

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
540 Depot Street Hancock, MI 49930
Monday, January 29, 2024**

Minutes

Opening

Health Officer Kate Beer opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. (EST). Present were G. Anderson, J. Byrns, B. Dakota, G. Eilola, J. Keranen, R. Nousiainen, and D. Rajala. Absent was R. Britz, J. Cane, R. DeMarois, and D. Siirila. Also, in attendance were Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director; Pete Baril, Deputy Health Officer & Director of Community Planning; Sara Heathman, Interim Environmental Health Director; and Julie Heikkinen, Administrative/HR Assistant. There was 1 person present and 2 people virtually in attendance as audience.

Beer began the board reorganization process with a call for nominations for Chair.

Nomination: Nousiainen/second Anderson nominating J. Byrns to the position of board chair. Beer called for other nominations, three times, with no response.

Motion: Rajala/second Eilola to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for J. Byrns as Chair. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Beer then sought nominations for the position of board Vice Chair.

Nomination: Nousiainen/second Eilola nominating D. Rajala as Vice Chair. Beer called for other nominations, three times, with no response.

Motion: Eilola/second Rajala to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for D. Rajala as Vice Chair. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Secretary nominations took place next.

Nomination: Dakota/second Anderson nominating B. Dakota as Secretary to the board. Beer called for other nominations, three times, with no response.

Motion: Nousiainen/second Byrns to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for B. Dakota as Secretary. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Next in the reorganization process, Beer asked board Chair Byrns to establish its Executive Committee for the 2024 year. One member from each county, including the board chair, make up the Executive Committee. Following a brief discussion, Byrns appointed these members to the Executive Committee: Nousiainen, Rajala, Keranen, Eilola and Byrns as Chair.

At this point, Chair Byrns assumed conduct of the meeting.

With reorganization complete, Chair Byrns requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

Motion: Dakota/second Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Chair Byrns asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Minutes of the October 23, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Keranen requested to amend the minutes to reflect his absence from the October 23, 2023 meeting. This action followed:

Motion: Rajala/second Eilola to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2023 Board of Health meeting with a correction to the attendance. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 10/14/2023 to 01/18/2024, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Eilola to approve the general expenditures for the period 10/14/2023 to 01/18/2024, voucher # 04, voucher # 05, voucher # 06, voucher # 07 and voucher # 08 in the amount of \$443,515.82. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports

Kate Beer, Health Officer:

The L'Anse Program Clerk opening has been filled. This is now a full-time position and we expect some accounting and EH clerical work to transition to L'Anse.

We are currently recruiting to fill the EH Director position. Several resumes have been received and we will schedule interviews soon.

Health Departments across the state are being asked to partner with MDHHS to provide Kindergarten Oral Health Assessments. Due to difficulty in hiring staff, WUP is teaming up with Public Health Delta Menominee and Dickinson Iron Health Department to contract with Smiles on Wheels to provide the program within our covered counties.

2023 Service awards:

There were 5 staff members who received service awards. 5 years of service to: Pete Baril, Scott Barr, and Pam Taavola; 15 years of service to: Bonnie Morley; 30 years of service to: Carol Waisanen

HVAC bids:

urnaces in the basement need to be replaced. We have received three bids and the job has been awarded to the lowest bidder, Ronald Hyrkas Contracting, Inc.

Financials:

Internal work to prepare for the FY2023 financial audit has started. The actual audit work will be performed during the first week of March.

Preliminary financials through December show a normal seasonal loss. They are currently being reviewed for changes carrying forward from the previous year and accounting for income under new programs.

Several new grants have been received since the original budget. We hope to have a revised budget by the end of February.

Other:

The management team is meeting on February 19th in L'Anse to work on strategic planning.

The postal service has notified us of reduced pick-up schedules across the region. Staff are looking at how this impacts timely delivery of water samples and possible solutions to the issue.

Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

Houghton County has the highest rate in Michigan of families seeking health department waivers to allow their sons and daughters to attend school without receiving the legally required vaccinations. This high rate of those pursuing vaccination waivers has been ongoing for quite some time. As a consequence, Houghton County has a low vaccination rate for a number of vaccine-preventable diseases with several now below the rate that would provide protection to the community through herd immunity. Herd immunity occurs when enough people in a community are unable to contract or spread an infection, so that when an infection is introduced to the community it is unable to spread significantly throughout the community.

Measles, for example, is extremely contagious. On average a person with measles will spread measles to between 12 and 18 other people in a completely susceptible population. Of those susceptible to measles, 9 out of 10 will develop measles if exposed to someone who is contagious. Because measles is so contagious, for herd immunity to be possible 95% of the population would need to be immune to infection either through previous infection or vaccination. In kids under 5 years of age, only 66% in Houghton County and 49% in Keweenaw County have been vaccinated. For those 5 years to 18 years 77% of those in Houghton County are vaccinated for measles. By contrast, for mumps, which is not as contagious as the measles, the threshold for herd immunity is believed to be between 75% to 86%. Initially, for COVID-19 the threshold for herd immunity was believed to be around 70%.

We estimate that if our population was exposed to someone contagious with measles we would likely see between 200 and 300 cases of measles within a couple of weeks. With a 20% hospitalization rate, this would

be 40 and 60 hospitalizations within that period of time, which is far beyond the capacity of our local hospitals and our ability to transport patients to surrounding facilities.

With the help of our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Annette Sawadogo, we are planning our response for when we have a local outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness. This includes securing access to medications and vaccines, educational materials, agreements with regional health care systems, public service announcements, and local service organizations. Many of these illnesses can strike with little warning and spread quickly, so we need to be prepared.

The only way to prevent these outbreaks to bring the local vaccination rate up to the point that the community is protected through herd immunity.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

The board reviewed the Mobile Unit Garage Lease, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Nousiainen to approve the Mobile Unit Garage Lease. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Proposed Environmental Health Fee Schedule, leading to this action:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Dakota to approve the Environmental Health Fee Schedule as presented, effective 01/01/2024. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the Accident/Incident Summary Report for the 4th Quarter 2023 & the Annual Report 2023, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Dakota to approve the Accident/Incident Reports as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the MNA Contract, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Rajala to approve the MNA Contract as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the Non-Union Wage Scale Increase, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Nousiainen to approve the Non-Union Wage Scale Increase, effective 01/08/2024. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the Vehicle Use for Business Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Eilola to approve the Vehicle Use for Business Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the revised Earned Time Off Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Byrns to approve the revised Earned Time Off Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Other

The board discussed increasing the rate of pay for Board of Health Members, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Nousiainen to approve increasing the rate of pay for Board of Health members from \$30.00 to \$50.00, effective February 1, 2024. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the 2024 Board of Health meeting schedule, leading to this action:

Motion: Dakota/second Eilola to approve the Board of Health meeting schedule, with the exception of one minor change; change the November 25, 2024 meeting date to December 9, 2024. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

With no other business, Chair Byrns set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), February 26, 2023, in person at the health department office in Hancock and also available via Google Meet.

Chair Byrns then asked for public comment and heard from one person.

Karen Timonen, Chassell, asked the Board multiple questions regarding the Covid injection.

Chair Byrns called for additional comments and heard none.

Adjourn

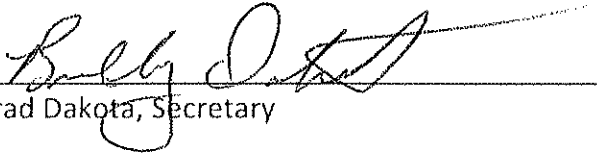
The final motion occurred at 7:17 p.m.

Motion: Rajala/second Keranen to adjourn at 7:17 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,



James Byrns, Chair



Brad Dakota, Secretary

Prepared by Kate Beer
KB/jh