

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**July 8, 2024 – 4 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., Dan Meloy, 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: Dan Meloy, President  
Elizabeth A. Kelly, M.D., Vice-President  
Tracey A. Puthoff, Esq.  
Eric Knapp  
Max Miller

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  
Brad Johnson, Director of Environmental Services  
Mike Kramer, Assistant Director of Environmental Services

Guests Present: Tim Werdmann

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Assistant Health Commissioner, Craig Davidson, read the list of three 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. Knapp** moved to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2024, Board of Health meeting.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye; Ms. Puthoff abstained.**

**6. Public Comment: None.**

**7. Presentations**

Department of Environmental Services, Brad Johnson, Director and Mike Kramer, Assistant Director began their presentation by thanking the Board of Health for the opportunity to present. Mr. Johnson provided a background of the Department of Environmental Services, which is one of the oldest environmental protection agencies in the country. The

Department of Environmental Services was started in 1971 to change its air pollution control strategy to a regional approach; thus, evolving into the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency issues permits, completes inspections, and manages enforcement for violations. He noted that there are 17 air quality monitoring sites throughout the region that monitor air quality and document compliance with health-based standards. They also conduct investigations into specific facilities and respond to citizen complaints about air quality in the region.

The Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency continues to stay in compliance with national air quality standards. These standards set limits to protect public health, including the health of sensitive populations, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with respiratory illnesses. Mr. Johnson provided a budget overview and key dates of the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency.,

Mr. Johnson presented the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency proposed air quality fee adjustments. The increases are necessary for the agency to maintain services. Mr. Johnson noted that there is a tiered approach to the proposed fee adjustments. Small emitters will have a very small or no rate increase. The higher emitters, or businesses with more units, will see larger rate increases. Mr. Johnson outlined the fee comparison to the Dayton, Ohio region.

Mr. Johnson answered a question from the Board of Health regarding the Supreme Court's decision on EPA standards. The EPA's "Good Neighbor" rule was temporarily blocked by the Court.

Mr. Kramer, Assistant Director, outlined the fee schedule and explained that the rate increases will generate about \$400K per year spread across five counties. This is a breakeven increase as during the previous three years, the agency operated in the "red." The agency will try to minimize the impact on small businesses, such as gasoline dispensing facilities and dry cleaners. As a result of Title IV, revenue is down \$1M, of which \$400K can be recouped through the fee increase. The remaining amount was reconciled through a reduction in staffing.

Mr. Miller responded to a question from Mr. Knapp regarding present employment. The current staff is knowledgeable, efficient, and able to meet demands. Mr. Kramer provided clarification on the fee schedule for Dr. Kelly.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Kramer noted that the air quality fee schedule has not been updated since 1996. Mr. Kramer answered a question from Mr. Miller regarding auditing and reconciling with the Ohio EPA permits and databases.

The Board of Health requested more information, including a side-by-side comparison of the current fee structure and the proposed fee structure. The Board will review requested documents and prepare any additional questions for consideration at next month's Board of Health meeting.

The Board receives 45 minutes of Continuing Education for this presentation.

## **8. New Business (1)**

## **Regulation 1-2024: Adopting Revised Local Fees for Air Pollution Control Regulations**

Commissioner Kesterman recommended the Board of Health table the regulation for consideration while Mr. Johnson and his staff provide additional details regarding the projected Air Pollution Control revised fees vs. current fees.

### **9. Health Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Kesterman began his report outlining the status of the Board of County Commissioner's consideration of the Bond Hill property.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that the Bond Hill location would be a prime location for Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) on the fifth floor of the building. He presented details and pictures of the Bond Hill location along with different amenities that would be available for HCPH. A potential floor plan for the prospective tenants was shared. Commissioner Kesterman's presentation included pictures of the lobby, reception area and entrance. Additionally, pictures of communal areas, outside event areas, the cafeteria, and lounge workspaces were presented.

Commissioner Kesterman noted the next steps for the potential Bond Hill property. The earliest the property could be opened would be the end of 2025 after negotiations, due diligence by the county commissioners, and construction.

Commissioner Kesterman answered a question from Ms. Puthoff regarding how the project would be funded. Funding will come from a variety of sources, including bonds and grants.

Mr. Kesterman asked the Board of Health about the November Board meeting as it currently falls on Veteran's Day. The Board of Health proposed the meeting be moved to November 12, 2024, and will revisit this at next month's Board of Health meeting.

Commissioner Kesterman noted that the administrator for Sharonville would still like HCPH to be involved in future seasonal flu vaccine clinics in their community. This request comes as a result of the existing contract for services between HCPH and Sharonville, which was originated ten years ago. Mr. Kesterman noted that Sharonville has many alternative vaccination locations which include primary providers, pharmacies, and clinics, and that mass immunization clinics for flu vaccine are unwarranted given this wide availability.

Commissioner Kesterman provided the quarterly employee retention report to the Board of Health. Five employees left in the last quarter and there are currently 130 employees.

Commissioner Kesterman presented the Board of Health with a public swimming pool variance request. Details of the variance were shared. He noted that a local health district would have to review and either approve or disapprove the variance prior to review by the Ohio Department of Health. Commissioner Kesterman noted that the variance discussion that is on the agenda is cancelled due to the operator not providing paperwork by the deadline. Commissioner Kesterman requested that the Board of Health delegate the authority to the Commissioner to decide swimming pool variances which will be discussed during new business later in the meeting.

Ms. Puthoff asked a question regarding ODH approval for the color value variance, and Commissioner Kesterman provided details on the process of approval.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, began his report by displaying a table with the 2023-2024 influenza statistics. He continued his report with details of home testing for sexually transmitted infections (STI), which are funded through the Ohio Department of Health.

Dr. Feagins displayed a website where patients can confidentially order a STI home test kit through ODH's "Aware" testing program. He noted that these STI testing results are entered into the Ohio Disease Reporting System if positive and are followed up by local health departments based on the jurisdiction in which the patient resides. Dr. Feagins noted that HCPH has already seen at least one patient in the sexual health clinic diagnosed through a Preventx home test.

Dr. Feagins outlined the Aware Home STI Testing phases. In Phase 1, the user goes to the website, completes risk assessment, and orders kit. He noted that HCPH is requesting a dashboard for data to determine the number of test kit requests and samples returned. Dr. Kelly asked a question regarding patients and their process of results for home testing STI kits. Dr. Feagins noted that the Epic system will help healthcare professionals. This is a new program through the state, and we are still learning about how the reporting and follow up works. The director of the test lab, Preventx, will be speaking on Dr. Feagins zoom call next week where we will have the opportunity to learn more.

Dr. Feagins noted that the Region 8 Syphilis Report for 1Q 2024 revealed a decrease in cases.

Dr. Feagins continued his report by stating the different workforce implications of long COVID. Dr. Feagins noted that overall, 17.5 million patients in the U.S. are affected by long COVID.

Dr. Feagins noted that he was appointed to the Trauma Committee of the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services. This appointment occurred in May 2024 and is a four-year term representing Southwest Ohio.

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 by notifying the Board of Health of a measles exposure on July 3, 2024. She noted that an investigation into this exposure, which had Hamilton County contacts, is ongoing.

Ms. Lindner stated that there was also a recent rabies exposure from bats at a campground. ODH and HCPH have both been involved with notification and follow up with contacts. She noted that the Epidemiology staff are following up with these contacts to ensure they are screen for their risk level and are directed to the appropriate care as needed..

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

Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, began his report by reporting on the lead prevention program. Mr. Davidson stated that some of the ODH funding is being used for outreach in at-risk communities. Promotional outreach is being done at the libraries. A lead specific phone line was secured and is being included on promotional materials. ODH has provided additional funding for two high-end lead meters.

Mr. Davidson shared a promotional video being used on the website and social media platforms to highlight some of the work being done as well as share testimonials.

Environmental health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

## **10. Finances**

The June 2024 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

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

**Mr. Knapp** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Greg Varner, Finance Officer, presented the second quarter financial review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity. Mr. Varner's report provides a comprehensive update on the District's second quarter finances. The District is currently experiencing favorable variances to the budget. Revenue streams are consistently aligning with budgeted expectations and expenditures remain below the budgeted levels. Additional details can be found in Mr. Varner's report.

## **11. New Business (2)**

### **Board of Health Meeting Date & Time Discussion**

Commissioner Kesterman asked the Board of Health about the November Board meeting date which falls on Veteran's Day (November 11, 2024). The Board of Health proposed November 12, 2024, as a possible alternative date and will revisit the date for consideration at the August 12 Board of Health meeting.

### **Public Swimming Pool Program: Limited variance delegation of authority**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved that the Board of Health authorizes the Health Commissioner to review and make determinations regarding requests for limited variances from the Ohio Administrative Code 3701-31, related to public swimming pools. This delegation of authority is intended to streamline the approval process and ensure timely responses to limited variance requests that may impact public swimming pool operations. The Health Commissioner's decision on any limited variance request shall be in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code section 3701-31-03(H), ensuring that limited variances granted are not contrary to the public interest, do not adversely affect public health and safety, and will set forth terms, conditions, and an expiration date. All limited variances heard by the Health Commissioner shall be included in the Board packet for the Board's awareness.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

## 12. Executive Session

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to go to executive session to discuss personnel matters at 5:42 p.m.

**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**Mr. Knapp** made a motion to end the executive session at 6:09 p.m.

**Mr. Miller** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Executive Session ended with no decisions being made.

## 13. Adjournment

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

**Dr. Kelly** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: August 12, at 4 p.m.

  
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Dan Meloy, President

  
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Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Health Commissioner