesterman answered all questions from the Board regarding the progress of the new property.

**(c) Department of Environmental Health Services**

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson gave an update on plumbing contractor registrations. Through the quality improvement process, there were two issues that were identified as improvement areas. Those issues were witness signatures were missing and the ability to verify the contractors OCILB (Ohio Construction Industry License Board) license needed to be verified. Mr. Davidson is in consultation with Ms. Chin to change the fee schedule from an annual renewal to a three-year renewal. He stated that the fee amount would not change, just that the Board would need to make a motion to lengthen a new fee schedule from one year to three years.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to have a public hearing for the proposed plumbing fee schedule changes at 3:45 p.m. on October 9, 2023, at the Hamilton County Public Health offices located at 250 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call; All Aye**

Mr. Davidson also highlighted from his report that he is taking a six-month course with the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center ImpactU Improvement Science Leadership Program. Mr. Davidson concluded his report with the environmental health enforcement updates included in the Board packet.

**8. Finances**

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

**Mr. Rippe** moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

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

**9. New Business:**

**Mr. Rippe** moved to approve Regulation 1-2023: Revised fees for food service operations, retail food establishments, temporary food service operations, vending operations, and mobile food service operations.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote- All Aye**

**Mr. Rippe** moved to approve Regulation 2-2023: Revised fees for public swimming pools, spas, and special use pools.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote- All Aye**

**Mr. Brett** moved to approve Regulation 3-2023: Revised fees for recreational vehicle parks, recreation camps, combined and temporary park-camps, and resident camps.

**Ms. Puthoff** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote- All Aye**

## 10. Adjournment

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

**Mr. Rippe** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: October 9, 2023, at 4 p.m.



Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner