

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Wednesday, November 18, 2020 2:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson Gary Sauer called the meeting to order at 2:08 pm.

Members Present:

Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners
Carolyn Rentenbach – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
Linda Farrell – Benzie County Board of Commissioners
Dr. Barbara Conley – Leelanau County Member at Large
Dr. Mark Kuiper – Benzie County Member at Large- arrived at 2:54

Members Absent: None

Members Excused:

Tony Ansoerge - Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

Staff Present:

Lisa Peacock – Health Officer
Dr. Joshua Meyerson – Medical Director
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services

Guests Present: None

Pledge of Allegiance: It was agreed to dispense with the pledge of alliance today due to the meeting being held via video conference.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion By: Conley to approve the Regular Board of Health Meeting of September 23, 2020.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve agenda as presented

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Public Comment – None

Health Officer Update – Lisa Peacock

Public Health Statement:

This week, we continue to experience a surge of COVID-19 across the northern Michigan Region. It is normal to feel distressed about this as the virus begins to touch each of us in different ways. For months many of us were able to say that we did not know anyone who had COVID but now that is very different. Our family members and friends have been diagnosed, quarantined, hospitalized, or even passed away. As

our schools, healthcare system, businesses, and other employers are impacted by absences due to isolation and quarantine, it gets harder and harder to balance all the demands. It is no wonder the stress is palpable as we all try to cope with this each day. It is stress, it is grief, it is trauma, and it is real. The upside though is that this is northern Michigan, these are communities who care. We are used to caring for the strangers who visit our beautiful area each year and deep down we know that we care for each other. There has never been a more important time to pull together to fight against our common enemy – this virus. This is the culprit that has taken our normalcy and we have learned so much over the past months about what we need to do to fight it.

When we were charged with “flattening the curve” back in the spring, we had a clear goal of protecting the healthcare system from an unmanageable surge. While this is still an important goal, a sustained pandemic requires a different type of resilience. Not only do we need to protect the healthcare system, but we need to protect our economy, our school systems, and our loved ones. In public health, managing this pandemic means that we continue to work to reduce transmission of the virus as much as possible to protect those at risk for severe illness or death while we await effective treatment and vaccines. This means we continue our usual work of identifying positive cases as quickly as possible through access to testing in our communities, investigating positive cases and tracing their contacts so that isolation and quarantine can be initiated and keeping the public informed about the virus and the mitigation measures that can slow it down. However, as cases and positivity soar and hospital beds fill up, we need the help of everyone in the community. If you aren’t sure what you can do, wear your mask everywhere you go, be mindful to stay home and away from others if you don’t feel well, resist the temptation to go to a party or a gathering in an indoor space, opt for takeout instead of dining in, and support your family members and friends when they need to be quarantined. These steps may seem simple, but they ARE what is most needed to protect all of us, especially our vulnerable community members. Hospitalizations and deaths rise when cases rise in the community because the virus spreads from person to person eventually to those most vulnerable. Remember that our bubble may be bigger than we think it is and we are exposed not only to those within it but those they interact with as well.

We need your help in another way. As our health departments have seen increases as high as eight and tenfold over the past few weeks, it is becoming more and more difficult to complete all the case investigations and contact tracing in front of us each day. We are working with schools and businesses to assist us in quickly identifying and notifying contacts of their need to quarantine and are constantly developing resources to support them in their efforts to help us. Although this is very helpful, we are still experiencing delays as case investigations involve phone tag and interviews that can take minutes to hours. We have brought in additional resources including quickly expanded staffing, additional technology, and partnership with the State. Even with all of this, it is impossible to cover new case counts as high as nearly 100 per day in some cases. For this reason, we need everyone who seeks a test for COVID-19 to do several things: stay home until you get your test results – if you test positive, anyone you share close space with could end up quarantined. If you are told that you have tested positive for COVID-19, you need to isolate at home for 10 days from the start of your symptoms or from the date your test was taken if you have no symptoms. You should notify anyone you have had close contact with (within 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes or more) starting 48 hours before your symptoms began, and instruct them to quarantine for 14 days from their last contact with you. We need everyone to understand and share this information because you may not hear from the health department in a timely way as we begin to prioritize cases. We are pleading with our communities to step up to this challenge – without a vaccine yet, isolation and quarantine are our most effective tools to slow down the spread of COVID-19.

MDHHS released guidance earlier this week for local health departments to realign priorities in case investigation and contact tracing as surging cases strain the public health system. They remind us that the core principles of case investigation are to:

- Ensure anyone who is positive for COVID-19 is aware of that status (through test results or symptoms/exposure)
- Educate people who have tested positive about isolation and household spread
- Identify close contacts of those who have tested positive and inform them of their need to quarantine to prevent secondary transmission
- Identify the source of exposure for those who have tested positive

When cases rise rapidly and significantly, the local health department cannot do this alone which is why it is important for everyone to understand these instructions and to follow through with them. In order to manage this process more effectively the guidance encourages prioritization of the highest risk cases such as confirmed cases over probable cases, cases at high risk for rapid spread or spread to those at risk for severe illness such as school staff, healthcare staff, and those living in congregate settings as well as using abbreviated versions of the case investigation.

Although there is an urgent need to pull together to continue our fight against COVID-19, there is also hope on the horizon. The public announcement about vaccine development aligns with our internal preparations for it. We are actively engaged in the early stages of planning for vaccine distribution as the state and national authorities establish prioritization criteria and supply chain processes. Our doctors and hospitals are successfully caring for patients with COVID as treatment options continue to develop but they desperately need our help to ensure that they can take care of us when we need it! We have multiple mitigation measures in place with growing evidence of their efficacy and we have been building our community resilience for months. It is time to take a deep breath and commit together to see this through – we CAN do this.

Accounts Payable

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve accounts payable and pay the bills in the amount of \$246,828.61.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea

4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

September 2020 Financial Statements

Putney stated that current expected financials are \$66,785 to the good for year end. The final amended budget was \$30,000, which is \$36,000 more than what was budgeted. Putney explained that she tends to budget quite conservatively, the difference is largely due to more revenue in Environmental Health fees and the expenditures were not as high as she anticipated them to be, therefor that caused the increase. Putney is working on preparing the year-end financials and still needs to adjust the local appropriation funds to shift some funding Environmental Health received and better suit the increased need for funds in Personal Health. Some of the DEQ and MDHHS funds received by Environmental Health will be shifted to Personal Health for the Covid response. After receiving permission from the State, Putney will also be shifting some funds received for food service that we were not able to utilize entirely due to many food establishments being shut down due to Covid. Once the shifting of funds is completed it should balance out quite well.

Motion By: Rentenbach to accept the financial statements as presented.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea

4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

MERS Defined Benefit Addendum

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve Defined Benefit Addendum as presented.

Seconded By: Sauer

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea

4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

MERS Defined Contribution Addendum

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve Defined Contribution Addendum as presented.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Open Meetings Act Electronic Meeting Resolution

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, Resolution #2 of 2020, establishing procedures to allow electronic meetings of all Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department public bodies and allow members to participate remotely as presented.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Leelanau Early Childhood Agreement

Motion By: Farrell to approve and support the Agreement for Leelanau Early Childhood services between Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department and Leelanau County.

Seconded By: Rentenbach

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Benzie-Leelanau Northern Health Foundation Lease Modification

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve and authorize the lease modification with Northern Health Foundation to acquire the adjacent property.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea
4 yeas 0 nay 2 excused Motion carried

Kuiper arrived at 2:54

Staff Holiday Pay

The purpose of this policy is to define how exempt staff will be compensated for work that is required to be completed on holidays during the Covid19 pandemic response.

When exempt staff are scheduled to work, or are given permission to work on a holiday during the Covid19 pandemic response, they will receive the following bonus pay in addition to their regular salary:

- Less than four hours worked on a holiday - \$50 bonus
- More than four hours worked on a holiday - \$100 bonus

Work completed on a holiday that was not scheduled or pre-approved will not be eligible for holiday pay unless they are responding to an urgent/emergency related situation to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve and support staff holiday pay for the exempt staff working holidays.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Kuiper-Yea
5 yeas 0 nay 1 excused Motion carried

Service Premium Pay

Service premium pay in recognition of service to the community during the pandemic response above and beyond usual job duties.

Motion By: Farrell to approve premium pay of \$1000 for each regular, permanent employee at Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department for a total of \$36,000.

Seconded By: Rentenbach

Roll Call Vote: Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Kuiper-Yea

Board Member Gary Sauer recused himself from this item due to a conflict of interest.

4 yeas 0 nay 1 excused 1 recused Motion carried

Job Classification Schedule

Motion By: Conley to approve and support the job classification schedule as presented.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Kuiper-Yea

5 yeas 0 nay 1 excused Motion carried

Staff Reports:

Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson

Dr. Meyerson briefly talked about the large numbers of flu vaccines being given as well as many Mass Vaccination Clinics occurring.

Dr. Meyerson educated and shared on his knowledge of the treatment for Covid and how it has evolved over time, Doctors and hospital staff are learning more efficient ways to treat Covid patients which is why overtime we are seeing that people being hospitalized for Covid are having shorter hospital stays with less people on ventilators and spending shorter amounts of time on the ventilators. A lot of the treatment advances has not been a specific medication but rather how they manage their patients during hospital care. Meyerson stated that the most efficient medication available to his knowledge currently for treating Covid patients would likely be dexamethasone, which is a relatively inexpensive old-time steroid pill.

Personal Health – Michelle Klein was excused; Peacock spoke briefly on behalf of Klein and Personal Health.

Peacock stated that in addition to being proactive with Covid cases in our area, we are continuing to provide our regular personal health services that are necessary. Peacock reminds us of is the importance of looking at the childhood indicators, like the percentage of children that get tested for lead and the importance of children staying up to date on immunizations when WIC clinics and in person immunizations are slowed down. While adjustments to schedules were needed in the last few weeks to stay on top on contact tracing for Covid, we are still prioritizing all the necessary and important services, that we routinely offer.

Environmental Health – Eric Johnston was excused; Johnston provided the written report below in his absence.

1. Land Use Program (FY 2019 vs FY 2020)

- Septic Only Permits Issued = 216 vs 247 (14.35%)
- Well Permits Issued = 136 vs 127 (-6.62%)
- Combined Well & Septic Permits = 187 vs 189 (1.07%)
- Vacant Land Evaluations = 97 vs 130 (34.02%)
- Existing System Evaluations = 370 vs 372 (0.54%)
- Well Final Inspections = 26 vs 27 (3.84%)
- Septic System Final Inspections = 200 vs 228 (14.0%)

- Remodel Reviews = 37 vs 24 (-35.14%)
- Overall FY 2020 land use job numbers were **up 6.13%** as compared to FY 2019.
- The increase can be contributed to significantly more septic system permits (+31), vacant land evaluations (+33), and septic system final inspections (+28).
- The increase in the number of FY 2020 jobs is surprising since it was felt that the COVID-19 pandemic would suppress activities in these program areas.
- I commend the land use sanitarians (Clay McNitt, Marc Grossnickle, Jim Reardon, and Xavier Gagne') and support staff (Vicki Houdek, Sanna Johnson, & Joyce Pleva) for their herculean efforts to meet the increased demand and to provide the permits & reports to the public as quickly as possible.

2. Centerville Township Point of Sale/Time of Transfer Ordinance

- On October 14th, Centerville Township passed a point of sale/time of transfer ordinance that is modeled after the Empire Township ordinance.
- The ordinance goes into effect on November 22, 2020.
- The ordinance requires that our office conduct all well and septic system evaluations and provide a report of the findings to the applicant.
- It is expected that this ordinance will increase the number of existing system evaluations by an average of 17 per year.

3. Bingham Township Short Term Rental Ordinance

- On October 19th, Bingham Township passed a short-term rental ordinance.
- The ordinance requires that “proof of a properly functioning wastewater disposal system” be provided at the time of application for a short-term rental permit. It also limits the number of occupants to a maximum of ten (10) individuals or “two (2) occupants per bedroom as permitted on the Health Department permit”, whichever is less.
- The ordinance will increase the workload demands on staff in the form of:
 - Providing the short-term rental owner, a copy of their septic permit and final inspection report (if available).
 - OR
 - Providing the short-term rental owner, a copy of any septic system evaluation reports (if available)
 - OR
 - Conducting a septic system evaluation for all short-term rental properties which are lacking adequate records.
- The ordinance allows for a maximum of 84 permit applications per year
 - The township began accepting applications on November 5th
 - As of November 9th, the Township had received 27 applications
 - As of November 12th, we have received 11 applications for existing system evaluations and have provided copies of permits & reports for the rest.
- The township will begin enforcing the ordinance on January 1, 2021.

4. Sanitarian Staff Addition

- As mentioned in my September EH Director’s report, it has been decided to add another Sanitarian to our staff.
- The position opening was posted on October 26th. We are taking applications until November 13th with the hope that the position will be filled by early to mid-December.

5. EH Program Efficiency Improvement Efforts

- Leelanau County Office Property File Scanning – Staff is still in the process of reviewing the data for the purposes of removing or redacting information that may be considered an invasion of an individual’s privacy. At this time, the redaction process has been completed for

Bingham, Centerville, Cleveland, & Elmwood townships. It is a very time-consuming process, but we are making steady progress. I am hopeful that the process will speed up during the winter months.

- Benzie County Office Property Files Scanning Project – At the November 10th meeting of the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, the commissioners gave funding approval for this project. Currently, we are in discussions with our record scanning contractor to determine when the Leelanau County files will be returned, the Benzie County records picked up, and when the project is estimated to be completed. I will update the Board on the progress of the project at our next meeting.
- HealthSpace Upgrade – After reviewing the new program and deciding that it was not ready for a “go-live” date in October, the date was pushed off until early to mid-January. Training of the staff is planned for December.
- In our continuing effort to provide more on-line services to the public, we have contracted with General Code/Laserfiche to digitize and automate our application forms. It is expected that this process will be completed and available to the public by December 31, 2020. COVID funding resources are being used to finance this project.

Administrative – Dodie Putney

Putney stated that she has been working on managing the many different sources of Covid funding received and making sure to spend funds appropriately for allowable expenses, based on different factors and stipulations that the different Covid funding allows. Putney stated that some of the funding will be used for purchasing a vehicle, that can be used for pulling the testing trailer that was purchased in the last fiscal year. We have recently become members of MiDeal, and we are now members for the next year. MiDeal is The Michigan purchasing program. While Putney has been inquiring through different dealerships for the best quote for the purchase of the new vehicle, Putney mentioned she hopes to be able to give our business to a local dealership of which she has received positive experiences with. So far Watson’s in Benzonia has given her the best price on the purchase of the new vehicle for The Health Department.

Public Comment – None

Board Comments – None

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 3:29 pm



Gary Sauer, Chair

Renee Youker, Recording Secretary