**Porter County Board of Health**

Tuesday April 5, 2022

Room 205

**In Attendance:** Attorney Dave Hollenbeck, Chairman Martin Moeller, Health Officer Dr. Maria Stamp, Terry Wuletich, Dr. Patrick Fleming Dr. Derek Gasper, Dr. Linda Boxum, Kathy Lemmon and Suzanne Phelps

Chairman Moeller called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Patrick Fleming made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting, seconded by Dr. Derek Gasper. All were in favor. Motion carries.

**Announcements:**

Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 7, 2022 due to primary election in May unless critical business arises.

**New Business:**

We have received three different grant funds that we recently received. The first fund is the COVID-19 vaccination supplement grant for $345,894.75. This grant will reimburse the health department for the cost of hiring temporary staff, supplies, travel and equipment costs incurred with the COVID vaccine and boosters.

The second fund is the Epidemiology grant for $100,000.00. This grant will reimburse the health department for staff and storage units rented to store PPE.

The third fund is the Workforce Development CoAg grant for $440,000.00. The nursing staff will work with the 69 Porter County schools to assist with communicable disease and health screenings for vision, hearing and dental. We had a choice to hire out or to use our own nurses. Since our staff already has a relationship with the schools in the county, we decided to use current staff and to provide a temporary increase in pay to handle the extra workload. The increase will only apply while we have the grant.

Dr. Stamp also signed a grant agreement today for $1,000.00 from IDOH. The deliverable is completely the local health department survey, which we should receive shortly. This is the first time they have offered an incentive to complete the survey.

The nursing division has been looking at several vendors for EHR software. We currently have six different systems to go into for each patient appointment. We had several demos with various software vendors and the staff all agrees that CureMD is the best option. They offer the most options and have the capability to expand. This will streamline the process for the nursing division.

We would like to offer an alternate work schedule. We want to make it easier for parents and patients to schedule hours after school or work. We will still be open five days per week with evening hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This will allow us to offer extended hours without earning comp time or flextime. We wanted to get approval from the Board of Health before we went in front of the Commissioners. This is just for the Valparaiso location at this time. Dr. Fleming’s office has tried this and it works out well for patients and staff. They appreciate the flexibility. Would be beneficial for doctors to be able to offer something to their patients.

Two years ago, we talked about increasing our fees, but with COVID we put it on hold. We are revisiting our fees for all divisions. Since we are self-sustainable, we need to make sure we charging adequate fees for the cost associated with each service. The Foods Division is not looking at increases in permit fees, but adding new programs such as vending machine inspections. Dave will work with the staff to see what changes if any need to be made.

**COVID update:**

We have a bit of a breather with low community transmission. The FDA approved the second booster for Moderna and Pfizer. Recommended to those fifty years or older and those that are 12 and up and immunocompromised. COVID state website has changed their tracking and map to reflect the CDC’s map. They are now looking at cases and hospitalizations instead of positivity rates. We no longer have to report negative rapid tests to the state. We have to report all PCR tests regardless of results and positive antigen tests. The current COVID variant that BA122 about 27% in Indiana. Antiviral treatment is not as effective. Oral medicines are still effective.

ISDH is looking into doing more wastewater monitoring. They were looking for wastewater treatment utility companies that are willing to work with them.

Dave Hollenbeck provided updates on two litigation matters. The EEOC advised that they are not going to pursue the complaint Linda Maglish made on discrimination. The other is the Patten matter. They sued the Health Department alleging negligence in our handling of the issuance of a private disposal permit. The act occurred ten years ago. Lawsuit has been dismissed with prejudice.

General Assembly act 1245 was signed by the Governor two weeks ago. If there is a septic technology that the state approves we have to approve the design whether it is allowed in our county or not. We cannot be more stringent than the state guideline, so we cannot require perimeter drains on septic systems. Porter County currently has a minimum absorption field size of six hundred square feet. We will now need to allow smaller size based on the number of bedrooms. Previously we could not be more lenient than the state now we have to follow the code exactly. This is a state code and does not take in the consideration of different soils. For instance, sandy soils will be handled the same way as clay soils. We will have inspectors trained on all systems that the state approved. We need to document all systems to have the data if issues start to arise. We would like to get signed release hold harmless agreements on systems that do not meet our current criteria or systems our inspectors have not been trained on.

We are losing our administrator. HR has been assisting with the process. We will first focus on internal candidates. It was posted on the county website on April 4 and will be online for ten days. Applications will be reviewed and interviews set up.

We had to deal with intruders that brought in video cameras. Dave has asked the Commissioners that we designate the rotunda on the first floor (the waiting area) posted no cameras allowed.

Post mortem on the pandemic. What worked and what could be improved. The Health Department has started a report and will get it to the Board of Health soon.

Motion to approve the claims and receipts for January and February was made by Dr. Linda Boxum. Seconded by Kathy Lemmon. All were in favor. Motion carries.

ARPA funds – Connie is a non-voting member of the committee. The first meeting will be on 4/13/22. The committee consists of Karen Nelson, Patrice Mullen, Mike Jessen, Sylvia Graham and Laura Blaney. The Health Department did submit a request for some of the funds to expand our office space so we can improve our service to the community. Sheila did a detailed chart of what we wanted and the reason why. Jeff Good advised that cost to expand would be $750,000.00 and we added $250,000.00 for new furniture for a total of $1,000,000.00.

John Pisowicz provided and update on his deliverables and has asked for a five-year contract contingent on funds from the state.

Would like to offer full time to Jed Stockton our Public Relations/Communication Director. Since our county keeps growing the need for an additional Foods Inspector is also needed.

Lincoln Kitchen a commissary kitchen for some food trucks and some of our vendors. Carrie has been doing the planning reviews with them. They currently have three kitchen spaces and a coffee shop up front. The still need to complete three additional kitchen spaces. Each kitchen gets a permit for their space and on how the space is used.

What happened with subdivision west of town that did not have proper septic systems. The house that Dan brought up as an example. Dan spoke to the state and they are going to add an aerobic treatment system to rejuvenate the field. There are filters and blowers that will help the bacteria break down.

A motion to adjourn made by Terry Wuletich and seconded by Suzanne Phelps. All were in favor. Motion carries.