

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
Wednesday, May 25, 2022 2:00 p.m.  
Leelanau County Government Center  
6527 E Government Center  
Suttons Bay MI 49682**

Chairperson Dr. Barbara Conley called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

**Members Present:**

- Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners
- Ty Wessell – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
- Patricia Soutas-Little – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
- Dr. Barbara Conley – Leelanau County Member at Large
- Mark Kuiper – Benzie County Member at Large
- Rhonda Nye – Benzie County Board of Commissioners

**Members Absent:** None

**Members Excused:** None

**Staff Present:**

- Dan Thorell – Interim 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:**

- Autumn Jurek – Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Motion By:** Soutas-Little to approve the April 27, 2022 BOH Meeting Minutes.
- Seconded By:** Sauer
- Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea,  
Nye - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Approval of the Agenda:**

- Motion By:** Sauer to approve the agenda as presented.
- Seconded By:** Nye
- Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea,  
Nye - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Public Comment – None**

**Immunizations – Autumn Jurek**

Autumn Jurek, BLDHD’s Immunization Coordinator, provided an update on the Immunization program. The Immunization program has an Internal and External Focus. The Internal Focus

includes the processes for immunization administration within our health department, monitoring immunization rates for our clients and facilitating appointment scheduling for those who are overdue for a vaccine, and emergency preparedness for mass vaccine administration. The External Focus includes supporting and monitoring local health care providers who participate in the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC); assisting school districts in meeting compliance requirements for student vaccination rates and reporting; Monitoring county level vaccination rates and conducting outreach to increase community awareness of vaccine needs and accessibility.

Almost all vaccines are available at the health department for both insured and uninsured individuals. For most individuals, vaccines are fully covered by insurance or a small administration fee is assessed. For others, particularly those with Medicare, large deductibles may apply. If finances are a barrier, we will work with the individual to find the least expensive option.

#### **Interaction with Health Department of Northwest Board of Health**

Dr. Conley had communicated with the Chair of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan Board of Health about the two BOHs having a closer relationship and more open communication in regard to the role of the Health Officer.

An idea that had been presented was that BLDHD BOH may want to consider creating a new position, Deputy Health Officer, to discuss at their June meeting. It would be added to an already existing employee, no additional staff would be hired for it.

#### **Health Officer Update – Dan Thorell**

A written report was distributed prior to the meeting for review. Please refer to it for details. The Public Health 3.0 is all about making sure everyone has access to health care. The PHAB accreditation is a very expensive process that not every health department can afford to have happen. BLDHD is following the guidelines to provide the quality care, they just are not certified. It has been proven that it is much more cost effective to provide preventative care than to pay for the treatment of preventable illnesses later. It was asked when mental health was going to become more of a prominent public health issue. The response was it has, health departments are getting grants to be able to place counselors in schools. This is to handle the lower-level mental health issues and outside agencies are used to handle the larger mental health issues. It was mentioned that it takes more than health departments and other county agencies to solve this issue, it takes the entire community. The three biggest factors that are holding back the treatment of mental health issues are insurance companies, lack of mental health care providers and stigma.

The idea to have both full BOHs meet would require a public meeting. The BLDHD BOH is open to this idea and they are also open to having the Chair and Vice Chair meet with two member of HDNW BOH. There was a discussion about potentially presenting the NWHD BOH with a new contract for the Health Officer position. This new contract would be more specific as to what BLDHD BOH is looking for in a Health Officer and what role the BLDHD BOH would be able to participate in the managing of this position. It was brought up that HDNW BOH may have new members after the November election. It may be best to wait until after elections to start negotiating a new contract with NWHD about the Health Officer position.

#### **Accounts Payable**

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

**Seconded By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea, Nye - yea

**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**April 2022 Financial Statements**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little to accept the financial statements as presented.

**Seconded By:** Wessel

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea,  
Nye - yea

**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Local Appropriations Request**

**Discussion:** The reason why Benzie County did not see a decrease in the request for appropriations is for three plus years they were not able to pay the percentage increase that would normally be a part of the appropriations request. Instead, the price of permit fees were increased to offset the lower appropriations. For 2023, the decrease in Benzie County permit fees would make the cost of permits the same for both Leelanau and Benzie Counties. Leelanau County has met the percentage increase for appropriations over the years, so not increasing the amount to be requested but a decrease for this coming year will once again make the contributions of both Counties equal. BLDHD will request \$255,248 from Benzie County and \$331,684 from Leelanau County. It was asked why the two counties pay different amounts and the reason is by the number of residents in each County. The appropriations formula is calculated by the number of residents per county.

**Motion By:** Sauer to approve the County appropriations request with no increase to either County, a \$16,251 decrease for Leelanau County and a decrease in permit fees for Benzie County.

**Second By:** Wessel

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea,  
Nye - yea

**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Staff Reports:**

**Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson**

A report was distributed prior to the meeting for review. Please refer to it for details. The report covered social factors that affect health.

**Personal Health – Michelle Klein**

A report was distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Please refer to it for details. State funding for HONU to provide COVID vaccine has ended. There are not many resources for vaccination in Benzie and Leelanau County and BLDHD is booked out several weeks. We are working with providers to increase access and also working on increasing our clinic availability. COVID testing continues at POMH on Tuesday/Friday and Lake Leelanau on Monday/Thursday. We may be adding an addition testing day in Benzie County.

The kindergarten dental program, to be implemented this summer, will provide dental screenings for incoming kindergarteners. Children will be referred to a primary dental provider, although there continue to be barriers in dental providers accepting new patients, particularly those with Medicaid.

**Environmental Health – Eric Johnston**

A report was distributed prior to the meeting. Please refer to it for details. There was a question on how beaches are selected for the beach monitoring program. There is only funding for so many beaches to be monitored, so a long time ago the Counties put together a list of the beaches that were the most important to be tested based upon the frequency and volume of users. If it is desired to add a particular beach, it can be added but another beach already being sampled would need to be removed due to the limited amount of funding available. The sampling location adjustment would go into the next year’s monitoring schedule.

MDHHS released a press statement about tick season. The article goes into detail about the symptoms of Lyme disease and Anaplasmosis, which are two of the top diseases that tick bites can cause. The number of cases of both diseases has been steadily increasing every year. Benzie and Manistee Counties have the highest number of reported cases for Anaplasmosis in the lower peninsula. The symptoms to look for after a tick bite are a rash, fever, and other flu like symptoms.

**Administrative – Dodie Putney**

A report was distributed prior to the meeting. Please refer to it for details. Putney spoke with the architect earlier in the day and the building plans were going out for estimate for the Benzie Resource Center. The discussion of how high building prices have gone up raised the question that if the price comes back too high would the project be placed on hold. The response was it would be considered. The work on the roof for the Benzie Resource Center will happen this year. Johnston also added that they are waiting to hear back from the architect that is working on the remodel project for the Leelanau Government Center to see how much the remodel would be to move the EH Department into that location. The State released the budget for allocations for the coming year earlier today. Putney is planning on being able to have a budget presented to the BOH earlier than normal this year since this information came in early.

**Public Comment – None**

**Board Comments –** Conley asked if people are able to call into a BLDHD BOH meeting, Putney explained that they can call the phone number that is listed on the agenda and enter in the code, they will then be able to listen into the meeting. The call is run through Teams.

**Adjourn:**

**Motion By:** Sauer to adjourn the BOH meeting at 4:34p.m.

**Second By:** Kuiper

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Conley- yea, Wessell- yea, Kuiper – yea, Soutas- Little – yea,  
Nye - yea

**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

*Barbara Conley M.D.*

Dr. Barbara Conley, Chair

*Shelley Jablon*

Shelley Jablon, Recording Secretary