

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

Link to view the Meeting Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9Pa27GOyyk>

Chair Sandra Larson called the March 16, 2022, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 4:30pm in-person and via zoom. A quorum was established.

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ann McDonough, Bailey Avenarius, Ken Buesing, Justin Andrews, Kevin Dragotto, Elizabeth Kelsey, Eric Wiklund, Brittany Hubanks, Matt Andrews, Dawn Sherman, Wayne Kenniker

Additional Notes: None

**1. Roll Call**

**2. Public Comments**

Diane Pape-Freiburger: Stresses concern about the cost of vaccinations in the future and chance that the federal government may no longer cover the cost of the COVID-19 vaccine for those without insurance.

**3. Chairperson Announcements and Updates**

Chairperson Sandra Larson shares that she recently joined IPHA and encourages other BOH members to join. The Health Department staff are also members of IPHA.

Sandra also invites BOH members to attend local meetings for organizations that work closely with the Health Department. These organizations are the Dubuque County Food Policy Council, the Dubuque Area Substance Abuse Coalition, and the Dubuque County Wellness Coalition. Marsha Horwitz is interested in participating in the Wellness Coalition and Amy Crow Sunleaf is interested in the Substance Abuse Coalition.

**4. BOS / BOH Liaison Comments**

Supervisor Ann McDonough comments that the county has resources for the BOH if in need of guidance regarding variance requests, ordinances, and permitting fees.

Ann also asks the BOH to review and provide input on two APRA proposals that have gone to the BOS. One is from the VNA for their payee program, and the other from the MercyOne Mobile Unit.

## **5. Approval of Agenda**

Tom Bechen requests to add a discussion on the ARPA proposals to the Agenda.

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to approve the Agenda for April 20, 2022, with the requested amendment. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

## **6. Approval of Minutes**

Tom Bechen made the motion to approve the Minutes from February 16, 2022. Amy Crow Sunleaf seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

## **7. Presentations & Reports**

### **a. Response to Public Comment/Questions from Previous Meeting**

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display an email received by the BOH from a community member asking for updates on the BOH ARPA proposals and information on the cost of COVID-19 vaccine. Samantha lets the BOH know she responded to these emails on 3/2 and 3/16 and provided the requested information. The BOH did not have any additional comments or questions.

### **b. Guest Presentation – Iowa DNR**

Cory Frank from the Iowa DNR presents to the BOH on their role in environmental health. He focuses on septic variances and regulations in the State of Iowa.

### **c. Dubuque County Health Monthly Update & COVID-19 Update**

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to provide a COVID-19 data update to the BOH. She mentions that the CDC has moved from Community Transmission Level to Community Level which focuses more on COVID-19's impact on local hospital systems. Dubuque County is currently at a low Community Level. When at a low level, the CDC recommends staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters, maintaining good ventilation, and making a plan for testing and treatment if/when needed. Isolation and quarantine guidelines have not changed. Cases continue to decrease in Dubuque County, while vaccination and testing options remain available.

Samantha shares that since last meeting with the BOH, the department has completed 20 Grants to Counties water tests. Additionally, the department is preparing to participate in upcoming events, including an emergency preparedness drill and Party for the Planet at the Mississippi River Museum. Samantha will be attending an emergency preparedness conference in Atlanta the first week of April.

Samantha reminds the BOH of the VNA open house that will be next Wednesday from 4:30 – 6:30pm.

### **d. VNA Monthly Update**

Brittany Hubanks provides a brief update to the BOH on grant progress for all subcontracted grants including Tobacco Abatement, Wisewoman/Care for Yourself, LPHS, and Immunizations. She also mentions a new Marshallese community group

the VNA is working with called Monsoons, based out of Maquoketa and updates on the Dula Project and their maternal/child health and oral health programs.

- e. **BOH Member Topics of Interest – Jessica Smith**  
Jess Smith has had to leave the meeting for a family emergency and will no longer present. There are now four BOH members in person and two on Zoom.

## **8. Action Items**

- a. **Variance Request – Massey Station Road**  
Ken Buesing from Buesing and Associates updates members on changes to the Massey Station Road variance since last meeting with the BOH. The Board is still concerned about the quality of the water after the Health Department collected a bad sample from the property well. Justin Andrews also shares his plans if the variance is approved. The two, along with Matt Andrews, have not looked into plans for installing a new well if needed.

With concerns related to the well water and proposed septic design, and the BOH finds it difficult to approve the variance request.

Adam Hoffman asks if neighbors have been approached about this plan and if the discharge in their yard has been resolved. Matt Andrews replies that conversations with the neighbor have happened. The original septic design was not accurate, and this new design would address the issues the original design caused.

Bailey Avenarius, Cory Frank, and Adam Hoffman all discuss alternative systems such as a holding tank, or coco filtration system.

Tom Bechen made the motion to not approve the septic variance. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

## **9. Unfinished Business**

- a. **Executive Director Position Updates**  
Sandra Larson and Dawn Sherman update the BOH on the search for an executive director. The BOH was provided with information on recruiting agencies in the Agenda Packet.

Dawn Sherman, Amy Crow Sunleaf, Jessica Smith, and Sandra Larson were involved in the interview process of these agencies.

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to hire GovHR as the recruiting agency for the Executive Director position. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

- b. **Well & Septic Updates – Permitting Process & Permitting Fees**  
Bailey Avenarius discusses the revised septic permitting process for the Health Department. She explains changes in the permit itself for the BOH to approve. This

draft permit was provided in the Agenda Packet. It has also been sent to the City of Dubuque, County Attorney, and the Iowa DNR for review. It will also be reviewed by local septic installers at the Spring Contractor Meeting held on March 24, 2022.

The BOH decides to table this approval until the permit has been reviewed by all entities listed above.

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to table the permitting policy until the next meeting. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

The BOH then discusses permitting fees. Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display a table showing the current cost of permits and the cost of permits in other Iowa counties. This table was also provided in the Agenda Packet. These updated fees proposed by the BOH include:

- |                                              |          |
|----------------------------------------------|----------|
| • Residential Septic Permit:                 | \$250.00 |
| • Septic Reconstruction and/or Modification: | \$100.00 |
| • Residential Well permit:                   | \$250.00 |
| • Septic or Well Abandonment Fee:            | \$75.00  |

Tom Bechen made the motion to adopt the new permitting fees listed above. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

## **10. New Business**

### **a. Review BOH COVID-19 Mitigation Recommendations**

As mentioned in the COVID-19 Update, the CDC will now use "Community Level" to determine COVID-19 impacts on local healthcare systems. Dubuque County has now been ranked at a low Community Level, therefore the BOH would like to adjust their mitigation recommendations for the community.

Recommendations were provided in the Agenda Packet. These are discussed by BOH members.

Hendrik Schultz suggests approving the recommendations for a low Community Level and reassessing recommendations if the level in Dubuque County ever changes.

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to approve recommendations for a low Community Level and reassess as needed. Marsha Horwitz seconded the motion. 1 Aye, 1 Nay, motion carries.

### **b. ARPA Proposals**

BOH members do a quick review of the proposals presented to the BOS on behalf of the VNA and MercyOne Mobile Unit.

Overall, the Board supports the work of both public health organizations. They feel the proposal from MercyOne Mobile Unit aligns more closely with the ARPA

program. The VNA proposal addresses the needs of a specific, vulnerable population in Dubuque County, and the BOH appreciates that as well.

**11. Board Communication & Reports**

**12. Next Meeting – April 20, 2022 @4:30pm**

**13. Public Comment**

Wayne Kenniker – Questions the time change for the meetings. They used to be 6:00 and are now 4:30. He feels this has made the meeting less accessible for the public.

Sam Wooden – thanks the BOH for their time tonight and shares that he is running for County Attorney, so he wanted to sit in and learn more.

**14. Adjournment**

Tom Bechen made the motion to adjourn. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried. Sandra Larson adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.