

## **Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health**

Minutes of January 29, 2016 special meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on January 29, 2016 in the Ohio County Commission conference room in the City/County Building.

Board members present were Cheryl Wonderly, Dr. John Holloway, Tom Tuttle, Wilkes Kinney, Gloria Delbrugge and Michael Caruso. Staff present included Dr. William Mercer, Health Officer/Secretary; Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department (WOCHD or department) and member of the media.

The meeting was called to order. The minutes from the January 12, 2016 (Regular Board of Health meeting) were not mailed to members prior to the meeting for review. Minutes were held until the March 8, 2016 meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting it was explained that this is a special meeting. No report was given by the Board Chair or the Health Officer. No public comments or presentations were available or registered.

Howard Gamble presented the administrators report. The administrator updated the Board on two issues, Legislation updates and State Budget update.

### **Legislation Update**

The administrator provided the Board with a current listing of legislation that has been introduced that has a public health focus or impact.

Among the notable bills are:

- Several House and Senate bills that address the increase in the State's cigarette tax.
- SB 284 which would require all policies enacted by a board of health to be approved by the county commission.
  - Similar bill was not supported by CCA of WV last year
  - Could affect by current, future and pervious actions (POLICY) of a Board of Health
- SB 372 which would modify the administration of local boards of health.
  - Bill does not have the support of the County Commissioners Association of WV
- SB 387 Shared animal ownership agreements to consume raw milk
- HB 2448 Permitting the sale of raw milk
- HB 2449 Permitting co-owners of cows to receive raw milk from those cows
- HB 2859 Exempting certain food establishments from inspection
- HB 3007 Exempting from food related laws or rules for certain individually produced agricultural products

### **Budget Update**

The proposed fiscal year 2017 State of West Virginia Executive budget was released last week. The Board has been provided a copy of the proposed State Aid for Local & Basic Public Health Services. FY 2015 shows \$16,134,541 was budget for funding that is provided directly to local health departments. The FY 2017 Requested amount is \$16,134,541. The Governor has recommended \$12,134,541 or a 25% reduction in funding.

The new FY 2017 budget will start July 1, 2016. The Board needs to be aware the Governor is the sole individual who must be persuaded to restore the public health budget line. If the Governor agrees, our local legislators need to be informed and request support. Last year, the Governor vetoed most of the funding the legislature added to budget lines that he had cut in his original budget.

What a 25% reduction in WV State Aid would mean for the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department.

- Our State Aid this current year is \$336,054.26. 25% of this is \$84,013.50. A 25% reduction to our overall budget, including WIC and TP, is about 6%. However, the reduction in State Aid does not apply to our WIC and TP program. Their funding is solely for each program. We have no single line item that could account for this 25%.

Why the cut.

- When asked by the WVALHDs as to why a cut, the WVBPH did not give a response but stated they will not comment and they work from the Governor. We can assume that the WVDHHR budget was made without the 25% reduction, however, to assume that the Governor's office made the 25%, on their own, without the recommendation or discussion with WVDHHR or the Bureau is highly unlikely. Governor's budget is made by discussion with his cabinet and staff. No public response has been made from the Governor's office as to why.

The administrator discussed some actions that both the health department and Board could take in regards to the proposed reduction. The administrator will update both the City and County of a potential need to request additional funding. The administrator will also explore revenue increasing options as well as possible billing functions for certain health department services

The administrator discussed some ideas that the health department could take to address the possible reduction to the department's budget. No single budget line can take the entire 25% cut. Suggestions for cuts:

- End travel for all out of county meetings, trainings, etc.
- Discontinue health department cell phones
- Specific Discontinuation of health department phone services
- Board policy on state contracts and receiving payment for services within 2 months
- Increase staffs portion of health insurance costs
- End nonpublic health clinics (ie Family Planning and BCCSP)
- Hiring freeze

- End off site food trainings
- Increase or utilize health department's Fees for Services

No Unfinished or New Business was available for this special meeting.

The Board did not go into executive session. The Board set the next regular meeting for March 8, 2016. The Board adjourned.

**SUBMITTED BY**

William C. Mercer, MD, Health Officer  
March 8, 2016

**APPROVED BY**

John Holloway, MD, Board Chairman  
March 8, 2016