

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
November 9, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Mark A. Rippe, President, called to order the regular session of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District, conducted by conference call, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call of Members

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

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Dr. Jennifer Mooney, Assistant Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Philip Graham, Senior Health Counselor
Chris Griffith, Director, Division of Water Quality
Kevin Hawkins, Water Quality Technician

Guests: Jim LaBarbara and Dan Unger

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of 10 Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

4. Resolution F - 2020

The Board thanked Mr. Hawkins for his 26 years of outstanding service with HCPH. Mr. Hawkins will be missed and the Board extends its best wishes for his retirement. Mr. Hawkins expressed appreciation for his opportunity to work at HCPH and thanked the Board.

Mr. Meloy moved to approve Resolution F - 2020 Expressing Appreciation for the Outstanding and Dedicated Service of Kevin Hawkins.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Kelly moved to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman reported that the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has new leadership: Stephanie McCloud is the new Director of Health, Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff is the new Chief Medical Officer, Kathleen Madden is the new Chief of Staff and Lance Himes, former Interim Director, is a new Senior Deputy with a responsibility for vaccine distribution and delivery.

Commissioner Kesterman reviewed COVID-19 statistics in Ohio and Hamilton County. The number of cases in Hamilton County is 21,944; hospitalizations are 1,389; deaths are 380; and presumed recoveries are 16,456. The reproductive value is 1.25 for Hamilton County and the region. Daily cases continue to rise so staff are working to refresh prevention messages and providing tips for celebrating the holidays safely. Test and Protect sites are up and running. Commissioner Kesterman explained Hamilton County's metrics that are driving the State's advisory system. After explaining the Level 4 criteria, Commissioner Kesterman reported that Hamilton County does not have the ability to create local, broad closures as the State did early in the pandemic. Rather, HCPH has the ability to work directly with a business when an outbreak is occurring. Should the business be a major source of spread, the Health District would have the ability to order that business to close. Commissioner Kesterman indicated that nearly all businesses are proactive in their response. Any action would be in consultation with Prosecuting Attorney, Ms. Chin. Overall, schools are doing a marvelous job with isolating/quarantining students if/when necessary.

Commissioner Kesterman shared new marketing efforts associated with COVID and the upcoming Holiday's. HCPH has partnered with Hamilton County CARES Act to create catchy messages encouraging safe behaviors. Ms. Puthoff asked for the full name of the organization -- AOHC. Commissioner Kesterman explained that is the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners.

Kurstin Jones, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator, began her tenure with HCPH. Ms. Jones has a packed schedule, but Commissioner Kesterman will bring her to a future Board meeting after she gets settled.

Mr. Brett joined the meeting.

At the last meeting, the Board asked staff to investigate waiving the three percent increase for 2021 local government assessments. Commissioner Kesterman reviewed and explained the Jurisdictional Fee Changes, the steps required to make changes, and the refund option. It was recommended that the Board allow for staff to provide a refund to jurisdictions during the first half of 2021. There was discussion that the refund and an announcement could occur at the District Advisory Council meeting. Further, it was decided that we would ask the Council to reduce rates by three percent in 2021 and not increase rates for 2022.

Ms. Puthoff moved to refund the 2021 three percent increase to jurisdictions and to recommend to the District Advisory Council a reduction in rates to 2020 levels for 2022.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

HCPH has our first known positive COVID-19 employee. Staff have isolated and quarantined as required. In addition, we have shifted staff to ensure that all essential duties are met.

At the last meeting, the Board asked about additional measures for HCPH staff safety and mental health. Commissioner Kesterman reported that new enhanced cameras are being installed at all points of entrance. The door entry system is being updated to a web-based system that also integrates with the new cameras. Hamilton County employees now have access to a mental health app that is very helpful. Commissioner Kesterman is very proud of HCPH staff and said they are all doing an amazing job.

Ms. Puthoff asked that appreciation be expressed to all staff from the Board. Ms. Puthoff inquired about the Community Health Improvement Plan cycle. Commissioner Kesterman explained that the Health Improvement Plan is in the first year of a multi-year plan. The HCPH Strategic Plan will be ready for renewal in late 2021 / early 2022.

Mr. Rippe asked for more information about the new camera functionality as some cameras have the technology to auto focus on license plates as they enter a parking lot. Commissioner Kesterman explained the new cameras' can read license plates.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director, reminded the Board that the Community Health Improvement Plan does not include dealing with a pandemic. Staff are going above and beyond this year for all of their accomplishments. Dr. Feagins is pleased with the ODH's new CMO hire, Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff, and believes he will be a strong addition. Local hospitals are approaching capacity, so smaller facilities are shifting patients to the larger facilities to balance the load. The next two weeks are important to keep the hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. Most staff are getting the influenza vaccine. Healthcare staff will be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available. Hospitals are surveying staff to find out how many staff intend to take the FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) vaccines. Dr. Feagins explained the Phase 1A vaccine and distribution process. Dr. Feagins reported that COVID-19 marks a setback for gains in mortality rate and reviewed the graph data from 1900 to present.

Mr. Rippe asked for more information about the Pfizer vaccine. Dr. Feagins stated the vaccine release was expected. Pfizer is waiting for the completion of Phase 3 of trials and FDA approval which is estimated in early December. A second booster dose was part of the initial plan and is already included in the distribution process.

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the desire for HCPH staff and their families getting the vaccine in Phase 1. Dr. Feagins explained the Phase 1 A and B classifications. Changes are expected from the State as the vaccines become available.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney highlighted from her report in the Board packet that the COVID RC21 grant has been a success in serving 300 families affected by COVID quarantine/isolation. Staff did a great job on implementation and execution.

Dr. Mooney presented on the Harm Reduction Division and the OD2A (Overdose Data to Action) Grant. Highlights of the presentation are as follows: COVID-19 triggered a reassessment and the need for innovation which has been helpful. HCPH partnered with Easter Seals of Greater Cincinnati on a workforce development program (job training and paid work internships). The peer-to-peer learning collaborative is a resource for recovery support discussion and other OD2A recipients. Pilot projects include fentanyl test strip distribution, HCPH Health App, and Colerain Township Health Counselor. The existing Narcan distribution system was expanded. HCPH provides trauma informed trainings; staff work to educate school staff on adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma informed care (TIC); and staff work to strengthen relationships with police and first responders to identify children who may have witnessed traumatic events. HCPH works to coordinate all systems with a collective impact model that will help prevent clients/patients from falling through the cracks when seeking services for substance use disorder. The syringe services were expanded to additional locations as well as additional services being provided. The surveillance platform is moving to Tableau, which will enable enhanced reporting and coordination of data.

Ms. Puthoff thanked Dr. Mooney for her great report. Dr. Kelly said this is a great service to the community. This presentation counts for 15 minutes of Board education and completes the educational requirements for 2020.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson followed up on the Board's question about the estimated number of properties that need lead and home health hazards reduction. The HUD grant covers up to 97 units compared to 7,400 overall units in HCPH's jurisdiction. This grant scratches the surface at one percent. Ms. Puthoff asked for Ms. Jones, the new Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator, to look into ways HCPH can help more.

Mr. Davidson highlighted from his report the COVID-19 complaints data. Two-thirds of the complaints are mask related and many complaints are received during weekends. Staff continue to consult with facilities to gain compliance.

Wastewater sampling continues to gain recognition as an epidemiological surveillance tool and is now being piloted in Ohio for use in COVID-19 surveillance. HCPH was participating in this work even prior to the CARES funding being made available to the state of Ohio to support this project. Staff from the Divisions of Epidemiology and Water Quality, working with the IT department, have been providing the USEPA with COVID-19 case data that is geo-coded according to the sewer-sheds within Hamilton County. At present, the ODH website is not correlating case data to the viral load seen in the wastewater samples, but this is a goal of the program. There was a recent alert triggered in the Little Miami sewer-shed.

Mr. Davidson is continuing field visits with staff. Pictures of a recent visit to Rumpke Sanitary Landfill observing preparations for the eastern expansion are in the Board packet.

7. Unfinished Business: None.

8. Finances

The October 2020 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

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

8. New Business:

Ms. Puthoff moved to hold the December 14 Board Meeting at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Rippe thanked Sycamore Township Trustee Jim LaBarbara and Colerain Township Trustee Dan Unger for joining us today. Both Trustees thanked HCPH for all the information.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: December 14, 2020 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.



Mark A. Rippe, President



Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

