

***Dubuque County Board of Health
Minutes of February 16, 2022***

Chair Sandra Larson called the February 16, 2022, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 6:00pm via zoom and a quorum was established.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Tom Bechen, Adam Hoffman, Marsha Horwitz, Sandra Larson (Chair),
Hendrik Schultz, Jessica Smith, Amy Crow Sunleaf

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ed Raber, Ann McDonough, Ann Williams, Carmen Dunkel, CJ May, Codi
Thul, Dawn Sherman, Diane Pape-Freiburger, Julie Kirkus, Kayli Reese,
Mary Rose Corrigan, Stacey Killian

Additional Notes:

1. Roll Call

2. Public Comments

Sandra Larson invited the public to raise their hands if they wished to make public comments. No persons asked to make public comments.

3. Approval of Agenda

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to approve the Agenda for February 16, 2022. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. BOH Minutes of January 19, 2022

Tom Bechen made the motion to approve the Minutes from January 19, 2022. Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

b. BOH Minutes of February 9, 2022

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to approve the Minutes from February 9, 2022. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

5. Board of Health Chairperson Updates

Chairperson Sandra Larson encouraged BOH members to have robust discussions during meetings. The IDPH recommends that local Boards of Health utilize Roberts Rules of Order for meetings. A brief review of Robert's Rules was presented. Importantly, once a second to a Motion is made, the Board members should then fully discuss the Motion before a vote is taken. Robert's Rules of Order are intended to protect each member's ability to contribute and advance issues.

Sandra noted that meetings will move to in-person with a Zoom option in the future. A quorum must be present in-person, but some may participate remotely. The Zoom recording will continue to be posted on You Tube.

6. Presentations & Reports

a. Response to Public Comment/Questions from Previous Meeting

No comments or questions were received at the last meeting or since.

b. Samantha Kloft presented the COVID-19 update for February 16, 2022. Dubuque County is still at a high transmission level based on CDC guidelines. As of today, the county is at a 13.59% positivity rate. This is a reduction from a week ago. CDC recommends mask-wearing indoors for all individuals regardless of vaccination status when at high transmission level.

Cases are going down, with current cases of 211 on February 16. A lot less calls are coming in for in-home testing. Hospitals and testing providers report they are catching up on testing supplies. Hospitalizations are reduced to 7 on February 16. This data point is removed from the dashboard although it continues to be reported by local hospitals.

Of current cases, 18% are in ages 1-17 and 17% are in ages 18-29. 100% of positive cases in February in Dubuque County are estimated to be the Omicron variant. 99.2% of all positive cases statewide are estimated to be Omicron.

53.81% of Dubuque County residents are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Vaccination clinics continue to be available around the County. The VNA continues to offer walk-in clinics on Mondays and Fridays.

Contact tracing has shifted to focus on increased education and staffing a COVID-19 hotline. Since this started, the VNA has received 142 calls. Examples of posters were presented.

Samantha reviewed the efficacy of various types of masks.

The Governor ended the State's Disaster Emergency Proclamation this week. The web addresses with COVID information have shifted. Samantha noted other changes to reporting by IDPH, notably that negative COVID-19 test results are no longer required to be reported.

Sandra asked what the status was on receiving the approved mask purchase. Samantha ordered them and they have arrived and are available at the Health Dept. Hartig Drug received some N95 masks through a grant and the Health Dept. and EOC distributed them to health care organizations. Jess Smith noted that the hospital received 10,000 masks and are distributing them. Dr. Horwitz noted the availability of N95 masks at some local pharmacies.

c. BOH Member Topics of Interest

Sandra invited Dr. Schultz to comment concerning the BOH's current COVID-19 mitigation recommendation. Dr. Schultz noted the significant, rapid drop. He expected a shift to Moderate transmission level. He noted the County is in a good position due to achieving a high level of vaccination. Home testing has resulted in reduced in clinic testing, but hospitalizations have reduced. This means the strains in the community are less virulent. He thought the County was approaching herd immunity. This is important because mitigation measures can now be like a bad flu year. He noted the metrics that can be used to determine when guidelines can be loosened or rolled back.

Sandra asked for members opinions on loosening guidelines. Dr. Schultz suggested that we consider the risk for the community, or high-risk individuals when developing recommendations. Once it drops to "Medium transmission" the risk becomes less and the impact is less. Dr. Horwitz asked what we should do now.

Dr. Schultz provided recommendations for updating the BOH COVID-19 Mitigation Recommendations to the Public. Tom Bechen suggested that language could be included in the recommendations that these new guidelines are due to lower transmission, but recommendations could be reinstated if levels increase. Dr. Shultz suggested that the Board revisit in 5-6 months

Jessica Smith made a motion to approve the amended guidelines for Dubuque County residents. Dr. Schultz seconded the motion. 7 Aye, Motion carried.

Adam Hoffman reported on items of importance to the environmental section of the Health Department. After a recent meeting with the DNR, there are several opportunities to enhance the Department's environmental reach, including the following:

- Review and revise local well and septic ordinances.
- Spring meetings with local septic contractors.
- Revision of the Permit Application.
- Increased education opportunities for staff.
- Mentoring with other county sanitarians.
- Increase collaboration with the county Water Shed Department.

Adam Hoffman and Dr. Schultz then left the meeting for other commitments at 7pm. A quorum of 5 members remained.

a. Guest Presentation – Open Meeting Laws

County Attorney CJ May outlined the Iowa Open Meetings law. He said the law has a specific intent to ensure that the process of decision making of public policy should be transparent to the public. It applies to all the County's meeting where deliberation or action is taken, agendas must be duly posted, minutes must be taken and approved, and notification must be given.

HR Director Dawn Sherman and CJ May gave several examples. Tom Bechen suggested not using "reply all." Additional discussion ensued.

CJ May was asked that if a formal sub-unit was formed, and they meet during the BOH meeting or during a recess or immediately after there is no need to republish if the meeting is announced during the regular meeting. Anything outside of that requires notice and minutes on the sub-unit.

Sandra asked about the process for hiring the executive director. If three members meet with Dawn to discuss the job description that would not require an open meeting. CJ May indicated that three could meet on the administrative issues but bring it back for discussion and decisions by the Board.

7. Action Items

a. Receive & File: 2021 Dubuque VNA Annual Report

Tom Bechen made the motion to receive and file the VNA 2021 Annual Report. Dr. Horwitz seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

8. Discussion & Inquires

a. Health Department Updates

Samantha Kloft noted that the Environmental Specialist, Bailey Avenarius, has conducted 20 water tests in the past month. Bailey has also worked with 7 individuals about applying for the Iowa Infrastructure Fund Program for septic system replacement. She is also planning a meeting with the contractor community to provide expectations for septic system installs.

The Office Clerk position was increased to full time by the Supervisors during the budget process. In the past month, the current Office Clerk has done filing, invoicing, and accompanying Bailey on water testing. She has started her lab training.

Samantha said they presented a budget and ARPA proposal for additional staff that was well received by the Supervisors. Samantha said she has started to attend monthly Wellness Coalition meetings. She is also meeting regularly with the VNA to strengthen the coordination between the agencies. She said she is planning a table-top exercise on disaster preparedness. Education opportunities are being planned as well.

b. Visiting Nurse Association Updates

Stacey Killian said the VNA received the 2021-22 Child Immunization Audit Report. They reviewed over 1,000 records. 79% had immunization records, and 21% had provisional records. 98.48% in total had valid certificates. On January 11, 2022, the VNA had an on-site IDPH audit of records, policies and procedures, quality improvement initiatives, etc. The VNA met all the IDPH standards, and an agency letter will follow shortly.

The Community Partnerships on tobacco grant has started with new marketing initiatives.

Stacey noted some new staffing changes at the VNA. Some internal initiatives include DEI with a new staff committee reviewing policy and procedure, as well as educational materials. This also participating with the Unity Point DEI initiative. The VNA is also pursuing a new doula program, with 2 doulas under contract.

c. **Updates on Hiring for Executive Director Position**

Sandra Larson began by noting the Supervisors approved the requisition for the executive director position. She said that Dawn Sherman would help the Board select a consultant to assist in the recruitment process. She said they will be assembling a list of questions to ask consultants. Two or three members should be meeting with Dawn for the consultant interviews. This group would come back to the Board with recommendations for approval. Bechen said he would prefer to step back and allow new members to participate. Jess Smith said she would assist, as did Amy Crow Sunleaf.

Dawn said she was checking with her HR network for leads on experienced Health Director recruiters. She met with Mandy Dolson of GDDC Workforce Solutions about assistance. They can use some data collection to get a potential list of candidates which could be passed on to the search firm. She said Dolson offered other services like tours and engagement opportunities for candidates and their families.

d. **BOH Meeting Times**

Sandra Larson said several members have suggested an earlier meeting time. An earlier meeting time would help with more participation.

Tom Bechen made the motion to begin meetings at 4:30pm on the third Wednesday each month. Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

9. BOS / BOH Liaison Comments

Supervisor Ann McDonough expressed her thanks to the Board members for their work.

10. Next Meeting – March 16, 2022

4:30pm on March 16 at the West Campus conference room.

11. Public Comment

Sandra thanked the participants for their presentations and input during the meeting and throughout the month. A special thanks to Supervisor McDonough for her and the Board of Supervisors for their support.

There were no other comments made by the public.

12. Adjournment

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to adjourn. Jessica Smith seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried. Sandra Larson adjourned the meeting at 7:51pm.