

**Portage County Combined General Health District
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2023
6:00 PM**



I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The Portage County Combined General Health District Board of Health met on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 999 East Main Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM by Board President, Lucy Ribelin.

Board Members in Attendance:

Lucy Ribelin, President
James Bierlair, Vice President
Bob Howard, Member
Charles Delaney, Member

Board Members Not in Attendance:

Linda Grimm, Member
Amy Everett, Member
Evelyn Cutlip, Member
Dr. Howard Minott, Member

Staff in Attendance:

Joseph Diorio, Health Commissioner
Sarah Meduri, Director of Personnel and
Administrative Services
Christina Jewell, Administrative and
Account Clerk
Debra Stall, Fiscal Officer
Branden Burns, Director of Finance
Rosemary Ferraro, Director of Nursing
Becky Lehman, Director of Health
Education & Promotions
Justin Rechichar, Director of
Environmental Health
Amos Sarfo, Environmental Health
Supervisor, Stormwater/Wastewater
William Duck, Environmental Supervisor
Jim Meyer, Environmental Health
Specialist in Training
Amy Cooper, Director of WIC

District Advisory Council:

Bruce Lange, Charlestown Twp.

Others:

None

Media Present:

None

II. PORTAGE COUNTY TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION: (District Advisory Council)

Mr. Lange stated that there have not been any applicants to replace Mr. Howard on the Board of Health. Mr. Lange stated that Ms. Calcei has submitted a circulation to the township trustees for those who may have an interest in joining the Board of Health as a member.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IV. DISCUSSION REPORTS:

It was discovered that the Board of Health did not have a quorum to vote on the action items or new items, therefore, the meeting consisted of an update from Mr. Lange of the Township Association for the District Advisory Council and divisional discussions. A special meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at 5:00PM to conclude business.

a. Administration and Personnel:

Ms. Meduri stated that she and Ms. Cooper decided to try something different for the open position in the WIC division. They arranged walk-in and open interviews. Though they were a little bit more optimistic than what was received. This took place on Thursday, March 2nd from 12:00PM to 4:00PM. They advertised over social media, updated the PCHD website, pushed out via e-mail, and received a total of 3 applicants via walk-ins. Ms. Meduri was still optimistic; one applicant was invited back for a second interview. After the event, a few more resumes were received. Ultimately, Ms. Meduri was able to extend an offer to the individual who was a walk-in and her start date is Monday, March 27th. The WIC staff for the Ravenna location is now at full and the remaining openings are for an Environmental Health Specialist and a Site Supervisor for the WIC Columbiana County in Lisbon. Ms. Meduri stated that there have been a few applicants for the Environmental Health Specialist position and that she has spoken to Mr. Sarfo and unfortunately those applicants are not viable choices at the moment. She does plan to resubmit this open position in hopes of fulfilling this position.

Ms. Meduri spoke about Public Health Week- April 3rd-April 7th, PCHD will host an open house on April 4th from 2pm-6pm during Public Health Week. Stakeholders and the community are invited to attend and tour the building. The PHun Committee is planning fun activities to celebrate our staff throughout the week. The KSU Career Fair is approaching during Public Health Week. PCHD will be attending the KSU Career Fair on April 6th. Ms. Meduri provided an update to the board on the Workforce Development Grant. PCHD applied for WF23 in the amount of \$540,000. This is a 5-year grant cycle from 7/1/2023- 11/30/2027. The current Public Health Workforce Grant has been extended through the end of 2023. With these grant funds, Ms. Meduri has been able to provide a staff training schedule for the PCHD staff. Ms. Meduri spoke on the employee safety training in the month of February with Mr. Walker and the Portage County Sheriff's Office. This training touched on the different substances and signs of cultivating narcotics as the PCHD staff could come into contact with while assisting the public. Ms. Meduri also touched on the plans to do further employee safety training for the building, in regard to lock downs, fire drills and tornado drills to ensure the safety of the PCHD staff.

b. Fiscal and Accounting:

Ms. Stall introduced Mr. Burns, the new Director of Finance, to the Board of Health. Mr. Burns was formerly of the city of Twinsburg. Mr. Burns has been here with PCHD since February 27, 2023. He has knowledge of MUNIS and has become Ms. Stall's best friend. Ms. Stall states that he's well on his way to managing his duties on his own without the guidance of Ms. Stall. Mr. Burns is an Ohio University Undergraduate and has an MBA from Ohio University in Business Administration.

Mr. Burns stated that the cash basis report shows that at the end of February, there was a balance of \$3,296,576.93, which included all the funds. Mr. Burns stated that he plans to return some of the advanced funds back to the general fund. There is approximately \$1.1 million in advances to other funds at the moment. The general fund for February ended with \$363,016.07. It is just the first quarter of the year, but Mr. Burns stated that we are looking good. Mr. Burns presented the Board with a final copy of the 2024 budget for review and approval. He stated that there is a slight variation for 2024 for budgets, this report is more streamlined for 2024 compared to previous years' budgets.

c. Nursing:

Ms. Ferraro stated the Prolink Nurses are completing their contract at the end of March. We will have PCG assisting with the COVID-19 cases. The Trumbull County's program, "Help Me Grow" starts on Thursday with the Ohio Department of Health on how to initiate the program in Portage County. Ms. Ferraro stated that the Trumbull County nurses for this program currently have 55 home visitors, a supervisor and a director who oversee this program. Ms. Ferraro stated that she was really excited for this program since Portage County lost the labor and delivery at UH hospital. This program can benefit the residents of Portage County. Board President, Ms. Ribelin asked if the "Help Me Grow" was here in Portage County before and Ms. Ferraro said that it was, however, it was moved to Mahoning County with the intent to teach the parents on how to be good parents and help the baby reach milestones with good parenting. Ms. Ferraro stated that she is planning to put a packet together for Mr. Diorio to review and then share with the board.

Ms. Cooper, Director of WIC, stated that the "OhioHealth Mother's Milk Bank" is a program that offers breastfeeding and lactation of human milk donations to infants in need. She shared that her division encountered a mother who wanted to donate her breastmilk, and this program offers these services for free. There are specific guidelines for acceptance of services that require further details as this is an option that PCHD is exploring at this time. A freezer would be required to be connected to a generator to ensure the human milk does not spoil. Bloodwork is needed to screen the donor and there is a contract and process to complete prior to acceptance. PCHD would just collect and store the milk in our freezer and then contact them to collect the supply. Currently, the nearest donation drop location is Toledo, OH, which is quite a lengthy drive from Trumbull, Mahoning and Portage Counties. Ms. Ferraro stated that all the shipping labels and containers are provided and paid for.

Board President, Ms. Ribelin asked if this was in response to the formula shortage. Ms. Ferraro said no, but in general, mothers can donate locally and do not need to send to

Columbus, OH.

d. Environmental Health:

Mr. Rechichar introduced Mr. Meyer, a new Environmental Health Specialist in Training. He has been with PCHD about a month and is training under Mr. Duck, as he prepares Mr. Meyer to take over wastewater and storm water inspections. Mr. Meyer graduated from Kent State University with his bachelor's degree in environmental studies.

Mr. Rechichar also shared with the board of the onboarding of Andrea Arroyo who started with PCHD last month and shadowing with the food program. She too, graduated from Kent State University with her bachelor's degree in public health and health promotion and education. Ms. Arroyo was very excited about the opportunity with PCHD and hopes to teach bilingually. Mr. Rechichar shared that the Environmental Health recently held a "Mobile Rodeo" for the county's food truck licensees, which accounts for a little over 12% of the food licensing. He added that having the space to offer these programs outside was quite helpful as he was able to include the assistance of multiple divisions to maneuver the mobile traffic entering the parking lot.

Mr. Rechichar spoke on the national mentorship program with Paulding County, Ohio and he is working on facilitating the two locations to work on the training. Mr. Rechichar also stated that he is reviewing the older policies and the paperwork to see where the areas are that may be slowing us down on the procedures and time frame of completion. He plans to review these areas to aid in speeding up the process for the Environmental Health division without prohibiting the details of notes and documentation.

Mr. Sarfo stated that he received the stormwater report and is forwarding the report to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency by April 1st. Currently there are four WPCLF contracts for bid release, which is scheduled for March 31st. After these bids, we will still have funds from the 2023 grant funds and will renew the WPCLF contract for 2024 to have approved to have applications ready for the new guidelines in accordance with Appendix G.

Board President, Ms. Ribelin asked Mr. Sarfo how the public hears of this assistance. Mr. Sarfo stated that through the Townships, partner agencies, and our wastewater staff. The Ohio H2O program awarded PCHD with \$115,000, in 2022, \$150,000 and we will have \$150,000 for 2023. If we can use all funding, then we can contact Governor DeWine to possibly acquire additional funding for Portage County.

Mr. Duck stated that the wastewater program is picking up and he is training Mr. Meyer on the water sampling. He stated that he assisted East Palestine for 5-6 days on water sampling. There has not been activity for Portage County to assist Columbiana County now, but plan to be on standby. The building season is picking up, as is the warm season.

e. Health Education & Promotion & Accreditation:

Ms. Lehman stated that health care season is up and coming. Public Health Week is April 3rd – April 7th. Ms. Meduri has been developing fun ideas to integrate Public Health

activities into the day for PCHD staff, as well as a spirit week. She stated that her division is busy this month with the Health Fair at Skeels community center, a community baby shower at Reed Memorial Library and PCHD will host Akron Children's Hospital with a Car Seat Technician Course. Currently there are only 3 in Portage County and would like to obtain additional individuals and certify them to assist. Ms. Lehman also stated that if anyone is interested in the Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) meetings, the 1st quarter update is April 11th. There will be an option for a hybrid meeting as well as in person here at PCHD, at 9:00AM. She noted that her staff has been very busy with the District Advisory Council event at Elks Lodge on March 22nd, there will be large display boards promoting a lot of our programs. Ms. Selva, Ms. Plough and Ms. Lehman spent a great deal of time on new updated boards and education. Ms. Lehman mentioned to the Board the Strategic Planning ideas, they are starting a new program, so just kind of dusting off things that were done in 2019 and 2020. A new wheel will be created moving forward. Lastly, Ms. Lehman announced that AxessPointe is planning to become a distributor within the next month, this will be a great asset to the community for the Project DAWN program.

f. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

Amy stated that she is very pleased to be fully staffed at the Ravenna location by next week. There is a WIC Site Supervisor position needed for Lisbon. With the aftermath of the train derailment, WIC was able to provide 2 Pop-Ups in Columbiana County, and there is planning for another soon. Last month was National Nutrition Week. The WIC families were given whisks and spatulas for children and introducing them into assisting in the kitchen. Ms. Cooper stated that this District Advisory Council meeting would be the 1st for WIC, and they are all looking forward to meeting everyone and promoting their programs.

g. Health Commissioner:

Mr. Diorio stated that Mr. Lange was here representing the DAC and is the Chair for the DAC. The annual meeting will start at 5:30PM. We do not have a quorum at the moment for the Board of Health, as we have two members who cannot make this evening's meeting and he plans to have the Board members reconvene tomorrow, March 22nd at 5:00PM at the Elks Lodge to conclude the necessary business. A letter for an immediate special meeting will be submitted. The Strategic Plan will include updating the forms and preliminary information, the surveying of stakeholders, and other processes. We will have an option for the Board of Health members to participate in. There are volunteers, staff and directors added and would like to look at a 3-year strategic plan moving forward even beyond the pandemic. Mr. Diorio stated that he does plan to solicit the Board of Health members to partake in the strategic planning. He also plans to do a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and hopes to meet in April. He was sure to clarify that we are not changing our Mission, Vision or Values. Mr. Diorio stated that, "A lot of the things will carry forward, but we will be looking at a new three-year strategic plan". Lastly, he shared that we as an agency have achieved a great deal. Including the new building, Information Technology projects, a website, new programs, just to name a few. There have been tremendous strides made and accomplished.

Board President, Ms. Ribelin stated that she is very proud of the staff for all that has been accomplished.

Mr. Lange opted to create an executive committee to approve a Board of Health member for term.

VII. **OLD BUSINESS:** None

VIII. **BOARD ISSUES AND DISCUSSION:**

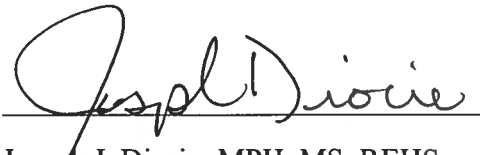
XI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

XII. **ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Board Member Howard to adjourn and seconded by Board Member Delaney.

An “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:04pm, on March 21, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph J. Diorio", written over a horizontal line.

Joseph J. Diorio, MPH, MS, REHS
Health Commissioner