

Health Board Minutes
November 21, 2023
Members present in person at the Health Department and on Zoom

Members Present:

Michael Day
Thomi Elmore
Cynthia Rose
Catherine Rountree
James Zimmerly

Staff Present:

Taylor Alton
Jennifer Heller
John Kennard
Kim Prendergast
Ernie Reed
Seleah Settle
Dr. Norman Oestrike, Health Officer

Board chair Thomi Elmore called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting July 18, 2023, and Special Meeting August 22, 2023

Motion to approve the minutes from the July 18 Special Meeting passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the minutes from the August 22 Special Meeting passed unanimously.

Health Officer- Dr. Norman Oestrike

a. Septic State Code

- I. Dr. Oestrike said the department is navigating operating under the new legislature. Amongst many other new things, the state code now allows a homeowner to hire a licensed engineer to sign off on their plans, then the department is required to issue a septic permit even if the environmentalist does not agree with the plans. In instances where the state code approves a proposal that the department does not agree with, the environmentalist will issue a letter stating that the law allows it, but the department does not recommend it. With the legislature, it puts the department in an advisory role where only recommendations can be made due to the lack of enforcement.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the Health Officer's report passed unanimously.

Front Office- Judy Hess and Taylor Alton – Report Mailed

a. Dr. Lindsay Weaver-IDOH Visit

- I. Taylor Alton stated that the Health Commissioner, Dr. Lindsay Weaver, and a few of her colleagues visited the office on November 17th. The purpose of the meeting was for Dr. Weaver to introduce herself and hear concerns from the local level, as she is traveling to every health department.

b. Health First Indiana Workshop

- I. Taylor said the state has arranged a Health First Indiana Workshop for the local health departments on Tuesday, November 28 in Bedford. She will go to this workshop along with the nursing staff. This meeting is to further discuss funding, how to meet the key performance indicators, and building partnerships between surrounding counties.

c. 2024 Meeting Dates

- I. Jim Zimmerly requested that the January 16 meeting be moved to January 23. There was no opposition.

d. New Attorney

- I. The department's current attorney, John Reames, will retire on January 1, 2024. A new attorney, Chris Jeeter, has been hired to take his place. To bring Mr. Jeeter up to speed, he is working with Mr. Reames for the remainder of the year.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve moving the January 16, 2024, meeting to January 23, 2024, passed unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the front office report passed unanimously.

Emergency Preparedness-Corey Frost– Report Mailed

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the emergency preparedness report passed unanimously.

Nursing- Seleah Settle & Kim Prendergast– Report Mailed

a. New Nurse & Duties

- I. Seleah Settle introduced Kim Prendergast who was hired in August in the full-time nursing position. Seleah said they are currently training Kim in all their normal processes and procedures. Once acclimated, Kim will transition to more school health-related duties to fulfill the key performance indicator set by the state. Seleah stated that she does not fully know what those duties will entail but she is looking forward to the Health First Indiana Workshop to see how other counties plan to meet the requirements.
- II. Dr. Oestrike announced that the department has decided to partner with the Early Education Center. Care is provided to children aged 2 to 5 years old. Kim will be heavily involved with this center as well.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the nursing report passed unanimously.

Environmental Health –Jennifer Heller – Report Mailed

a. Restaurant Updates

- I. Jennifer Heller clarified that the old Brown Bike restaurant has now become Cooper’s Alley. They have a unique way of serving their food and they do not have a set menu, as it is farm-to-table style food and changes frequently. The owners plan to expand the building in the future.
- II. A local restaurant was discovered to have a severe cockroach infestation. They were shut down for a week so a remediation company could bomb the entire restaurant.
- III. The state is still in the process of updating its food code. They are also developing an online system for submitting food complaints. It is unknown when these changes will be implemented.
- IV. Eventually Jennifer would like to see a digital way to sign annual food license applications. This would significantly reduce the cost of postage for the department. Taylor added that it would be helpful for birth and death certificate applications as well for people out of state.

b. Mosquito & Tick Control Presentation

- I. Jennifer stated that the state’s medical entomologist, Jeanette McGavic, would be doing a small presentation in the conference room on Wednesday, November 29 from 1:30-2:30 pm. She will be discussing vector control. Jeannette will be highlighting hot spots within our terrain, providing tips for prevention, and outlining the state’s goals for vector surveillance for 2024. Jennifer said anyone is allowed to attend this presentation. Taylor said she would send out a Zoom link for those interested.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the environmental health report passed unanimously.

Environmental Health-John Kennard & Ernie Reed-Report Mailed

a. Septic Ordinance

- I. The local septic ordinance can be enforced again if it is first approved by Commissioners and then approved through a state committee as well. The state’s septic ordinance committee has admitted they will not accept anything stricter than the state code, therefore, significantly reducing the chance of the local ordinance being approved.
- II. John Kennard suggested that before it is sent to Commissioners for approval the fines and fees should be raised. Since there was difficulty in getting the ordinance passed the first time, it was collectively decided that if it is sent to commissioners for approval again, the ordinance would be kept as is. John and Ernie expressed their concerns it would not get approved again by the Commissioners.
- III. Ernie stated that he would do more research and talk to surrounding counties about their provisions and enforcement of the state code. If the department can find a way to have enforcement and authority through the state code instead of trying to pass the ordinance again, that would be the ideal solution.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to table discussion regarding the septic ordinance passed unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to approve the environmental health report passed unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Motion to adjourn meeting at approximately 6:00 pm passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Norman Oestrike, MD
Health Officer