

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF HEALTH**

June 26, 2012  
10:00 a.m.

Meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Chair Nielsen.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:**

Marcia Stobie, Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
Dr. Richard Nielsen, Benzie County Member at Large  
James A. Schaub, Sr., Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Mary Tonneberger, Leelanau County Member at Large  
Anne Damm, Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
David Marshall, Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

**Absent:**

None

**Administration Present:**

William Crawford, Health Officer and Director of Environmental Health Services  
Dodie Putney, Director of Administrative Services

**Staff:** None present

**Guests:** Bryan Graham, Attorney  
James Young, Attorney participated by speaker phone.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Stobie, seconded by Marshall to approve the agenda.

**Voice Vote: 6 ayes:** Motion Carried.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** It was moved by Tonneberger, seconded by Marshall to go into closed session at the request of William A. Crawford, the Health Officer and employee of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Open Meetings Act, being MCL 15.268(a), to consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges against him.

**Roll Call Vote:** Ayes: Damm, Marshall, Schaub, Nielsen, Stobie and Tonneberger. Nays: None. **Motion carried.**

Entered into closed session at 10:13 a.m.

Re-entered open session at 11:10 a.m.

Bryan Graham explained to Mr. Crawford the specific sections within the Health

Department's Sexual Harassment Policy which Mr. Young concluded, based on his investigation, were violated by Mr. Crawford.

It was moved by Marshall, seconded by Stobie to go into closed session pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, being MCL 15.268(h), to consider the written legal advice from our attorney, which is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

**Roll Call Vote:** Ayes: Tonneberger, Stobie, Nielsen, Schaub, Marshall and Damm. Nays: None. **Motion Carried.**

Entered into closed session at 11:15 a.m.

Re-entered open session at 12:08 p.m.

Bryan Graham explained some specific sections within the Health Department's Sexual Harassment Policy.

It was moved by Marshall, seconded by Tonneberger that the Board of Health finds Mr. Crawford's behavior has violated Section 3a, Section 3a3, and Section 3c of the Sexual Harassment Policy. **Roll Call Vote:** Marshall, Damm, Tonneberger, Stobie, Nielsen, Schaub. Nays: None. **Motion Carried.**

Discussion focused on consequences for that violation.

It was moved by Marshall, seconded by Tonneberger that Mr. Crawford be removed as Health Officer, be demoted to a Sanitarian as a .80 FTE employee, that he be required to undergo counseling that is acceptable and satisfactorily completed to our Personnel Committee, a letter of reprimand from the Personnel Committee be placed in his file, that a monitoring program be established by Personnel Committee so that we know his behavior is acceptable, and he be required to sign a corrective action plan that is drawn up with the assistance of the new Health Officer, Personnel Committee and Agency Attorney.

Moved by Marshall, seconded by Tonneberger to amend his motion to include the below factual basis in making the motion.

1. The Health Department's Personnel Policy provides that an employee's employment may be terminated if that employee's job-related services are not satisfactory.
2. The Health Department's Sexual Harassment Policy provides that an employee, who violates that Policy, is subject to discipline up to and including termination.
3. William A. Crawford, as the Health Officer and executive leader of the Health Department should have been exemplary in (i) his compliance with all Health Department policies, (ii) the execution of his duties and (iii) the exercise of good judgment in his interaction with other employees.

4. The following generally summarizes the factual background that has led to this motion and it is not intended to be an exhaustive recitation of all background facts:
  - a. For approximately 1 and ½ years, Mr. Crawford has engaged in excessive personal contact with a specific female employee, which was far beyond the contact that was needed for the performance of his job function.
  - b. This excessive personal contact has included the following on a persistent basis:
    - i. Leaving his work area to have direct, close contact with the female employment almost every time that she was in the coffee area (on at least one occasion while a conference call was in progress), during clinics, during meetings in which the female employee was a participant, and in the female employee's work area;
    - ii. Waiting in his car until the female employee arrived for work and then walking near her into the office while attempting to engage her in conversation; and
    - iii. As the female employee walked to her car at the end of the work day, following her in close proximity while attempting to engage her in conversation.
  - c. This personal contact behavior, which puts him in the vicinity of the female employee, has increased over the past 1 and ½ years for approximately once a week to an almost daily occurrence. This excessive personal contact behavior has been observed by every employee who was interviewed regarding this matter. It was described by them variously as obsessive, very unusual, obvious, a pattern or noticeable. For example, an employee described the situation as whenever Mr. Crawford heard her voice that you could count to 3 and he would leave his office and attempt to find her.
  - d. During conversations with a number of female employees, it was learned that Mr. Crawford has stared or focused his gaze on the chest area of those female employees. This chest staring behavior has occurred on an almost daily basis with the female employee, who has been the recipient of the excessive personal contact described above, and has occurred with other female employees so frequently that this chest staring was far more than a random occurrence.
  - e. Mr. Crawford's excessive personal contact behavior and his chest staring behavior have created a hostile work environment for not just one female employee, but for a number of female employees. It may be that he did not intend for his behavior to create such an environment, but his

failure to recognize his own actions and how reasonable female employees could perceive those actions is unsatisfactory in an executive leader. The consequences of such a failure are magnified in a small workforce with a large number of female employees which is the case in the Benzonia office of the Health Department.

5. These behaviors have occurred during the course of Mr. Crawford's employment with the Health Department and on the premises of the Health Department's office in Benzonia.
6. These behaviors compromise his ability to be an effective leader in the future, compromise his ability to maintain the respect of those persons whom he must lead, set a bad example for other employees of the Health Department, show unacceptably poor judgment, show an inability to recognize and evaluate his own behavior in his work environment and violate the Sexual Harassment Policy of the Health Department.
7. As the Health Officer, Mr. Crawford reports directly to the Board of Health of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department
8. These behaviors constitute job-related services that are not satisfactory to the Board of Health of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department.

**Roll Call Vote:** Ayes: Marshall, Nielsen, Stobie, Tonneberger, and Damm.  
Nays: Schaub. **Motion Carried.**

**Appoint an acting Health Officer.** Moved by Marshall to appoint Jenifer Murray as acting health officer effective immediately. Seconded by Schaub. **Roll Call Vote:** Ayes: Schaub, Nielsen, Marshall, Damm, Stobie and Tonneberger. **Motion Carried.**

**Public Input:**

Bill commented that he regrets the decisions made here today. He believed he could have moved forward in a leadership position. He questioned his seniority level at a .80 FTE Sanitarian position.

It was moved by Damm, seconded by Stobie to adjourn the meeting. **Voice Vote:** 6 Ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Chair Nielsen adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m.

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Dr. Richard Nielsen, Chair

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Dodie Putney, Recording Secretary