

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Wednesday, January 26, 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
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 via Teams
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services
Eric Johnston – Director of Environmental Health
Michelle Klein - Director of Personal Health

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes:

Motion By: Bunek to approve the November 17, 2021 BOH Meeting Minutes.
Seconded By: Soutas-Little
Roll Call Vote: Sauer-yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea
5 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion By: Soutas-Little to approve agenda as presented.
Seconded By: Sauer
Roll Call Vote: Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea
5 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried

Public Comment –

Eric Shaub – Maple City – A licensed doctor should have to okay anyone to wear a face mask. He and his daughter are unable to wear them due to medical issues and they are always under attack from not having a mask on. They like to attend school sporting events and they feel like targets while they are there. The Health Department should be promoting a healthy lifestyle instead of face masks. Healthy lifestyles are not a cash cow, Covid is.

Ann Schlueter- Leland – If face masks worked, why are we still having all the sickness. If the Health Department would look at neighboring school districts who are not masked, they would see that they are not experiencing many issues. When a person disagrees with an individual it is not threatening, it is a differing opinion. Ann brought in copies of a FOIA request that had been submitted and stated that there were no real threats anywhere, just loud people with a different opinion.

Medical Director and Health Officer Vacancy

Sauer had requested that this item be an item of discussion at the previous meeting. Since that meeting a document has been provided that details Benize-Leelanau District Health Department's contingency plan. In this document it lists which positions will cover the Health Director or Medical Director's positions in case there is an unexpected vacancy. Sauer stated that the document sufficiently covered any concerns that he previously had. Bunek wondered why this was not an action item. Peacock explained that this document was created by BLDHD administration. It is not a document that is required to be voted on. It is an informational tool. It was created to easily identify who would be the contact for various situations. It can also be updated as needed as contact information may change.

Health Officer Update – Lisa Peacock

A written report was distributed prior to the meeting for review. Peacock asked if there were any questions about the information that was distributed. There were none. Peacock had prepared a slide show of additional information from the MDHHS website. It described the three buckets that the State of Michigan is using to manage the pandemic. The first one is to prevent death and severe health outcomes. The second bucket is to protect the health care capacity (hospitals and first responders). The third bucket is to keep vital infrastructure, such as schools, correction facilities, government and businesses, functioning. Part of the last bucket is educating the public on when to test for Covid and what the procedures are if a test is positive.

Covid has really spiked in the last couple of weeks. Cases had been rising due to the Delta variant but Omicron has pushed it through the roof. Hospitals are at the highest level of capacity that they ever have been for Covid patients. Nye asked if a person went to the hospital initially for a non-Covid related item but had to be tested out of protocol and the test came back positive, would this individual be counted as one of the Covid patients. Peacock responded that if this individual was admitted to the hospital, then yes, they would be counted. If the patient was treated as out-patient and sent home, no, they would not count in the statistics. Peacock mentioned that Southeast Michigan has had the biggest spike in hospitalizations. The hospitals in this area are the more specialized hospitals, which starts to affect our area when one of our residents needs that specialized care and cannot receive it because of lack of availability. The number of children who have been hospitalized has gone up about 66% from a year ago, due to Covid.

Nye asked if there was a plan for when the mask mandates in schools will be lifted. She also asked if, and when, the time came would it be up to the school districts or the parents to make these decisions. Peacock responded that she was hoping to have been able to lift the mandate at the beginning of the year but with the sharp increase in numbers that was not possible. When it comes time to lift the mandate it will be up to the individual school districts to manage this.

Peacock explained the different therapeutics that are being approved to treat Covid. She went into detail when they would need to be administered to be effective and how widely available that they are to the public.

Contact tracing is now being handled differently. The protocol up until the past week was to reach out to each person who had been reported as positive to interview. They would be asked where they had been and who they have been in contact with. With the mass amount of positive tests and the unwillingness of individuals to work with staff, it has been determined that contact tracing will

be focused on the congregate settings, such as long-term care facilities, jails and schools. People are encouraged to do their own contact tracing when they test positive. Previously it had been encouraged for individuals to report positive home tests on the website. With the number of these tests being performed and coming back positive, staff cannot keep up. It is now encouraged for people to reach out to the Health Department if they are interested in receiving assistance with how to contact trace.

Sauer asked if the doctor offices and hospitals had their own guidelines on how they distribute the therapeutics as the availability is an issue for various regions. Peacock responded, yes, each medical practice and hospital does have their own guidelines to determine how this medication will be distributed due to the availability issue. Dr. Conley added that there are thirteen open studies in progress right now in regard to some of these medications. Sauer asked if a person had a positive home test should they go see their doctor to be retested. It was discussed how it depends on the situation. Some employers are requiring a lab certified test to excuse a person for being out ill with Covid. Also, if a person is traveling, they should research to see if a home test is acceptable or if they need to go to a doctor's office or go to a lab to be tested to pass the requirements. Dr. Conley asked if the State of Michigan has ever discussed what quality control is used for proficiency testing of the Covid tests that are being administered at the labs. Peacock and Klein were going to investigate this.

Accounts Payable

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

Seconded By: Soutas-Little

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

Discussion: Sauer stated that he is comfortable reviewing the check register after the bills have been paid but was wondering if anybody would prefer to have the Personnel and Finance Committee approve the checks before the money is released. Everyone agreed that reviewing the register after the fact is sufficient. Items can be questioned if need be. Nye asked what are the TracFones, that were on the VISA statement, used for. Klein responded that they are used for contact tracing. As contact tracing slows up, these phones will be shut off. They were used because of the volume of calls that were going out to the public. Employees personal numbers would be protected this way.

September 2021 Financial Statements

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

Seconded By: Sauer

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

December 2021 Financial Statements

Motion By: Soutas-Little

Second By: Bunek

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

Discussion: Bunek asked why so much was being spent at Amazon. He felt that local businesses should be used more. Putney responded that a local company is used for BLDHD's paper needs. For everyday office needs such as pens and paperclips big box stores were the other option. So there really isn't much difference from shopping from one of the big box stores or Amazon for these items. Whatever can be sourced locally at a reasonable price will be and has been purchased this way.

By-Laws Committee Appointment

Motion By: Dr. Conley to have the Personnel and Finance Committee review the BLDHD's current By-Laws and create any necessary revisions by the June 2022 BOH Meeting.

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: Nye asked who was on the Personnel and Finance Committee. It is Sauer and Soutas-Little. Sauer questioned if additional Personnel and Finance Committee meetings would need to be scheduled other than the bi-monthly ones that are currently being held to complete the task of reviewing the By-Laws. It was decided that if they need to be scheduled that they can be. Sauer asked if a current copy of the By-Laws could be sent out. Putney is going to send them to everyone to review.

2022 Board of Health Meeting Dates

Motion By: Sauer to approve the BOH to meet monthly, rotating between the two Counties (Benzie Resource Center and the Leelanau Government Center), to meet every fourth Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m.

Second By: Bunek

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

Discussion: Sauer stated that he would like the BOH to meet monthly as there are several ongoing items. If there is a month where there is nothing to discuss, the meeting can be cancelled. Soutas-Little asked Klein, Johnston and Putney if meeting monthly would place too much of a burden on the BLDHD staff. All Directors agreed that this could work. Nye stated that she would like to see, on the months where the agenda only has a few items on it, that more educational subjects be placed on the agenda. She is interested in all the different funding sources and programs that are administered through the BLDHD. Dr. Conley wanted to confirm that the meetings would still be on the fourth Wednesday of the month and at 2 p.m. Everyone agreed that the time and date of this would remain the same as previous. Dr. Conley also wanted clarification that the meetings would rotate between Counties like they have been, and it was agreed. Putney brought up that it is a part of the current By-Laws that the meetings rotate between the Counties, also that the meetings are to be held at the Health Department locations. There will have to be an amendment to this By-Law as there is no longer space at the Leelanau location to host these meetings. The meetings will need to be at the Leelanau Government Center.

Classification Schedule

Putney had distributed the job classification schedule prior for review. Putney recognized that there was a significant amount of information to be reviewed in this document, therefore it was not going to be an action item for this meeting. She wanted everyone to have sufficient amount of time to review the document. The document scored the positions that she would like to have reclassified. These two current positions were accidentally left out of the initial reclassification process in December 2020. The document contains the scoring instructions and how the two positions landed with this. It was also compared to other positions within BLDHD that received similar scores to show how they were related in skill need. Nye asked what the salary change for these two positions would be. Putney responded approximately \$20,000 for the two positions combined.

Staff Reports:

Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. Dr. Meyerson's report was about the role and requirement of a medical director for a health department. He stated that most of his duties are

spelled out in the Public Health Code. As he has performed this role, he has noticed that every district is unique. He oversees three different districts. Dr. Meyerson notes that there are only a few things that he can handle the same across all three. He usually needs to tweak many items to fit the needs of the different areas. Some of the items that he expands on are nutrition guidance for expectant mothers and small children (WIC). He will assist with food born illness outbreaks and various other environmental health issues that may arise, such as swimmer's itch and PFAs. Nye asked if he was hired under contract with HDNW. Dr. Meyerson responded, that yes, Peacock and himself were entering the second year of the second five-year contract that they have had with HDNW.

Personal Health – Michelle Klein

Written report distributed at the beginning of the meeting. This handout contained all of the various services that Personal Health provides to the community. The demographics that BLDHD works with are pregnant mothers all the way to the elderly. Klein had also listed all of the community collaboration projects that the Health Department is involved with. Klein provided a roster of her staff. Next to their names she listed the various programs that they service. She likes to have her staff cross trained in all areas so they can serve the community more efficiently.

Sauer asked about the school nurses that were hired this fall. He was wondering if they were strictly funded with Covid funding. At the moment, yes; they are. More long term, sustainable funding is being investigated for these positions as they are much needed in the school districts. Nye asked about the Shape Up North collaboration that was listed on the handout. It is led by Munson and was very robust before the pandemic. It is a website that helps direct the public to activities that encourage physical fitness, such as 5K runs, hiking trails and other activities that people can partake in. Peacock mentioned that Rachel Pomeroy, a staff member at BLDHD, has created a nutrition program that has been shared with families that are attending the Early Childhood play groups. Klein added that there is a lot of grant writing that is performed to obtain funding to provide many of the programs that are offered. Soutas-Little mentioned that she saw a presentation about the dental program that is offered through NMHSI and was impressed. She wondered if the mobile dentist office was being offered at this time. Due to Covid it had to stop for a bit but it is starting back up. This mobile office offers dental checkups for children free of charge. Dr. Conley asked about the counselors in schools. Klein explained that the counselor that is at Suttons Bay is not funded through Covid funding but through a more sustainable funding source. It was through a grant that was awarded to HDNW. Peacock added that to receive this grant a district had to have already received funding from it. HDNW had previously been awarded this grant, so they partnered with BLDHD to be able to help them provide services. BLDHD had sent a grant application in a few years ago for Benzie Central to receive funding for a counselor but had been denied. BLDHD has an application filled out and ready to send as soon as the new round of bids begin in February for Benzie Central and they are hoping to be awarded it. Nye asked if the HDNW and BLDHD ever coordinate with Centra Wellness for services and the answer was, yes, all of the time. Sauer asked how are the students referred to the counselor in Suttons Bay. Klein responded that it is teachers, parents and the students themselves who are referring individuals to see the counselor.

Environmental Health – Eric Johnston

Written report distributed prior to meeting and an attachment was handed out at the beginning of the meeting. A new Sanitarian had been hired, Alex Lance. He started on January 17, 2022. January is Radon Month. BLDHD is hosting the campaign "Give a Can, Get a Kit". A person can bring in a nonperishable food item or personal hygiene item and receive a free radon kit. This is being offered through January 31, 2022. For the eleven months out of the year when residents would pay \$12 for a kit, generally five kits a month are sold. So far this month 45 kits have been given away. Nye asked what may have prompted the significant jump in kits being requested by

the public. Johnston responded that there was better advertising this year than in years' past. 9&10 News did a story on this campaign, there is more knowledge out there on how radon causes lung cancer and that one in four homes have elevated levels of radon. Klein asked if there were any areas that were more prone to have radon over others and Johnston responded that bedrock will contain more radon. The State does not give the health departments exact locations on where the radon was found. The only information that can be shared is what township that the radon was found in.

The handout that was distributed at the beginning of the meeting described all the various services that Environmental Health provides. The three services that are mandated by the State of Michigan are food service, sewage and water. The rest are grant funded. Some services such as wells, septic and remodels are fee funded. When an entity or person would like to build a subdivision or condos it has to be reviewed to make sure everything for sewer and water will be acceptable. Currently there are two body art businesses that are inspected. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services pays for the inspection of foster homes. Other areas of inspections are campgrounds, public pools and public beach monitoring. The types of infectious diseases that the sanitarians will investigate are rabies, ticks, and other pest-borne diseases. Nye asked if BLDHD is bound by township ordinances or does the BLDHD policies supersede. Johnston responded that if it is not directly dealing with water or sewer, it will be governed by the township ordinance. If it is something that falls in the gray area, it will be a joint effort between the BLDHD and township.

Nye asked if the State Legislature had passed any policies regarding marijuana use in restaurants. Johnston replied that it is still sitting in committee.

Leelanau County is completely online for property records. All of the files for this County have been redacted and the files were able to be posted for the public to access. For Benzie County, Almira Township and Benzonia Township are the first two townships that are available for the public to access. Crystal Lake Township is in the process of being redacted right now. Peacock announced that Johnston had received an award from Laser Fiche for his hard work and achievement in getting public records accessible online. Johnston has been assisting other health departments in digitalizing their public records. At the moment, Grand Traverse County Health Department is consulting with him on how to post their records online. Johnston pointed out that Peacock had spearheaded the idea and Bunek congratulated all who had worked on the project.

Administrative – Dodie Putney

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. BLDHD will be upgrading their phone system. Putney has been working with Gracon Services with the upgrading process. She has used this company before and found them extremely helpful and cost effective for such a large project. The phone system was updated five years ago but it is now outdated. BLDHD's phone lines are no longer under contract, so this provides the opportunity to move the phone system to an internet cloud-based system. This will allow BLDHD to get rid of some costly PRI phone lines. The final bid will be ready around May 10th so it will be able to be presented to the Board at the June meeting. Another upgrade that is being investigated is video conferencing. The only technology that is currently available for this is when it is borrowed from Centra Wellness. It is only available in one conference room. BLDHD would install another system in the other conference room. Covid money has been used to update computers throughout BLDHD. Bunek asked for clarification that it was all Covid money being used for the technology projects or was there any general fund money going into this. Putney responded it was all Covid funding. Sauer stated that Benzie County is experiencing issues with broadband. They need more of it. He wondered if BLDHD was in the same position. Putney responded that it is becoming an issue as more software is becoming Cloud based. BLDHD uses Wyant Computer services to help monitor and manage these items, such as firewalls and virtual servers. Putney mentioned that BLDHD is participating in a Rural Health Care program that enables BLDHD to receive a funding to help offset the internet costs.

The Fund Balance Policy was brought up in the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting that was held prior the BOH meeting. It was discussed that ideally three months of funds should be available in case something happened. This is rarely achieved. This year the Health Department ended their fiscal year with a surplus. This normally never happens. Covid funding helped bring the fund balance within the ideal amount. Nye stated that she believes this is a very important discussion that should be brought back to the Counties in regard to appropriations. The Fund Balance is going to be explored in future meetings.

Public Comment –

Cory Schaub – Why are the Health Departments collaborating with the schools on future masking policies? He has a health condition that does not allow him to mask in school settings and he feels that he is targeted for not wearing them. All people who have exemptions are being targeted. The PCR tests lost it's FDA Emergency Use approval so why do we trust these tests.

Ann Schlueter – She would like to see a concrete back to school plan for masks. She asked Klein if parents are aware that their students are receiving mental health care when they are at school. Klein responded that parents must provide consent for this to happen. Ann asked if there had been any studies done to show how speech is being delayed and how kids are losing empathy because with the mask wearing they can no longer identify with one another. Kids are breathing through there mouths all day which is creating dental issues.

Board Comments –

Sauer responded to a question that Ann Schlueter had regarding the mental health funding. Sauer stated that it was a matter for the school boards to address not the Health Department.

Adjourn:

Motion By: Soutas-Little to adjourn the BOH meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Second By: Bunek

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

Barbara Conley M.D.

Dr. Barbara Conley, Chair

Shelley Jablon

Shelley Jablon, Recording Secretary