

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
Wednesday, February 23, 2022 2:00 p.m.  
Benzie Community Resource Center - Ingemar Johansson Conference Room  
6051 Frankfort Highway  
Benzonia, MI 49616**

Chairperson Dr. Barbara Conley called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

**Members Present:**

Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
William Bunek – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Patricia Soutas-Little – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Dr. Barbara Conley – Leelanau County Member at Large  
Rhonda Nye – Benzie County Board of Commissioners

**Members Absent:** None

**Members Excused:** None

**Staff Present:**

Lisa Peacock – Health Officer  
Dr. Joshua Meyerson – Medical Director  
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services  
Eric Johnston – Director of Environmental Health  
Michelle Klein - Director of Personal Health

**Guests Present:**

Deb Aldridge – Benzie Leelanau District Health Department

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little to approve the January 26, 2022 BOH Meeting Minutes with the correction to the Board Comments.

**Seconded By:** Nye

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Sauer asked if there could be clarification in the January Board Comments that he had been responding to a public comment.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

**Motion By:** Sauer to approve agenda as presented.

**Seconded By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Public Comment – None**

## Community Connections

Deb Aldridge prepared a slide show presentation to present to the BOH to explain in depth the Community Connection Program. This program stretches from Newaygo County up to Emmet/Cheboygan Counties, it encompasses thirty-one counties. Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region is the backbone of the program. The initial outreach to participants is through questionnaires that are at medical offices, dental clinics and referrals from various other community agencies. As patients check into the various medical offices, they are given a form to fill out that asks if a variety of needs are being met. Some of the items that are asked are does a person have enough food, do they struggle to find transportation or housing or do they need health insurance. In 2021, there were 876 referrals received. Approximately 60% of these individuals that were reached accepted help. To reach referrals Community Connections will start with a phone call. If that is unsuccessful, they then will text and follow up with a letter if the text does not work. The three main reasons why a case may be deemed unsuccessful is if the person could not be reached, they are over income or if the person does not follow through with the referrals. For a medical referral the person would need to attend the initial medical appointment to be considered successful. If it a mental health referral the person would have to attend three scheduled appointments to be considered successful. The eight main services that are provided through referrals are medical, financial, food, health insurance, housing, utilities, behavioral health and transportation. Part of the financial needs that can be met is to help an individual pay for dental work or other medical procedures that an insurance company will not cover. Community Connections works with various agencies to try to meet the needs of the accepting referrals. For example, a financial need that someone may have is they need dentures and they cannot afford them. Community Connections will reach out to various partners such as Father Fred, or BACN to see if they have any resources to help. These entities would write a letter of intent for the person to take to the prosthodontist stating how much of the service that the Agency would pay for. Aldridge spoke about how early intervention can save the health care system in the future. Meridian, McLaren and United Health are all partners of Medicaid that have been partnering with Community Connections to work on ways to keep costs down.

Late Thursday, February 17, 2022, the news of the tainted baby formula was released. The Similac Brand that was affected by this recall is what the State of Michigan had contracted for WIC. A call had went out to the State to see how this should be handled but only a message could be left. Around noon on Friday the State still had not called back about this so Aldridge reached out to the head of Community Foundation. Within three hours the Community Foundation and the Olsen Foundation had pooled \$4,000.00 together for the Administrative Director of BDLHD to go to Sam's Club to purchase formula for both the BLDHD and Grand Traverse County Health Department. Personal Health staff delivered formula to families in need on Saturday. Aldridge started to reach out to families on Friday about this recall. There were approximately 60 families that were contacted because they potentially had the tainted formula.

Sauer asked if the DHHS is doing enough to reach out and help people as 60% of Community Connections referrals accepting help is a large number. Aldridge answered that Community Connections works closely with DHHS but at this time everything is on the computer for DHHS and they do not have any offices open. If someone needs assistance with filling out electronic forms that is considered a barrier and our staff will assist with that. Community Connections will assist an individual by either going to someone's home or over the phone, it all depends on the person's comfort level. Bunek asked what the qualifications for a Community Health Worker were. Aldridge responded that that it is a high school diploma and then once a person has been hired for this position, they are provided one hundred hours of training. Dr. Conley asked if it was known how many of the referrals were individuals who were currently working or homeless. Aldridge responded that a lot of the referrals are people who are working but are working in positions that do not have steady hours, such as the service industry. If a person happens to be homeless, Community Connections will work with housing groups to help place the person. At

this point the housing agency, such as Goodwill Inn, will be fully in charge of this need and Community Connections will help the individual with the needs that are more in align with what programs that are offered directly through them.

#### **Health Officer Update – Lisa Peacock**

A written report was distributed prior to the meeting for review. The mask mandate for schools in Benzie and Leelanau Counties have been lifted. This happened as the State of Michigan regrouped and moved the State into a recovery stage for the pandemic. The State moved into a recovery stage because there are more widely available tools, such as vaccinations, more masks and knowledge on how to treat the virus. The contact tracing has stopped. The employees who had been tracing have moved into other roles such as answering the phone line and working at clinics. Klein added that testing is continuing in both Counties. BLDHD is still partnered with the HONU labs. The number of tests that have been performed has gone down drastically. In January, a little over 800 tests were performed and so far in February about half that number have been performed. The availability of home tests is part of the reason. The mass vaccination clinics are ending this week. The demand for the clinics has decreased. People can go online and schedule an appointment to come in and get their vaccination or booster.

Dr. Conley thanked Peacock for her service to public health and her commitment to keeping people safe and the schools open. Klein added that with Peacock's departure it is a loss to community health.

Public Health funding is used to provide the six functions of public health. When providing the six main functions, items that are focused on to make sure that the best service is provided is making sure that there are adequate physical and legal resources available. Health departments will share resources with cross regional entities as efficiency is one of the main goals. Budgets are used to align the needs of the public and the funding that is available. The financial statements are a good tool to look at for long-range forecasting of the financing and implementation of services. The return on investment for prevention programs is a large cost savings for health issues that could arise in the future.

The Annual Report was distributed to the BOH Members. Page 13 of the report listed the revenue sources for BLDHD. The largest source of the revenue is from Federal and State funding, medical billing is the second largest segment of the funding. The State and Federal funding must be spent on specific items. The County Appropriations have more flexibility on what they can be spent on. It can be used for match money for various services. This allows more services to be provided at a lower cost. Appropriations are also used to subsidize programs that reimbursements do not cover the entire cost. Needs are constantly changing and these funds allow the BLDHD to be able to meet these needs in a timely manner. Klein, Aldridge and Rachel Pomeroy are the three main grant writers for BLDHD.

Nye wondered what is next with Peacock resigning. A big concern is that Health Department of Northwest Michigan's Board of Health is likely to make decisions that are going to affect BLDHD without our input. When an agency shares a position such as a Health Officer with another agency, both agencies should communicate on how to best meet the needs of both agencies. If HDNW decided to end the contract with BLDHD they would have to give a six-month notice. April 29, 2022 is Peacock's last day as Health Director. At that point the Deputy Health Officer will fill the role for both agencies. If the contract to share a Health Officer ends it will cost BLDHD a considerable larger amount of money to fill this role than what is currently being spent. Sauer mentioned that BLDHD should consider facilitating a new plan. Dr. Conley agreed, she does not want to wait and to see what HDNW's decision might be, BLDHD should be proactive. Dr. Meyerson plans on serving all the counties that he is currently serving. Sauer asked Dr. Meyerson if he would consider contracting with BLDHD separately instead of the joint contract that is currently in place. Dr. Meyerson said he was open to it, there are many ways that this could be

handled. Soutas-Little commented that six months will go very quickly. The current arrangement has worked very well up to the pandemic and then the HDNW BOH and BLDHD BOH now have two different visions. There needs to be a strategic planning meeting. Dr. Conley stated that by the next meeting, in March, a strategic planning item can be added to the agenda as an action item. It was agreed by all BOH Members that they did not appreciate the fact that HDNW did not communicate with any of them about the possibility of ending the contract of sharing a Health Officer.

#### **Accounts Payable**

**Motion By:** Sauer to approve accounts payable and pay the bills.

**Seconded By:** Dr. Conley

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

#### **January 2022 Financial Statements**

**Motion By:** Bunek to accept the financial statements as presented.

**Seconded By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

#### **Employee Class Schedule**

**Motion By:** Sauer to approve the reclassification of Account Clerk I to Accountant I and Account Clerk II to Accountant II.

**Second By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Putney wanted to clarify that the Account I would move to a Grade 6 and the Account II would move to a Grade 7. Account Clerk I and Account Clerk II would be removed from Grades 4 and 5. Bunek wanted to confirm that the Account II would not be a Grade 8 and it was confirmed that this position is a Grade 7. Nye thanked Putney for the meeting that they had to clarify the reasoning for the reclassification of the two positions. When the reclassification had originally been presented the cost of the reclassification was given for the full five-years. Bunek asked for clarification that for this year it would impact the budget by approximately \$4,800 and that was correct.

#### **Video Conference Equipment**

**Motion By:** Bunek to accept the bid for new video conference equipment but with a sixty-five-inch screen.

**Second By:** Sauer

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Putney described that the video conferencing equipment that had been bided is exactly like the equipment that was being used for today's meeting. This equipment would be used in the other conference room. The equipment that is being used today is not owned by BLDHD but by Centra Wellness. She had accepted bids from Graycon, Wyantt and reviewed prices listed on the internet. Graycon had the best bid. Public Health Preparedness and Covid funding would pay for this purchase. Bunek asked if the screen could be bigger than what was in the conference room that the BLDHD meeting was being held in. Also, if a bigger screen was purchased could it be swapped out in this conference room. The other conference room is smaller so the smaller screen makes more sense in it. Putney is going to check with Centra Wellness to see if they would be okay with an arrangement like this. The entire system will cost roughly \$5,000.

## 2022 Board of Health Meeting Dates

**Motion By:** Nye to approve changing the March 2022 BOH Meeting date to March 30, 2022, to move the November meeting to November 30, 2022 and cancel the December 2022 meeting.

**Second By:** Soutas-Little

**Voice Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea

**5 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Sauer asked for this adjustment because there is a meeting in Grand Rapids on March 24<sup>th</sup> and this would be a conflict. He also pointed out that if there was a November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting it would help with the time spacing of not having a December meeting. December is such a busy month and the meeting date fell right at the beginning of the Holidays that it should be skipped. If there is urgent business this meeting could be rescheduled.

## Health Officer Contract Update

It was decided that this agenda item had already been discussed during the Health Officer Update. Nye asked for clarification on when Peacock's last day would be. It would be April 29<sup>th</sup>. Peacock did mention that the BOH for HDNW could terminate her employment sooner than the 60 day notice that she had given them.

## Staff Reports:

### Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson

Adults should get vaccinated for the flu. The State of Michigan had a mild flu season this year. There were more cases this year than last, but the numbers are still low. Shingles is a vaccination that is highly recommended for adults to get. Previously, to qualify to receive a shingles vaccine you had to be sixty-five years old or older. Stress can help cause the shingles virus to infect a person because the stress has weakened their immune system. Currently, a person just needs to be nineteen years of age to be vaccinated against the shingles. The pneumonia vaccine also used to be for people who were over sixty-five years old. The original vaccine would inoculate a person against twenty-three different strains of pneumonia. Then a vaccine was invented for babies and children that would protect them from four different strains. Over time technology has led to a vaccine that protects people against 20 various strains of pneumonia. There are more companies now producing a vaccine for this disease. Sauer asked if a person has had shingles should they still get a vaccine. The answer was yes, break through cases can happen to people who have had the shingles.

### Personal Health – Michelle Klein

Written report distributed at the beginning of the meeting. BLDHD is distributing KN-95 masks and home Covid Tests. Once the supply of tests run out, she is not sure if more will be coming in or not. BLDHD just received a large supply of masks and she is sure there will be more available to get at a later time.

Currently the Syringe Services Program (SSP) is only for Benzie County. It is helping individuals receive clean needles and safely disregard used needles. The program is also designed to help individuals receive testing and vaccines to keep them safe and healthy. This program hopefully will help encourage and assist participants to begin a drug treatment program. In January, 3,300 new needles were given out and 2,500 used needles were turned in. There are six participants physically showing up to collect supplies and drop items off. These six people help service forty-five other participants. Also, in January there were over 147 Narcan kits distributed and two people began a treatment program.

The Early Childhood program is going to begin a session of Mom Power and Fraternity Fathers in April. Mom Power had great success last fall and they are hoping for the same results this spring with the two programs. The Annual Report for Parenting Communities is almost finished. Klein is

hoping to present it to the BOH in March and then to the County Commissioners in April. In person play groups are starting to begin this week.

The school nurses are funded with Covid funding. This funding is scheduled through June 30, 2022. The Government has not communicated to Directors on whether there will be a second year of funding for this or not. BLDHD is partnering with the school districts to apply for 31 O funding, only schools can apply for this. If the schools are awarded this, the nurses will be in the assigned school districts, but they will be employees of BLDHD. Dr. Conley asked about the workload for the school nurses. Klein responded that they are beyond busy. They have been working super long hours to keep up with everything. As contact tracing and Covid numbers slow down Klein is hoping to start transitioning the nurses to a more traditional role within the schools. Bunek asked if there are any dedicated places within the schools for these nurses. Klein responded that the schools are willing to find places to locate the nurses. Peacock commended Klein and Amanda Thompson, from HDNW, for taking the lead on finding more funding to keep school nurses in the schools.

### **Environmental Health – Eric Johnston**

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy (EGLE) was at BLDHD performing a non-community water supply program audit. Peacock added that when the EGLE consultant was finished, they had contacted her to commend Johnston on what a wonderful job that he is doing with the program. The consultant had mentioned that the way the program is managed should be used as a model for the whole State. BLDHD administers the program for EGLE as part of a Grant Agreement. The grant does not pay for the complete costs it takes to run the non-community water supply program; it only pays for about 71% of the total cost. Johnston is a part of a work group that is meeting with the State to discuss alleviating some of the workload burden and reimbursing local health departments for more of the costs to administer the non-community water supply program. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the first meeting to talk to the State about this is scheduled. Sauer asked if restaurants pay for their water tests. Johnston responded that they are billed annually by the State. The State collects the money and then they send a portion of that to the local health departments to administer the program. The facilities that are part of the noncommunity program are also responsible for paying the lab fees for their required water quality monitoring tests.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Food and Dairy Division offered to do voluntary audits of local health department food service programs. BLDHD has volunteered. It is a good way to see if we have any areas of our program can be improved. They will come to perform this voluntary audit in April.

Nick Dow has created a guidance manual for the public pool operators in our two Counties. It was mailed to each licensed pool facility along with their 2021 license. Sauer asked how many public pools were there in Benzie and Leelanau. Johnston estimated that there are 27 public pools (actual number of licensed pools/spas = 40).

Johnston shared a handout that he had created which lists various resources that could financially assist individuals with septic or well repair or replacement. He has posted this information on BLDHD's website. If anyone could think of any other ways to post this information to the public, please let him know. Dr. Conley was wondering how to get more people to look at BLDHD's website. It was mentioned that this information could be shared on Facebook or at Community Connections. Dr. Conley suggested sending this information to all the companies that work with wells and septic systems in our area. They could share this with clients as they work with them.

Crystal Lake Township digital property files are now available online. Nye asked if the villages of Beulah and Benzonia were included in the records that are posted online. The Villages are included but are not listed individually online because those properties have the same property number format as the township properties. The City of Frankfort is the only municipality in Benzie

County that will be listed separately from the townships because they have a unique property number format that is assigned to those properties by the county. Johnston has been working on making the application process more user friendly for people to use. He hopes to have the new electronic applications available for use by the public around March 1st. The new electronic form will allow a person to fill out the application and submit it right from their computer with no need to print it off and mail it or drop it off at our office as is required presently. Another new feature is that applicants will also be able to pay for their application online with a credit card which they can't do currently.

**Administrative – Dodie Putney**

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. The audit took place last week. She is hoping to be able to present it at the March 30, 2022 meeting. This year a single audit was required due to the amount of federal funds that were received by BLDHD.

There will be a Management Meeting on February 24, 2022 to go over what the needs will be for the addition to the Benzie Resource Center. With the original design the estimates for the addition were approximately three million dollars. This was higher than expected, so there will be a meeting tomorrow to see what everybody absolutely needs and what the partnering agencies may be able to pay. On February 28<sup>th</sup> BLDHD has a meeting with Leelanau County to start exploring BLDHD moving their Leelanau office in the Leelanau Government Center. Sauer asked if the BOH will be a part of the decision making in the addition to Benzie Resource Center. Putney responded, yes, they will be. Once there is a final concept it will be brought to the Board. Sauer mentioned that this building was initially paid for by bond. It was then turned over to BLDHD to use as long as it was used for specific public purposes. Peacock pointed out that the building is currently owed by Northern Health Foundation. The building was almost paid for but then the last addition was built and created another mortgage on the building. In 2015 Benzie County waived ownership rights for the building as the mortgage was being written for construction costs. A quick claim deed was written to transfer ownership to the Northern Health Foundation. The mortgage that was taken out at that time was for twenty years. Once the mortgage is paid for it will become property of BLDHD. Refinancing for another addition will push back full ownership of the building again.

**Public Comment – None**

**Board Comments –**

Dr. Conley read the Resolution of Commendation for Peacock. Sauer mentioned that the NALBOH is August 1<sup>st</sup> through the 3<sup>rd</sup>. If someone is going to present it is due now. He asked if BOH members normally go. Peacock answered, no. She had gone to one in Colorado when the Shire project was just beginning. She had presented at this meeting. District #10 normally will send BOH members.

**Adjourn:**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little to adjourn the BOH meeting at 4:08 p.m.

**Second By:** Sauer

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye - yea, Conley- yea, Bunek-yea, Soutas-Little- yea

**5 yeas    nay    0 excused    Motion carried**

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Dr. Barbara Conley, Chair

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Shelley Jablon, Recording Secretary

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