

Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health

Minutes of January 14, 2020 regular meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on January 14, 2020 at 12:00pm in the City/County Building, City Council Chambers, Wheeling West Virginia.

Board members present were Dr. John Holloway, Tom Tuttle, Dr. Mathew Wood, Elisabeth Slater and Laura Chapman. Staff present included Dr. William Mercer, Health Officer/Secretary and Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department (WOCHD or department). Others present were the media, WOCHD Staff and guests

The meeting was called to order by Board of Health Chairman Dr. John Holloway. Minutes from the November 12, 2019 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting in the Board members meeting packets. Minutes were approved.

Dr. Mercer gave the Health Officer's Report. Dr. Mercer discussed recent updates and activities with Project HOPE and the department's on going Snoopy/Joe Too Cool To Smoke Program including the recent educational program at Woodsdale Elementary School.

The administrator's report was given by Howard Gamble. The health department said goodbye to three seasoned staff and welcomed two new nursing staff. Retiring from the department were Maggie Sall, RN and Becky Beckett, RN. The department welcomed Elizabeth Fowler, RN and Kelly Fitzpatrick, RN in November 2019. The department is now recruiting for a Threat Preparedness Director, Sanitarian and Office Assistant.

The health department is still trying to fill three open positions in the health side of the agency as well as the WIC side. Staffing continues to be an issue, both in terms of candidates and time.

The Board was presented with the 2020 IRS mileage rate. The IRS rate, beginning January 1, 2020, is at 57.5 cents per mile, down one half of a cent from the rate for 2019. The Board approved the request.

The department has received a lot of calls and inquiries into the new federal minimum age increase for selling tobacco products. With the limited guidance from the State Health Department it is the department's understanding that the new age, 21, is now in effect. This new rule covers cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 21. In addition, new rules have also been proposed through the FDA to end the production and sale of vaping devices/cartridges in mint, fruit or dessert flavors.

The WV Legislative Session is underway in Charleston. As of 1/10/2020 878 bills have been introduced. The Board was provided with a copy of bills that relate to public health that have been introduced.

The Administrator presented to the Board an update on the National and Statewide Hepatitis Outbreak. Since March of 2018 West Virginia has seen an increase of hepatitis A cases, with most being connected to the National Outbreak affecting 30 states. In WV there have been 2653 cases, including 23 death, reported as of January 10, 2020. Cases are also reported in Ohio (3446) and Pennsylvania (736). Ohio County has less than 5 reported cases. The health department continues to offer Hep A vaccinations to “at risk populations”, 1st Responders and the areas Homeless population. The department will be working the Wheeling Housing Authority in February and March to hold vaccination clinics at selected facilities.

The Board was presented with a pay differential of 11% for the department’s two current full-time sanitarians. This request is part of a December 2019 West Virginia Division of Personnel/State Personnel Board action to update class specifications and pay grades for the Sanitarian series; including Sanitarian 1, Sanitarian 2, Registered Sanitarian, Sanitarian Supervisor and Sanitarian Chief. The Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department has two position which were impacted by these changes. As a special plan of implementation, the department requested a 11% increase for the following sanitarian personnel to alleviate pay compression:

- Laughlin Johnson, RS
- Jonathan Monroe, RS

The Board approved the pay differential for the two environmental program employees.

A new Fees for Permit state rule is in its final stages. The new rule is posed to make several changes to the process county health departments charge for fees for permit. Noted proposed changes:

- Industrial Campground
- Labor Camp
- Process for charging and approving an agencies fee schedule.
- Small increase in fee amounts

Once the new rule is approved the Board will be asked to approve the new rates and fee categories for the agency.

Two new staff have joined the WIC program. Vanessa Hill was hired in January as a Health and Human Resource Aide. Vanessa has been with the program as a temporary staff for several months. Kellie Smith was hired in January as a Nutritionist 2.

In September 2019 the Board was presented with the WIC FY20 budget and plans to budget a 6% raise for WIC staff. The pay increase would only affect WIC staff and would begin January 1, 2020. The request was approved. At this time the increase needs to be modified to 5% effective February 1, 2020. The Board approved the change.

The Administrator gave a short HOPE Program Overview focusing on general operations and financial aspects of the program. Crystal Bauer, RN gave a short programmatic overview of HOPE and its services.

The program has two-line items in our financial system, General and Mobile Medical. All donations, gifts or awards are specifically designed to either the general or mobile medical line. No funds are used for health department operations, programs or services. The majority of expenses are salary and supplies. The program is a service of the health department and the agency covers administrative, financial and operational costs of the program. This is similar to other programs of the agency which have a revenue source but are supported by the agencies general budget. The program employees two staff who are part time professional exempt (non-civil service). These employees are paid hourly. Since the program has been with the health department the program has been the recipient of several grants and gifts which have covered most of the program's expenses as well as the purchase of a 2019 mobile medical vehicle.

In Unfinished Business the Administrator discussed with the Board the new WV Medical Cannabis Program. The State Health Department, Office of Medical Cannabis, is now accepting permit applications (until mid-February) for growers, processors, dispensaries and laboratories. The state rule for this new program does have a public health approval process. Before a permit may be issued, the state health department will/shall obtain written approval from the local board of health for the county in which the permit is to be located and operate business. The state health department will also need to receive notification from the county commission. The specific process that the Board will give this approval has not yet been developed or finalized. The Administrator will keep the Board up to date on any notifications.

In New Business, prior to the Board of Health meeting, members were presented with the November and December 2019 financials including Bills, Payroll, Aged Receivables and Year to Date Financials. The Board reviewed and approved the financial report.

The Board was also informed that effective January 1, 2020 a new City of Wheeling User Fee will begin. This is a \$2.00 per week fee (about \$4.33 per pay) and applies to all full-time, part-time staff that work in the City of Wheeling for at least 30 days per calendar year. The fee will be deducted from payroll and submitted to the City of Wheeling by the agency. For the most part, all staff in our Health Department division and our Ohio County WIC office will be covered and have the fee deducted. Staff in in our WIC offices in Weirton, Beech Bottom, Moundsville and Paden City will not be covered (unless the work in the City of Wheeling for at least 30 days per year). At this time 14 health department and WIC staff will be affected by the new user fee. Several other exempt/part time staff will need to check with their primary employer to make sure the fee is deducted.

The Board did not go into executive session. The Board set the next regular meeting for March 10, 2020 at 12noon. The Board adjourned.

SUBMITTED BY

William C. Mercer, MD, Health Officer
January 14, 2020

APPROVED BY

John D Holloway, MD, Board Chairman
January 14, 2020