

***Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting
Minutes of January 19, 2022***

Mr. Bechen called the January 19, 2022, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 6:00p.m. via ZOOM.

Roll Call:

Members Present:	Tom Bechen, Sandra Larson, Hendrik Schultz, Amy Crow Sunleaf, Jessica Smith, Marsha Horwitz
Members Absent:	Adam Hoffman
Others Present:	Samantha Kloft, Dubuque County Health Department; Benjamin Fischer; TH; Ann McDonough, Dubuque County Supervisors; Harley Pothoff, Dubuque County Supervisors; Jay Wickam, Dubuque County Supervisors; Megan Bonert, Kevin Dragotto, Dubuque County Auditor; Stacey Killian, VNA; Justin Andrews; Dave Schnider; Diane Pape-Freiburger, Marc Zugenbiller

Additional Notes:

1. Roll Call

2. Public Comments

Diane Pape-Freiburger – Thanks the new BOH members as well as the whole BOH. She also congratulates Samantha Kloft on her new role as Interim Director.

Supervisor Ann McDonough – Shares that last week she dropped off the last allotment of masks that the BOH/BOS purchased. She urges the BOH to consider purchasing more as the community continues to need them.

Marc Zugenbiller – Thanks Supervisor McDonough for her comments. he adds that he is a nurse at Marshal School and the mask conversation is important to him.

3. Introduction of New Members

Both Marsha Horwitz and Jessica Smith have been newly appointed to the BOH. This being their first meeting, they share brief introductions with all BOH members.

4. Approval of Agenda

Tom Bechen suggests switching agenda item #8 and #6 as Hendrik Schultz will only be able to attend the first hour of the meeting tonight.

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to approve the Agenda for January 19, 2022, with the proposed changes. Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

5. Approval of Minutes

Sandra Larson made the motion to approve the Minutes for December 20, 2021. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 4 Aye, 2 Abstain, motion carried.

6. Election of Officers

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display the BOH Bylaws related to election of officers.

a. Chairperson

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to elect Sandra Larson as BOH Chairperson. Amy Crow Sunleaf seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

b. Vice Chair

Sandra Larson made the motion to elect Adam Hoffman as BOH Vice Chair. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

Though Adam is not at the meeting, Sandra did have conversation with him prior, and he said if elected, he would accept.

7. COVID-19 Update

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display and led a COVID-19 a presentation. Samantha gives the BOH a brief update on COVID-19 vaccinations in Dubuque County. She shares that Dubuque County remains at a community transmission level of high. Samantha also shares the following updates:

- Active COVID-19 cases continue to increase in Dubuque County as we reach one of our highest peaks since March 2020.
- Those age 39 and younger make up 61% of all positive COVID-19 cases in the last 7 days.
- There remains a high number of individuals seeking COVID-019 tests in Dubuque County.
- Rapid testing supplies remain low in the County as well as the nation. The IMT is continuously assessing the situation to ensure residents have adequate access to COVID-19 testing.
- IDPH is reporting that 90% of all positive COVID-19 cases in Dubuque County in January have been Omicron. The other 10% are Delta. This estimation comes from sequencing a certain number of COVID-19 positive tests during the month to estimate the amount of Omicron in Dubuque County.
- CDC updated mask guidance as well as isolation and quarantine guidance.

Sandra Larson asks if the hospital numbers are patients specifically being treated for COVID-19 or if they are individuals hospitalized for other reason but test positive for COVID-19 while there. Samantha responds that it is patients being treated for COVID-19. Hendrik Schultz adds that that is correct; these patients are hospitalized because of their COVID-19 status, not for another reason.

Hendrik also comments on the peak in cases we are experiencing in Dubuque County. He believes this peak was reached much quicker than the peak in November 2020 and that we will come down from this peak quickly as well. This is a trend that has already been seen in other countries. He also adds that this may be because Omicron spreads very fast but typically creates less severe symptoms in individuals. This is indicated through our low hospitalization numbers compared to last year.

Jessica Smith adds that Omicron is more transmissible which is having a greater impact on day-to-day life and the workforce in Dubuque County. However, the overall trend is improving.

8. Reports – Receive and File

a. VNA

b. Food Policy Council Grantee Quarterly Reports

All reports were provided to the BOH in advance through the Agenda Packet. Hendrik Schultz made the motion to receive and file all reports. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

9. Response to Public Comment

Sandra Larson begins the conversation by explaining that in past BOH meetings, the public has questions or comments that require a response. Right now, there is no process for getting a response to these individuals.

Samantha Kloft shares that public questions/comments could be addressed at the following BOH meeting with a standing agenda item titled, “Q&A.”

Sandra also suggests sending a letter to the individual who proposed the question. Samantha does worry that with a short-staffed department, there may not be time for individual calls to be made to address these questions. She also adds that letters would prevent others in the community from hearing the response.

Hendrik Schultz suggests using the chat function during a public meeting to allow people to ask questions and get quick replies.

Tom Bechen adds that if the question/comment requires BOH action, the Board will have to address it in a public meeting rather than in a letter.

The BOH agrees that something should be done to address public questions/comments/concerns.

No action is needed for this change. A plan for responding to public comment will be included on the next BOH agenda.

10. Strategic Plan/Director Replacement

Tom Bechen begins the conversation by reminding the BOH that members were responsible for reaching out to other counties in the area to get information on their strategic plans and hiring procedures. Members Tom, Sandra, and Amy follow by sharing what was communicated with them from each county.

Tom has already met with Dawn Sherman in HR to begin the process of revising the director job description. Jessica, Tom, and Sandra will meet with Dawn again to finalize the description.

11. 24/7 Contact with IDPH

Samantha Kloft shares that both the VNA and Dubuque County Health serve as 24/7 contacts for the Iowa Department of Public Health to reach in case of emergency. Following Patrice Lambert's retirement, the County lost their 24/7 contact person and phone. Samantha stressed the need for a phone that will be used by the Director, or in this case Interim Director. This will allow Dubuque County Health to continue being a 24/7 contact for IDPH.

Samantha also explains that the phone cost would have to come out of the BOH budget, but that the monthly cost of the phone plan would be covered by the Service Area 6 Emergency preparedness grant held by County Health.

Jessica Smith made the motion to approve the purchase of a 24/7 phone that will be used by the department Director. Sandra Larson seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

Hendrik Schultz did leave the meeting.

12. IMT Recommendations

IMT recommendations were provided to the BOH in advance through the Agenda Packet.

a. Contact Tracing Plan

The IMT proposed a plan for utilizing already allocated contact tracing funds to staff a COVID-19 hotline and increase education about new isolation/quarantine guidance. This would be done in place of traditional contact tracing. Due to many factors outlined in the recommendation, traditional contact tracing efforts are no longer effective in Dubuque County.

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to approve the contact tracing plan presented by the IMT. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

b. Mask Purchasing

The BOH has the opportunity to purchase more masks for the community as they previously purchased allotment has fully depleted.

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to purchase 40,000 masks with BOH funds. Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

13. Septic and Wells

Variance and plat information was provided to the BOH in advance through the Agenda Packet.

a. Massey Road Septic Variance

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to detail the information provided to the BOH in the Agenda Packet and provide information on progress made since the last meeting. In their written materials, submitted since the December meeting, neither Ms. Avenarius, County Environmental Specialist nor Cory Frank, DNR recommended approval of the waiver unless the well is adequately protected.

Justin Andrews, homeowner of the property, comments that because their water test came back positive for coliform, they would like time to resolve this issue before further review of the variance request. If there are bigger issues with the well and water, reconstruction may be required, and this may alter the proposed variance request.

Board member Adam Hoffman and Ken Busing are unable to attend the meeting and provide an environmental health prospective on this. Therefore, the BOH does not feel comfortable making a motion on this at this time.

Amy Crow Sunleaf also adds that she would like to see a healthy water test result before approving this variance. The BOH agrees.

Amy Crow Sunleaf moves to table to approval of the Massey Road septic variance. Marsha Hortwitz seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

b. Country View Estates Plat 2

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to detail the information provided to the BOH in the Agenda Packet. Dave Schinder detailed the plat information for BOH members.

Sandra Larson made the motion to approve the Country View Estates Plat 2.
Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

14. Meeting Schedule for 2022

Sandra Larson recommends meeting monthly throughout 2022 as each meeting has been long and there is lots to accomplish. Tom Bechen supports that, especially while working to replace the Executive Director position. Amy Crow Sunleaf wonders if the BOH should be meeting twice a month during this planning process.

The BOH agrees that meeting monthly on the same day/time will work best right now. Tom reminds the Board that special meetings can be called if/when needed.

Tom also adds that Zoom will work best during the surge in COVID-19 cases. If/when that situation changes, the BOH can re-evaluate meeting location.

15. BOS Liaison Comments

Supervisor Ann McDonough urges the BOH to let the BOS how they can help with the hiring process. She suggests hiring a consultant that can facilitate conversation about strategic planning and utilizing more county staff to organize this effort.

16. Public Comment

None

17. Next Meeting Date/Time – February 16, 2022, at 6:00pm.

18. Adjournment

Amy Corw Sunleaf made the motion to adjourn at 8:00pm. Sandra Larson seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.