

Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health

Minutes of March 8, 2016 regular meeting

The Wheeling - Ohio County Board of Health met on March 8, 2016 in Wheeling City Council Chambers in the City/County Building.

Board members present were Dr. John Holloway, Tom Tuttle, Wilkes Kinney, and Michael Caruso. Staff present included Dr. William Mercer, Health Officer/Secretary and Howard Gamble, Administrator of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department (WOCHD or department). Several guests and a representative from the Wheeling News Register were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order. The minutes from the January 12, 2016 Regular Board of Health meeting and January 29, 2016 Special Board of Health meeting were mailed to members prior to the meeting for review. Minutes were reviewed and accepted by the Board.

Board Chairman, Dr. Holloway did not have a report and there were no public comments or presentations.

Dr. Mercer gave his Health Officer's report. Dr. Mercer updated the Board on the department's Homeless Outreach Program. He recently traveled to Pittsburgh to shadow a similar program. Photos were shared with Board members of the event. Dr. Mercer updated the Board on a recent Heroin epidemic program that was held at OVMC. He also gave an update on the departments Narcan and needle exchange program to the Board. On March 31st a Joe Too Cool to Smoke program will be held at Ritchie Elementary School. Dr. Mercer gave a short flu update.

Howard Gamble presented the administrators report. A short Legislative Update was presented to the Board.

- Public Health billing statute passes House. Committee Substitute for HB 4659 passed the House of Delegates at approximately 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday. The bill authorizes local health departments to bill health insurance plans for services. The commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health is not required to approve the fees. The bill now goes to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Resources.
- HIV, STD billing legislation moving. A committee substitute for SB 404, which allows local health departments to bill insurance companies, Medicaid and other insurers for HIV testing and testing for sexually transmitted diseases, was approved Tuesday morning in an early-morning meeting of the House Committee on Health and Human Resources. The bill contains a requirement that prohibits LHD's from refusing testing to an individual because of inability to pay. The bill has a second reference to the House Finance Committee, although some Health Committee members suggested the second reference be removed.
- SB 387 Shared animal ownership agreements to consume raw milk. Gov. Tomblin signed the raw milk bill into law. Drinking raw milk will soon be legal in the Mountain

State, after Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin signed a bill Thursday allowing for herd sharing. Direct sale of raw milk will still remain illegal, but residents may buy shares in an animal to receive milk from it. A document must be signed by those purchasing an animal acknowledging the risks of drinking raw milk. Tomblin vetoed a similar bill last year, but his office said that this year's bill had provisions that eased his concerns about public health. Local health officials had been critical of the bill, pointing out the bacteria risks of drinking raw milk as opposed to pasteurized milk.

- SB 420 Tobacco Tax bill was not advanced during a hearing in the WV House Finance Committee on March 3rd.

As of February 2016 the department has been notified by the WV Consolidated Public Retirement Board that the employer contribution rate will decrease from 13.5% to 12% effective July 1, 2016. This will reduction will benefit the department financially.

The administrator gave an update on the new Clean Indoor Air Regulation. A mailing was sent out to all business in Ohio County. The department has been addressing several phone calls and inquiries as to the new provisions. The department will again remind agency permitted business during the spring permit mailing.

The health department, along with the health departments in Brooke, Hancock and Marshall Counties will be overhauling their websites. The departments have been working with Beyond Marketing in Wheeling to make the necessary corrections and updates. The sites of Marshall, Brooke and Hancock have been completed.

The health department is working with multiple agencies in West Virginia on a HAB response plan. The purpose of the WV Harmful Algal Bloom Response Plan is to provide a unified statewide approach to address harmful algal blooms in the state's recreational waters and to protect people from toxins produced by cyanobacteria.

On June 10, 2016 the Health Department will hold their annual TP Conference at Oglebay. The department is currently putting together the agenda for the conference. Board members are welcomed to attend.

In Unfinished Business the administrator updated the Board in regards to the actions taken following the January 29th Special Board of Health meeting. A letter was sent to both the Ohio County Commission and City of Wheeling concerning the potential need for additional funding from both the City and the County. At this time the administrator sees the potential need for additional funding in the amount of \$84,000 as a result a 25% reduction in state aid funding. The administrator did a follow up communication with both agencies. The County Commission has verbally agreed to contribute their share of the additional funds per our request.

Based on the potential 25% budget cut in our state funding this would result in an \$84,000 loss of funding to the health department. An equal amended FY2017 City and County budget request would be \$67,000 (current \$25,000 requested amount + \$42,000) from each agency.

New Business

The Board was informed that the appointments of Gloria Delbrugge and Wilkes Kinney to the Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health will be up at the end of June. These members were asked to advise the Board on their intention to remain on the Board by the May meeting. The Board will need to formally recommend to the members appointing agency (City or County) of the tenure expiration and willingness to remain on the Board.

In New Business the Board was presented, prior to the meeting, a financial packet that contained the January & February bills and payroll, Aged Receivables and Year to Date financials. The Board held a short discussion on the department's annual audit. The report was approved.

The Board did not go into executive session. The Board set the next regular meeting for May 17, 2016. The Board adjourned.

SUBMITTED BY

William C. Mercer, MD, Health Officer
May 17, 2016

APPROVED BY

John Holloway, MD, Board Chairman
May 17, 2016