

**Hamilton County General Health District**  
**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**April 13, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

At 4 p.m., Mark A. Rippe, President, called to order the regular session the Board of Health of the 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, Interim Health Commissioner  
Dr. Jennifer Mooney, Assistant Health Commissioner  
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director  
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
Greg Varner, Finance Officer

Guests: None.

**3. Clean Kitchen Awards**

Interim Commissioner Greg Kesterman read the list of four Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Brett** moved to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**Mr. Brett** moved to approve the minutes from the April 2, 2020 Board of Health special meeting.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

**5. Interim Health Commissioner's Report and Environmental Health Services Report**

Interim Commissioner Kesterman reported there are 6,800 COVID-19 cases in Ohio with 2,330 hospitalizations and 268 deaths to date. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) online dashboard is updated daily at 2 p.m. ODH shows Hamilton County third in the state which aligns with the state's population. In Hamilton County Public Health's jurisdiction, there are 319 positive residents, 84 hospitalizations, and 19 deaths. HCPH's website has been updated to include a ZIP Code map showing all of Hamilton County cases, including in the City of Cincinnati, Norwood and Springdale. The site also started to display demographic information

for the jurisdiction. Ohio's social distancing efforts are working. The Ohio peak is expected this weekend.

The 911 Communication Center has been a great asset to HCPH. Positive case location addresses are being updated for EMS safety precautions. Hamilton County is also partnering with HCPH to provide school nurses, 911 operators and HR staff to assist with contact tracing. HCPH is building capacity as the contact tracing work will continue for months to come. Nursing homes with one or more cases are now being listed on the Ohio Department of Health's website. HCPH received a public information request from the media. Ohio now has a Business Dispute Board that clarifies which services are essential and resolves rule interpretation differences between counties.

Program Implementation Plan results for First Quarter are good, with only six items postponed or road-blocked. COVID-19 and TB contact tracing has taxed HCPH's resources. House Bill 197 Coronavirus Relief Bill temporarily suspends sewage treatment late fees and backflow late notices. HCPH will not shut off services and expects an estimated loss of \$4,631 in revenue as a result of this change. We anticipate additional impacts in second quarter as a result of COVID-19.

An annual Rabies Program report is submitted to Ohio. In 2019, two bats tested positive and there have been no human cases in the last 15 years. Bite report statistics show that the majority are dog bites.

The Division of Waste Management's Lead Program audit is in the Board packets. The audit results had no findings. Waste Management performed well during the site visit and congratulations to the Division for its excellent work conducting investigations and educating families.

Details of three Whitewater Township condemnations are in the Board packets.

Dr. Kelly asked for the operational definition of "recovered." Technically it is two negative tests. However, there are not enough tests to perform post-tests. An acceptable alternative definition is at least seven days from onset or three days from conclusion of symptoms. HCPH staff make calls daily to get status updates.

Mr. Rippe expressed from the Board Members deep appreciation to all HCPH staff for all their outstanding efforts with COVID-19 and Performance Improvement Program initiatives.

## **Staff Reports**

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

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director reported that social distancing and closure of business have helped to flatten the curve. In Hamilton County, because of the contact tracing being done by HCPH for self-isolation and self-quarantining, we likely will not need to open the Level 3 Alternative Care Center at Duke Energy Convention Center.

Dr. Feagins explained statistics on the Regional Critical Care Preparation and Surge Estimates grid. The goal is to stay within the 409 standard vents on hand and we are close to being able to do that at Level 1. Hospitalization length of stay has been reduced which helps some. The Disaster Plan is the best that has ever been done and can be used in the future if needed. There is one transfer coordinator for Region 6. Children's Liberty Campus is an overflow facility

for ICU, but it is not expected to be needed. Providers are following Crisis Standards of Care/SOFA score. Battelle is cleaning N95 Masks for reuse up to 20 times. We are 16 days from the projected local surge.

Mr. Brett asked when services will return to normal. It depends on the amount of PPE and testing on hand. Post-pandemic, testing for coronavirus will become the new normal for certain procedures like pre-surgery. The local surge date is different than the state's surge date. Dr. Kelly explained the peak and surge dates are not the same thing. Peak is the number of cases testing positive and surge is the number of hospitalizations and patients on ventilators. Interim Commissioner Kesterman is working with county and state officials to get requests for PPE filled. Mr. Rippe asked about rapid testing. Dr. Feagins explained it is all about the reagents. Point of Care is not easy to use, and labs take a while to come back. Blood tests are still in the works and are for post-diagnosis. Mr. Rippe asked for a status on a vaccine. Vaccines can take 12-18 months to develop, test and manufacture.

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

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

Assistant Health Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Mooney echoes compliments to the Epidemiology staff for their response to this pandemic. The entire HCPH team has been amazing through these challenging times.

Harm reduction program delivery has changed due to social distancing rules. The "exchange by appointment" has worked surprisingly well. Staff expect and are planning for a spike once social distancing is over.

The Disease Prevention Division has also modified programming to appointment-only in the clinic with certain days prioritizing TB patients, and others offering immunizations or treatment for syphilis. Staff are being mindful of the number of people in the building at one time since due to the need to protect TB patients who are already immunocompromised.

Dr. Kelly asked about Communicable Disease Reporting Program Implementation Plan red light. It is attributed to Epidemiology staff being pulled to COVID-19 response efforts. To help with call tracing, HCPH is bringing on additional staff from the County whose positions were non-essential.

Ms. Puthoff asked about impact on the OD2A grant. The federal contacts have been very supportive through this pandemic. HCPH staff are documenting their work and the CDC is very excited for the results. One example is a special application (app) that was designed for COVID-19 and can be repurposed for other programs. Some grants will be extended due to the pandemic.

#### **6. Unfinished Business: None.**

#### **7. Finances**

Greg Varner, Financial Officer, presented the First Quarter Financial Review. Mr. Varner discussed details of revenue, expenditures, budget, fund balances, and grant activity.

Mr. Rippe asked if the COVID-19 Grant is restricted. Mr. Varner indicated that it was restricted to COVID-19 activities. Mr. Varner explained details while reviewing the risks and opportunities of COVID-19. We are waiting for a waiver authorizing staff working on other grants to be

working on COVID-19. Interim Commissioner Kesterman is not filling some open positions until we see the impact of COVID-19. Other positions will be filled to ensure that we can meet grant deliverables and expenditures. Leadership is watching closely and hoping that the COVID-19 grant will end up offsetting the decrease in revenue. Second Quarter will be a better indicator of the total impact.

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

**Dr. Kelly** moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

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

## **8. New Business:**

- a) Purchase 2008 Ford F550 Farber for the Harm Reduction Program. Dr. Mooney explained the van is easy to drive and park, and it has handicap access. Mr. Varner is seeking clarity if a grant will pay for this. Interim Commissioner Kesterman explained that this purchase is in the budget, but that the size of the purchase requires Board approval. Interim Commissioner Kesterman requests approval for up to \$90K in case this specific purchase does not go through. Mr. Rippe asked about cost to retrofit. Dr. Mooney explained minimal work will be needed, which makes this van ideal.

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to approve the purchase of a new Harm Reduction Program van not to exceed \$90,000.

**Mr. Brett** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

## **9. Executive Session**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to go to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 5:27 p.m.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

The Board of Health came out of Executive Session at 5:34 p.m. where no decisions were made.

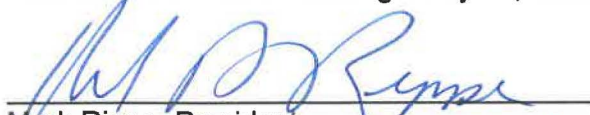
## **10. Adjournment**

**Ms. Puthoff** moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

**Mr. Meloy** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote – All Aye**

Next Board of Health meeting: May 11, 2020.

  
Mark Rippe, President

  
Greg Kesterman, Secretary  
Interim Health Commissioner