

**July 28, 2021, Board of Health Meeting
Remote Meeting**

The Board of Health convened in open session at 5:15 pm
The meeting was called to order by Mery Price

**Board Members Present
Quorum is reached**

Mark Kaeding
Mery Price
True Vue
Don Bodeau
Emily Berge
Martha Nieman
Jennifer Eddy

Board Members Absent:
Terry Miskulin

Staff Members Present:

Lieske Giese
Matt Steinbach
Jeff Rob
Janice Vinopal
Hannah Artz
Gina Holt (recorder)

Introduction of Hannah Artz, Health Department Budget Specialist.

Order of Agenda Request to pull items from Consent Agenda

- None made

Public Comment:

- Public comment was received via email and shared with board members prior to the meeting.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes from June 23, 2021 meeting
- Approval of Child Passenger Safety Seat Grant
- Approve Americorp/Healthcorp member fee for one-year position
- Approve UW Population Health Fellowship stipend

Motion to approve Consent Agenda: Martha Nieman

2nd Motion: Don Bodeau

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

Business Item

- Receive Quarterly Financial Update
 - No specific issues or concerns.
 - At this point in the year, it may be possible to avoid fund balance use for planned expenses, but it is too early to estimate that.

Motion to receive quarterly financial update as presented by Health Department staff: Mark Kaeding

2nd Motion: True Vue

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

- Approval of 2021 Fund Balance Account allocations
 - Annually we bring to the Board the previous year's fund balance amounts and recommended allocations.

- The allocation recommendations include Working Capital, Special Projects, and COVID-19.

Motion to approve 2021 Fund Balance allocations as presented by Health Department

Staff: Don Bodeau

2nd Motion: Emily Berge

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

- c. Review and approve draft 2022 Health Department Budget
- It is early in the budget planning process and there will be several meetings over the next few weeks with the City and County to discuss the 2022 budget related to levy.
 - We anticipate significant COVID-19 related funds that will likely arrive this year but will be carried forward in 2022.
 - Fees will be brought to the board for approval at the August board of health meeting.
 - This is the largest deficit budget for operations brought forward in a number of years. The team feels confident that by the time December comes, we will have more finalized numbers and that this deficit will improve.
 - Tax levy does not keep up with what inflation costs are for levy funded staff.

Board of Health Questions and answer:

- Q: The estimate for the health insurance for the County is significantly higher of an increase than that is in the Health Department, is that correct? A: The Health Department utilizes the City health insurance, and the estimate is 2% for the increase.
- Q: Is the concern for the deficit due to possible fund balance use? A: It is part of the concern, but historically we have utilized less in fund balance than budgeted.
- Q: When COVID first started and the Health Department was keeping track of all the hours spent working on COVID 19, is that something that the department will be using for grant funding? And will tracking time be beneficial for ARPA funds? A: We have stopped the complex time tracking beyond the timesheet, but we are continuing to track for exempt and nonexempt staff to pay for time spent on COVID-19 related work. At this point the intent for the ARPA funds is not likely to do an ask for Health Department funding at this point unless things really explode and we do not receive any state allocations directly.

Motion to review and approve 2022 draft Health Department budget as presented by

Health Department Staff: Mark Kaeding

2nd Motion: Martha Nieman

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

- d. Approval Approve 2022 portion of 2020 – 2024 Health Department Capital Improvement Plan
- This is the typical annual Capital Improvement Plan check in. The department continues to focus on planning ahead.

Board of Health Discussion, Questions and Answer:

- Q: Is \$12,000 enough to update desktop and laptops? A: Yes, there is a replacement plan set up replacing devices over time.

Motion to approve 2022 portion of 2020 – 2024 Health Department Capital Improvement Plan as presented by Health Department Staff: Don Bodeau

2nd Motion: Mark Kaeding

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

e. Approval of 2022 Pay Plan

- In the draft budget a 2% cost of living was built into the draft budget that was approved.

Motion to approve 2022 Pay Plan as presented by Health Department Staff: Martha Nieman

2nd Motion: Emily Berge

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

f. Recommend support of Eau Claire County proposed ordinance change for possession of Marijuana

- The health department and Board of Health was not asked to engage proactively by the County in this topic, but it is an important public health conversation to have.
- This is not recommending the legalization of Marijuana, but it is in support of the decriminalization of marijuana.

Board of Health Discussion, Question and Answer:

- The difference between decriminalization and legalization is a good discussion to have. Criminalization affects families and can greatly affect children's well-being.
- We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge that the conversation includes the aspect of the criminal justice part of this. Some legalization conversations really don't get to the health issues which are still in research, review, and discussion. It is the right thing to do now.
- Marijuana addiction creates both physical and mental health concerns.
- Q: Will our decision be passed onto the County Board A: Yes, it will be forwarded.

Motion to approve recommend support of Eau Claire County proposed ordinance change for possession of Marijuana as presented by Health Department Staff: Don Bodeau

2nd Motion: Martha Nieman

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

g. Recommend Board of Health Representative to ARPA Committee

- The function of this special committee is to develop criteria for an objective regranting process to respond to the requests for ARPA funds, and to hire a third-party administrator to distribute the funds identified for the small businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- Once the board makes a recommendation for either a board of health member or a designated health department employee a letter will be drafted by Merey Price and Lieske addressed to Nick Smiar, County Board Chair, recommending the designated person. An online application will also be required to be filled out prior to August 9th.
- We will continue as a department to see this as a critically important priority.
- The County dollar amount is a little over \$20 million dollars being received.

Board of Health Discussion, Question and Answer:

- Q: Is this process for the committee for the use of all of the funds? A: 2.8 million out of the original amount has been committed to broadband expansion so it will be the remaining amount it is assumed.
- Q: Is there is advantage to having someone who is familiar with grant process be on the committee? A: It is hard to know at this time how the committee will function, but grant experience will help frame what is seen as an acceptable funded entity.
- It has been very clear that the people most impacted by this be at the table, and it seems that health department staff may be closer to those that have been more impacted.

- The person that should be doing this has a voice for all and is fighting for those that are marginalized and vulnerable. We want to make sure the money is allocated where it is needed.
- There could appear to be a conflict of interest if a board member is representing the health department, but also is involved in other organizations that may be on the committee.

Motion to recommend Board of Health Representative to ARPA Committee as presented by Health Department Staff: Emily Berge
2nd Motion: True Vue

Martha Nieman makes motion to have the Health Office, Lieske Giese, designate a health department staff member to the Counties newly formed ARPA Committee as presented by Health Department Staff: Martha Nieman
2nd Motion: Emily Berge
Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

Other policy and informational items from staff for the Board

- a. COVID-19 Update
 - Things are changing quickly. The CDC recently came out with updated guidance related to mask use.
 - We have had a significant increase in case numbers. We are now moving at a state level to being at moderately high. We haven't been in those categories for a while. Right now, we are at the moderate level on the CDC tracker, and we believe that tomorrow may be moved to substantial which marks a trigger for CDC guidelines that recommends mask wearing indoors.
 - Focus continues to be working with schools as they are restarting shortly.-K12 and higher education
 - We have challenges with any health order or ordinance at this point and the public needs to hear that we are concerned, and we are naming that no one can afford to have rapid disease spread. There will be a shared announcement coming out tomorrow regarding the importance of vaccinations.
 - Vaccine is widely available throughout the community if there would be an increase demand.
 - Much of our J&J vaccine expires in early August and some manufacturing challenges could make that brand difficult to receive.
 - Outreach with schools for vaccination continues to be a priority.
 - Is it possible when messaging to go out regarding hospitalizations to have the numbers include vaccination and unvaccinated percentages included? The state messaging has included that data point. The vast majority of those hospitalized have been unvaccinated. Hospitalization and death are rare with vaccinated individuals.
 - The importance of having clear and concise local data is impactful. If it can't be County wide at least Western Region.

- b. Local PFAS (PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES) Situational Updates
 - We will continue to track what is happening with PFAS throughout the community.
 - PFAS are a public health issue, and we are fortunate to have experts like Matt Steinbach and Audrey Boerner working at the Health Department.
 - The health department has a dedicated web page regarding PFAS. [PFAS Health Effects | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](https://eauclairewi.gov/PFAS-Health-Effects)
 - The proposed State level DNR groundwater and drinking water standards are in the beginning stages and the process can take two years before it is finalized.
 - This topic will be brought back to the Board as there are new developments. The

- c. Board of Health Meeting format update
 - No discussion
- d. Health department Report-no discussion due to time moved to August 25, 2021, Board of Health agenda.
 - Updates
 - Correspondence/Media
 - Service Recognition-Tammy Raeder, PHN 30 years and Jennifer Hanson, EH Specialist 5 years
- e. Eau Claire Healthy Communities Quarterly Update-
 - No discussion due to time moved to August 25, 2021, Board of Health agenda.
- f. Strategic Plan update
 - No discussion due to time moved to August 25, 2021, Board of Health agenda.

Board member informational items

- a. Board of Health Advocacy/Policy –
 - WPHA/WALHDAB Legislative Priorities shared with the Board.
 - Board Self-evaluation Discussion, Question and Answer
 - There were a few things that stood out, there are a lot of requests for advocacy training for the board. Merrey' Price states that it is her goal to have a person or persons identified to provide training at the November Board of Health meeting. Q: what would be helpful to know or learn regarding advocacy? A: Training to feel more confident in knowing how to create a concise and effective message. It seems like you need short bites to get through to a legislator that is busy. Anything to increase confidence when talking to legislators. Knowing what to say and how to say it.
 - Maybe having training and time and space to brainstorm with board members on how to build relationships as a Board of Health. Q: Is there a role in media in this as well for the use of advocacy?
 - A: How do we better prioritize what is what when it comes to public health priorities?
 - It would be helpful to have a quick and easy reference to know when bills are coming to a vote.
 - The national messaging is not always clear and concise. Q: Is there State or National public health advocacy that the board could be doing?
 - As a board member I am concerned about speaking to media because I believe that I am supposed to defer the media to the health officer. Maybe we can reestablish any boundaries regarding the media.
 - We want to make sure that we find a good match with a trainer, if board members have any thoughts or suggestions, please let Merrey Price know.
 - Discussion regarding the comment regarding lessons learned during the pandemic. Pre-meeting communications can be tricky due to concerns like walking quorums, so it is important to continue to receive items from Health Department staff. What is the expectation or recommendation is it possible

to note if the ultimate goal would be to not recommend?

- We as a Board were somewhat challenged when addressing a few topics throughout the past year. The emergency meeting mid-September is an example. Q: Is there anyway to be more open in cases like that? County Board and City Council often have first readings where there is time to gather more information on agenda items and ask questions before a vote.

Requests from Board members for future agenda items to be given consideration

- a. None requested

Next scheduled BOH meeting is August 25, 2021, at 5:15 p.m.

Merey Price adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.