

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
210 N. Moore Street Bessemer, MI 49911
Monday, July 22, 2024**

Minutes

Opening

Chair Byrns opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. (EST). Present were G. Anderson, R. Britz, J. Byrns, J. Cane, B. Dakota, G. Eilola, R. Nousiainen, and D. Siirila. Absent was R. DeMarois, J. Keranen, and D. Rajala. Also, in attendance were Kate Beer, Health Officer/Administrator; Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director; Gail Ploe, Healthy Connections Program Director; and Julie Heikkinen, Administrative/HR Assistant. There were no people in person or virtually in attendance as audience.

Chair Byrns requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

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

Chair Byrns asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Revised Minutes of the May 20, 2024 meeting were discussed. This action followed:

Motion: Eilola/second Anderson to approve the revision of the minutes for the May 20, 2024 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Minutes of the June 24, 2024 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Anderson/second Eilola to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board discussed the dates of general expenditures for the period: 06/07/2024 to 07/03/2024, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Siirila to correct the ending date from 07/03/2024 to 07/18/2024 on both the agenda & the voucher sheet. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 06/07/2024 to 07/18/2024, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Siirila to approve the general expenditures for the period 06/07/2024 to 07/18/2024, voucher #19, voucher #20, and voucher #21 in the amount of \$184,050.36. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports

Kate Beer, Health Officer:

Personnel

Applications for open positions have are to come in. We have two Sanitarian applications that would work toward becoming registered through our department. One additional application was submitted for the Health Officer position, the person may not have the correct degree, but we will confer with the State. There have yet to be applications for the Director of Finance.

There is now a contract with Marquette Health Department for the Maternal and Infant Health Social Worker position.

The past week was spent on our state accreditation. State personnel were in-house to assess administration, environmental, and public health programs. I am pleased to report that all of our programs did extremely well. Many compliments were given regarding staff performance and the quality of our programming.

Financials:

June financials are in process due to accreditation and a later payroll accrual. As of May, there is a small loss of \$32,000 which will be recouped as the EH year moves forward and we fully bill some pending grant items. This loss includes leave payouts for employees who have resigned. The HIV program is running low on funds this year and is scheduled for a reduction next year. According to state program officials, at least 29 people are living with HIV in the Western U. P.

Other:

The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment program has started, with three sites in Calumet and one in Houghton, being served so far, providing services to 30 children. There will be additional sites as the new year rolls out.

Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

The first confirmed case of Powassan virus infection in the State of Michigan was recently diagnosed in a patient living in the region served by the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department. The patient had not travelled outside the region.

Patients with Powassan fever will present with fever, headache, vomiting, and weakness. The virus can infect the brain (encephalitis) and the membrane surrounding it (meningitis), leading to brain swelling, seizures, and, in some patients, death.

Powassan virus is spread to humans by the same black-footed tick that can carry Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis. This additional risk amplifies the need to perform thorough personal tick checks following being in the woods or wilderness.

Powassan fever is a reportable infection in the State of Michigan. Cases have been reported primarily in the northeastern United States and the Great Lakes Region, making it surprising that this is the first case reported in Michigan.

Powassan was identified in this patient using a test panel looking for a variety of viruses, including Powassan. Many panels do not include testing for the Powassan virus, so this finding is somewhat serendipitous. When clinicians in our region began testing for anaplasmosis, we had an increase in the incidence of anaplasmosis. When a test panel looking for tick-associated infections including babesiosis was rolled out and used, suddenly cases of babesiosis were identified in counties where it had not been seen before. Powassan fever may have been here for a while, but, because we have not made an effort to identify it, we have not identified any cases until now.

With the Powassan virus now on our radar, it will be interesting to see how many new cases are identified.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Beer presented the FY2025 CPBC Annual Budget to the board. The General ELPHS, EH, and MDHHS grant-funded programs are \$2,073,874 and Emerging Threats are \$790,989, on par with last year totaling \$2,864,863. Additional grants may be added during the year, leading to this action:

Motion: Eilola/second Cane to approve the FY2025 CPBC Annual Budget as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board discussed the Accident/Incident Report – 2nd Quarter 2024, leading to this action:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Dakota to approve the Accident/Incident Report – 2nd Quarter 2024 discussed. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board discussed the Authorized signatures for Hancock office accounts, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Siirila to approve updating the Authorized signatures of the Hancock office accounts as discussed. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

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Other

Beer provided the board with an update on the septic loan program in Michigan.

With no other business, Chair Byrns set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), August 26, 2024, in person at the health department office in L'Anse and also available via Google Meet.

Chair Byrns then asked for public comment and heard none.

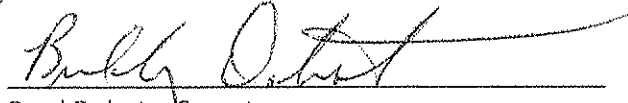
Adjourn

The final motion occurred at 6:48 p.m.

Motion: Dakota/second Anderson to adjourn at 6:49 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,


James Byrns, Chair


Brad Dakota, Secretary

Prepared by Kate Beer
KB/jh