

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
January 13, 2025 – 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
Eric Knapp
Max Miller

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Steve Feagins, M.D., Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Allison Babka, Public Information Officer

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Health Commissioner, Greg Kesterman, read the list of one Clean Kitchen Award recipient 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 December 9, 2024, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman began his report by thanking the Board of Health for the end of year celebration staff day at HCPH. Pictures of the recent staff day were shared in the Board packet.

Commissioner Kesterman also wanted to let the Board of Health know that he joined The Health Collaborative Board which partners with healthcare leaders, including hospital executives and other community health partners. This opportunity offers the chance to influence strategic health decisions while working around key influencers in public health.

Commissioner Kesterman also recognized the HCPH Wrapped online campaign. This campaign focused on the agency's highlights including some of its major achievements, milestones, and stats in public health from 2024.

Commissioner Kesterman concluded his report by providing pictures of the recent snow days and employees' interactions from home. He informed the Board of Health of the positive response of staff's opportunity to work from home during these snow days.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, began his report by presenting data of confirmed influenza associated hospitalizations in the Southwest Ohio Region. He also noted that visitor guidelines are updated due to influenza-like illnesses in the region. These guidelines include if you have infection symptoms, visitors cannot come, and they should request a mask if they have a cough. Also, no visitors under the age of fourteen are allowed. These guidelines are given throughout different health systems.

Dr. Feagins explained the "Stomach Flu" Norovirus symptoms and how prevalent the outbreak is. He noted that there are several increasing numbers of outbreaks, and many are associated with schools. Symptoms are limited to 24-48 hours. One of the greatest risks of hospitalization from this virus is caused by dehydration. He provided data of the U.S. Norovirus outbreaks from August to December last year. Dr. Feagins answered a question from Mr. Miller regarding how long the norovirus stays on surfaces.

Dr. Feagins presented information on H5N1 influenza virus.

Dr. Feagins noted a recent rabies exposure incident in Northern Kentucky and provided details of the exposure. This individual who was exposed (likely outside of the United States) was hospitalized on November 21, 2024, and received medical treatment in Kentucky and Ohio before their death. He noted different statistics regarding rabies infections in the U.S. Dr. Feagins then presented healthcare worker exposure to Rabies information. He noted while extremely rare in the U.S., that there is still high-risk exposure theoretically including direct contact of broken skin or body fluids.

Dr. Feagins then updated the Board of Health on information regarding Tuberculosis Treatment.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Jackie Lindner highlighted the Drug Checking program with the SAFE Services in her report. Ms. Lindner noted that staff have developed training materials to support sample collection and processing to ensure samples are managed correctly and safety measures are in place.

Ms. Lindner thanked Mr. Meloy for his attendance at the WeTHRIVE! recognition event on December 5, 2024. She noted that the staff appreciated the Board of Health's involvement in this event that is cherished by many community members.

Ms. Lindner reported that 902 items were collected at the HCPH winter coat and food drive. A distribution event is planned for later in the month to share donated items with SAFE Services participants to help them stay safe, warm, and comfortable this winter.

Ms. Lindner and Dr. Feagins answered a question from Mr. Knapp regarding the possible need for a PSA related to Hepatitis since the case counts are high. They stated that no PSAs are needed at this time. Dr. Kelly asked a question regarding syphilis PSA and Dr. Feagins noted they will continue to monitor the data.

Mr. Knapp noted to Ms. Lindner that the Harm Reduction vending machine on Broadway Street is currently used extensively and thanked the staff for its utilization for the community.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Commissioner Kesterman presented for Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Davidson, who was absent. Details from the Waste Management 2025 Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill Licensing report were shared. The 2025 applications have been reviewed and licenses issued except for three facilities. Minor issues with H Hafner and Sons and Newtown Fill are expected to be resolved in the next 30 days. Commissioner Kesterman noted the Loveland landfill needs to have a higher financial assurance level met per the state to reopen and come back into compliance.

Commissioner Kesterman noted the Plumbing Division conducted an extensive review of the proposed plumbing fee adjustments. Sean Moore of the HCPH Plumbing Division presented information at the December 2024 Board of Health meeting regarding the need for these plumbing fee increases. The fee increases are for minimum/ base fee, additional per fixture fee, and backflow devices. New fees will be introduced for plan reviews. A public hearing for the proposed fee adjustments will be required.

Mr. Knapp asked a question regarding anticipating members of the community for the public hearing and Commissioner Kesterman stated they will be prepared.

Commissioner Kesterman answered a question from Mr. Miller regarding the potential revenue from these updated fees. Commissioner Kesterman noted that HCPH anticipates an additional \$400,000 from it that will go toward software upgrades that are required as CAGIS is switching to Accela for their permitting software.

Mr. Knapp asked a question regarding any other departments that need to increase their fees. Commissioner Kesterman stated that most programs require a cost methodology except for the Plumbing Division. He noted that they are looking at other fees.

Environmental Health enforcement updates are included in the Board packet.

8. Finances

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

Dr. Kelly moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Greg Varner, Finance Officer, presented the Fourth Quarter Financial Review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity. Mr. Varner noted that the fourth quarter ended strongly as the general fund nearly broke even thanks to a couple of unbudgeted receipts from the Harm Reduction Division, and a strong fourth quarter in Vitals and Plumbing.

9. New Business

Plumbing Fees Recommended Adjustment Public Hearing

Mr. Knapp moved to approve the public hearing request for Recommended Plumbing Fees Adjustment on February 10, 2025, at 3:45 p.m. at 250 William Howard Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Bryan Hoffman

The Board of Health signed the proclamation, thanking Mr. Hoffman, I.T. manager for 13 years at HCPH and 32 years as an employee of Hamilton County.


10. Adjournment

Mr. Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: February 10, at 4 p.m.



Dan Meloy, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner