

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
December 12, 2022 – 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.

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Mike Samet, Public Information Officer

Guests: Cassandra Brouse, Lockland Schools
Judith Durham

3. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of eight Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education. Cassandra Brouse accepted the award on behalf of Lockland Schools.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Brett moved to approve the minutes from the November 14, 2022, Board of Health meeting.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

5. Public Comment: Judith Durham shared a letter to the Board of Health written by herself, Amy Hammond and Anna Hayes addressing concerns with vaccination for COVID-19. Copies of the submission are included in the Board record.

Commissioner Kesterman responded that all vaccines are distributed voluntarily. Many visit vaccine clinics for information only. Vaccination for those under 18 years of age requires parental consent, including at clinics held within schools. There have been no vaccine mandates issued by the Hamilton County Board of Health.

6. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman reported rising COVID cases throughout southwest Ohio. Combined with influenza and RSV cases, hospitals are nearing capacity. HCPH currently has eight nurses dedicated to vaccinations, a number likely to reduce after January 1.

Monkeypox cases are declining across the U.S. This disease will likely no longer be considered a public health emergency after January 1. The agency is closely watching a measles outbreak in Columbus and is in touch with Columbus health officials weekly. HCPH is prepared to quickly ramp up in the event of cases in Hamilton County.

Overdoses continue to be an issue, however, harm reduction work has made a significant difference. Overdose calls to 911, emergency department visits and deaths have all declined through the first three-quarters of the year.

There had been a case of tuberculosis that had resisted treatment. The person has since become compliant, is staying in a hotel provided by HCPH and treatment should be completed within the next week.

Commissioner Kesterman reported that Jackie Lindner will begin as assistant health commissioner for Community Health Services after January 1. He thanked Mr. Brett for his participation on the selection committee. Senate Bill 338 is working through the legislature and will improve performance in food program audits. Cradle Cincinnati recognized HCPH colleagues Gayle Foster and Jamaica Gilliam as "Champions for Change" for their work in reducing infant and maternal mortality.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director reported that hospitals are returning to medical mask requirement in patient facing areas. H3N2 is currently responsible for 77 percent of influenza cases in the region. Influenza hospitalizations are spiking sharply and earlier than usual. COVID-19 hospitalizations are at highest levels in three months.

Wastewater analysis shows COVID circulating at higher levels than what is being seen with reported cases. This is likely because of vaccination, increased immunity and a shift to self-testing which is largely unreported. Monoclonal antibody treatment is not effective against currently circulating variants. Antivirals are the currently recommended treatment.

The Columbus measles outbreak is expected to last several months. Epidemiology has identified four imported cases with history of travel to Kenya. Of the 64 cases identified so far, all were either unvaccinated or partially vaccinated.

Monkeypox has been renamed Mpox. The Jynneos vaccine is highly effective and safe.

UC has a four-week infection prevention and control rotation for infectious disease fellows. HCPH leads a weekly infectious disease working group.

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

(b) Department of Community Health Services

The update is provided in Commissioner Kesterman's report in the Board packet.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson reported the Smoke Free Workplace, approved in 2006, has resulted in better compliance and reduced complaints. The last fine levied by HCPH was in 2018.

Norwood has hired a registered environmental health specialist and will no longer require HCPH's services. The current contract expires in April, 2023.

There were no environmental health enforcement actions for the month.

7. Finances

The November 2022 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet.

Ms. Puthoff moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Dr. Kelly seconded the motion.

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

Greg Varner, Finance Officer, reviewed the 2023 Revised and 2024 Estimated Budgets. General, Restricted and Consolidated funds are on track to achieve positive year-end results. Projected fund balances for December 31, 2022 and actual fund balances for 2021 and 2020 exceeded budget with favorable variances.

Budget objectives for 2023 include investment in staff salary structure; investment in training and equity; flexibility to address space needs; strengthening general and restricted fund balances; and maintaining strong technology assets. The approved expenditures for the revised 2023 budget is \$10.565 million dollars.

Space needs will continue to command attention. The agency is currently working with current clinic landlords to extend lease with little success. There are also options for space under consideration in Norwood and Walnut Hills. The Norwood location currently has an architectural design complete and will be sent to general contractors to seek price estimates for the work. Ms. Puthoff asked if there was a preference among these options, to which Commissioner Kesterman outlined several potential scenarios for future needs.

8. New Business:

Ms. Puthoff moved to close the office on December 14 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. for the End of Year Celebration.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Meloy moved to adopt Regulation 4-2022 Regulation Adopting Revised Local Fees for Plumbing and Medical Gas.

Ms. Puthoff seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Mr. Brett moved to adopt Resolution I-2022 Resolution to Approve 2023-Revised Budget and 2024-Estimated Budget for the Hamilton County General Health District.

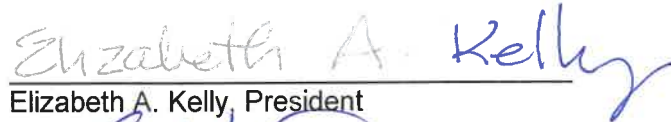
Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye


9. Adjournment

Ms. Puthoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m. p.m.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: January 9, 2023.


Elizabeth A. Kelly, President


Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner