



March 30, 2022, Board of Health Meeting

County Courthouse, Room G-302

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**

Mery Price
Terry Miskulin
Jennifer Eddy

**Board Members
Absent:**

Don Bodeau
True Vue
Martha Nieman

Staff Members Present:

Lieske Giese
Tegan Ruland
Marisa Stanley
Gina Holt (recorder)

Additional Staff Members:

Nicole Kragesness
Audrey Boerner
Kaitlin Suginaki

Order of Agenda Request to pull items from Consent Agenda

- None made

Public Comment:

- None made

Covid-19 After Action and Response Evaluation-Board of Health Feedback:

- This is an opportunity to discuss what worked and what didn't work during the pandemic.
- Discussion Question 1: Thinking about the communication about COVID between the Health Dept and BOH, what went well? What didn't go well?
 - Giving clearly defined direction; the more that changed the more the information was doubted.
 - Health Department gave clear and concise updates to the board throughout the pandemic.
 - At each board meeting a COVID update, and discussion took place.
 - Finding a way to emphasize whatever is at the top of the concern list. If something bubbles to the surface sharing it. Bringing forward bulleted messaging points.
 - Different entities saying different things at different times.
 - How are you going to keep mental health for those working in Public Health? How can you still be empathetic when others were doubting?
 - Staff updates each month during the pandemic were helpful. Trying to help with the feeling of burnout.
 - The situation report was a great tool.
 - At the State level decisions weren't being made to give local and regional people time to plan and be ready to respond. They were receiving information at the same time as the media.
 - There seemed to be some lag time with decisions.
- Discussion Question 2 and 3: Did you feel that feedback or questions by the BOH regarding Health Dept COVID response were considered or addressed? What recommendations related to communication do you have for future public health emergencies (not necessarily communicable disease emergencies)
 - Questions and feedback were great between Health departments and Board members.
 - A lot of times there were no answers, and that was understandable. It didn't feel like information was being withheld.

- For the first six weeks of COVID everyone was on the same page. Then there was a shift from the public. There was active dissemination of incorrect information.
- It was difficult mentally to deal with all the negativity from the Public.
- Being properly armed against incorrect information was important.
- When times are calm continuing to build on partnerships is critical. Trust and relationships are important.
- We need to focus on how we increase our ability how we clarify what the public health roll is in the community.
- The health department has made great strides with underserved partners.
- The ability to say I don't know when asked questions and the answers were unclear was positive.
- A team approach showed that the foundation was laid. It was great to see the mechanisms work and get through it.
- Discussion Question 4: Any specific feedback you would like to share with the Health Department COVID response team about how response went over last two years?
 - When you align with partners and aren't isolated. Other people lend credibility to the department. Brining experts in on the briefings was a good approach.
 - The incident command center and partners that came together did an amazing job.
 - Working through ebbs and flows of case numbers and contact tracing was proactive.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of minutes from February 23,2022, meeting

Motion to approve Consent Agenda: Jennifer Eddy

2nd Motion: Terry Miskulin

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

Business Item

- a. Sign Public Health Week Proclamation
 - This is modeled after the national template which was developed by the American Public Health Association.

Motion to Sign Public Health Week Proclamation as presented by Health Department staff:

Mark Kaeding

2nd Motion: Terry Miskulin

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

Other policy and informational items from staff for the Board

- a. COVID-19 update
 - There are recent changes and updates with vaccination and booster from the CDC.
 - About 20,000 county members are eligible for the second booster in the 50 age group for new booster.
 - We continue to make sure the community is aware of recommendation updates.
 - We are working on vaccination recall reminders for those who have not completed the vaccination series. We are trying different strategies such as letters, phone calls, and text reminders.

- One of our biggest concerns as a state is federal funding for Covid 19 and the public health emergency declaration related to Covid 19. Lack of funding will affect test availability, vaccination availability, and continuing with some of the plans that we have moving forward.
 - HRSA is a payor source for those who either don't have a pay source or don't disclose a pay source. The funding from HRSA will end next week. This can affect the resources available locally and statewide.
 - Our disease investigation team process has changed significantly based on CDC/State guidance. The size of the response team is much smaller than January and February.
 - We are continuing to focus on saving ARPA funding for the start of this summer to focus on recovery.
 - We will bring an update on COVID funding to the Board at the April meeting.
 - The HD website continues to be a source for the locations throughout the community that are giving vaccination and offering testing.
 - The ongoing Tuesday vaccination clinic at the Health Department will continue.
 - An overview on where our neighboring communities stand with vaccinations, etc. We do continue to provide vaccination and testing services for any individual even if they do not reside in Eau Claire County.
- b. Director/Health Officer Report
- Sarah Seifert, Communication Specialist was hired. She was a Leader Telegram reporter that did a lot of work on COVID 19.
 - New babies at the department
 - Public Health Foundational Service model will be brought back for discussion at a future meeting.
 - Correspondence/Media
 - Service Recognition -Gina Schemenauer, Public Health Specialist, 10 years
- c. Health Department review of BOH action from 2021
- The annual review of the BOH activities, opinions, and positions that is done by the Management Team provides an opportunity to do a check in that highlight's areas and issues where communication and connections can be strengthened between Board of Health and Health Department staff.
 - Of note there was great attendance and participation at Board of Health meetings in the past year.
 - BOH orientation continues to be a priority.
- d. Wisconsin Public Health Forward Initiative
- The primary focus of the initiative is to address three system-wide infrastructure issues facing local and tribal health departments: funding, workforce, and legal authority. Stateside workgroups were launched by WALHDAB. This includes Health Officers, funding partners (DPH, WALHDAB), consultants with expertise in funding, workforce, and legal authority.

Board member informational items

- a. Board of Health Meeting location, date, and time discussion
- Under the current interpretation of open meetings laws, all board meetings will need to be held in-person.
 - It is nice to connect in real time and be part of it.
 - High quality technology is also important.

- b. Advocacy Training Update
 - There is progress being made. We have identified a person who may be a good fit to provide training.
 - We are looking at logistically what would make sense.
 - It is anticipated that the training would be around 2-3 hours in length. Board members expressed that a stand-alone session not connected to a meeting night would be preferable.

- c. Public Health Policy/Advocacy update-
 - WI Legislative update -the legislative session has ended. There are a lot of things for potential action next year. A lot of conversations at the state level continue in legislature.
 - Federal update-the current budget as well as the recently proposed Presidential budget has some positives as well as some concerns.

- d. Standing Committee Updates:
 - City Council: [City Council Agendas | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](https://eauclairewi.gov)
 - Stephanie Hirsch new City Manager starts next week.
 - Election day is next week
 - County Board: [2022 Meeting Agendas & Minutes | Eau Claire County \(eau-claire.wi.us\)](https://eau-claire.wi.us)
 - There will be many new board members post election.
 - Ground Water Advisory Committee: [Groundwater Advisory | Eau Claire County \(eau-claire.wi.us\)](https://eau-claire.wi.us)
 - Met three weeks ago and discussed ground water, PFAS, and staffing and upcoming retirements.
 - ARPA County Funding: [ARPA Committee | Eau Claire County \(eau-claire.wi.us\)](https://eau-claire.wi.us)
 - County ARPA committee community application process. Documents that were provided were discussed.
 - Other

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

- a. None

Next scheduled BOH meeting is April 27, 2022, at 5:15 p.m.

Merrey Price adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.