

**Portage County Combined General Health District**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**June 17, 2021**  
**6:00 PM**



**I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

The Portage County Combined General Health District Board of Health met on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 6970 State Route 88, Ravenna, Ohio 44266. The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm by Board President Howard.

Board Members in Attendance:      Robert Howard, President  
   Evelyn Cutlip, Vice President  
   Amy Everett, Member  
   Lucy Ribelin, Member  
   James Bierlair, Member  
   Linda Grimm, Member

Board Members Absent:                Charles Delaney, Member  
   Dr. Howard Minott, Member

Staff in Attendance:                    Joseph Diorio, Health Commissioner  
   Mark Arredondo, Medical Director  
   Rosemary Ferraro, Director of Nursing  
   Debra Stall, Director of Finance  
   Mary Helen Smith, Director of Environmental Health  
   Becky Lehman, Director of Health Education and  
   Promotion, Accreditation Coordinator  
   Amy Cooper, WIC Director  
   Justin Rechichar, Environmental Supervisor  
   Amos Sarfo, Environmental Supervisor  
   Sarah Meduri, Personnel Officer

Advisory Council:                        Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township

Others:                                        None

Media Present:                            None

## II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Board of Health Meeting: May 18, 2021 – Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Accept the Board Meeting Minutes of the May 18, 2021, seconded by Board Member Ribelin an “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

## III. PORTAGE COUNTY TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION (Advisory Council) –

No update.

## IV. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Expenditure Ratifications

Invoice Batch No.	1853	\$	60,060.12
Invoice Batch No.	1894	\$	15,263.59
Invoice Batch No.	1928	\$	4,746.00
Invoice Batch No.	2001	\$	10,860.70
Invoice Batch No.	2009	\$	23,875.33
Invoice Batch No.	2052	\$	5,414.11
Invoice Batch No.	2139	\$	16,213.19
Invoice Batch No.	2168	\$	1,524.72
Invoice Batch No.	2207	\$	8,131.51
Invoice Batch No.	2236	\$	3,346.19
Total Invoice Batch		\$	149,435.46

Ms. Stall stated the batches include COVID-19 contracts. Ms. Ribelin inquired about the payments to Kent City Health Department and Ms. Stall replied that the Portage County Health District is the lead health department, so grants are issued to Portage County Health District then a portion gets paid to Kent City Health Department.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to accept the above Expenditures and Ratify these expenses, seconded by Board Member Everett.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

- B. **Resolution #21-76** Amendment to the 2021 Portage County Combined General Health District Annual Appropriations for Revenue Previously Certified.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to approve Resolution #21-76 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Cutlip.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

- C. **Resolution #21-77** The Portage County Board of Health Acceptance to Allow Joseph Diorio to sign the Addendum to the Agreement with Kent City Health Department for COVID-19 Coronavirus Response Supplemental Grant

Ms. Lehman stated this is the third addendum to the contract with Kent City Health Department due to additional funding for the Coronavirus Supplemental Grant in the amount of \$3,354.

Board Member Everett presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-77 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Ribelin.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Abstain

- D. **Resolution #21-82** The Portage County Board of Health Acceptance to Allow Joseph Diorio to sign the Agreement with Kent City Health Department for COVID-19 Enhanced Operations (EO21)

Ms. Lehman moved the resolution up on the agenda so the contract could be brought to the Board prior to the addendum to the contract. The Enhanced Operations Grant covers general COVID-19 response and supplies.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-82 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Cutlip.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Abstain

- E. **Resolution #21-78** The Portage County Board of Health Acceptance to Allow Joseph Diorio to sign the Addendum to the Agreement with Kent City Health Department for COVID-19 Enhanced Operations Grant

Ms. Lehman stated this is the first addendum to the contract with Kent City Health Department due to additional funding for the Enhanced Operations Grant in the amount of \$4,495.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-78 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Everett.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Abstain

- F. **Resolution #21-79** Declaring a Public Nuisance, Ordering Abatement of that Nuisance Located at 2687 New Milford Road, Randolph Township and Approving the Civil Prosecution for Violation(s) of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3718 and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 3701-29 Sewage Treatment Systems

Ms. Smith stated the nuisance was discovered in the summer of 2020 during dry weather screening. Staff tested the water and confirmed it was a discharge laundry line from the house. Staff were sent multiple times to the residence and notices were mailed with no attempt to contact the Health District or remedy the issue.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-79 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Grimm.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

- G. **Resolution #21-80** Declaring a Public Nuisance, Ordering Abatement of that Nuisance Located at 481 Archart Drive, Suffield Township and Approving the Civil Prosecution for Violation(s) of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3718 and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 3701-29 Sewage Treatment Systems

Ms. Smith stated staff conducted a dye test on the septic system and discussed the WPCLF program with the property owner's daughter who stated the homeowner may be interested in applying for it. Staff attempted to reach the homeowner multiple times, but the owner is a truck driver who is out of town a good amount of time. Information regarding the program and notice of violations have been sent repeatedly.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-80 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Grimm.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

- H. **Resolution #21-81** The Portage County Board of Health Acceptance to Allow Joseph Diorio to sign the Agreement with Kent City Health Department for COVID-19 Contact Tracing Supplemental CT21 Grant

Ms. Lehman stated the contract ends at the end of the month. The services have already been completed and the contract needs to be put in place in order to pay Kent City Health Department.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-81 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Everett.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	abstain

## V. DISCUSSION REPORTS

### A. Administration and Personnel:

Ms. Meduri updated the Board on the status of the current job postings for the Health District.

**Accreditation Coordinator:** Twenty-five (25) applicants applied to the position. Four (4) applicants were chosen to interview. One (1) internal applicant. The Health District just completed all interviews and are discussing the candidates and hope to have a decision to bring to the Board for July.

**Public Health Nurse:** Thirty-seven (37) applicants applied in total since October. Thirteen (13) of them applied when it was reposted in April. Eight (8) applicants were chosen for an interview. Of them, one (1) applicant did not respond, one (1) no show, one (1) cancellation the day of the scheduled interview, for a total of five (5) completed interviews. Top 3

candidates were identified. Ms. Meduri reached out to offer the position, but the candidate stated they were unable to accept at the rate offered.

**PT Nursing Clerk:** Fifteen (15) applicants applied for the position. Seven (7) applicants were contacted to schedule an interview. Three (3) of them did not respond to two phone calls and voicemails. Two (2) cancellation of scheduled interviews. Two (2) completed interviews. A candidate has accepted an offer and is completing her background check and drug screen. Pending her results, Ms. Meduri will ask for approval for the hiring of the individual in July.

Ms. Meduri provided an overview of the Health District workforce over the year since January 2020.

- Eight employees have left Portage County Health District (PCHD) since January 2020.
- Eight new employees joined the Health District, which means eight employees joined either prior to or during the pandemic.
- There are currently fifty-two current employees.
- There are three current job postings open (Public Health Nurse, Billing Clerk and Accreditation Coordinator).
- PCHD onboarded sixteen contact tracers which have since offboarded due to lack of funding and of them, four transitioned to Epidemiological Assistants.
- PCHD has one contracted MRC Team Leader.
- There have been seven interns assisting PCHD since January of 2020.
- Two staff have also left for maternity leave and returned, with one more going on maternity this fall.
- Bob Walker, PHEP Coordinator, started in December of 2019 and Penny Paxton, Epidemiologist, started in late February of 2020. Two critical positions within the Health District during the pandemic and neither employee had been with the Health District very long prior to jumping headfirst into COVID-19 response.
- WIC started with PCHD in October of 2019. WIC staff were part of the Health District for less than six months before entering COVID-19 response.

Ms. Meduri stated the amount of change just in the workforce over the last year and a half has been tremendous. She gave great kudos to staff for being so resilient and hard working throughout the entire pandemic and beyond. It has been quite a challenging year for all staff personally and/or professionally. Staff have continued their normal duties as well as COVID-19 response. She expressed what amazing work staff have done and that the staff, Board Members, and members of the community should be so proud of all staff, for what they have all done to continue with the Health Districts programs, services, supporting the community and COVID-19 response. She further commented that it has not come without its price. Staff are exhausted and burned out.

Ms. Meduri is working with several community partners and have reached out to other Health departments to find additional resources to provide to staff as well as working on debriefing sessions for both one on one and group sessions for all staff. These sessions will help staff unpack the weight of the pandemic and learn necessary skills for coping, adjusting to change, grief, stress and more. The rest of the world is moving on from COVID-19, but PCHD staff are still dealing with COVID-19 and the affects of it daily with vaccinations, grants, and other response efforts. She commented that staff are beyond burned out and they are doing their best to support staff and find additional ways to show support to help staff adjust back to “normal” work

again. Board Members were in favor of Ms. Meduri exploring debriefing sessions and supported the idea of getting outside resources to assist staff.

Ms. Meduri also informed the Board that Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>) was passed through the Senate and President Biden is expected to sign the bill into law Thursday afternoon. Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §124.19, which defines state holidays as including ‘any day appointed and recommended by the governor of this state or the president of the United States, the Health District will ratify the personnel policy 4.05 Holidays.

**B. Fiscal and Accounting:**

Ms. Stall stated the Cash Basis Report looks quite good. She stated \$988,300 has been cash advanced from the General Revenue Fund to grant funds to cover expenses until reimbursed. Then, one grant money is received in, the money will be transferred back to the General Revenue Fund.

**C. Nursing:**

Ms. Ferraro stated the Health District distributed over 31,000 COVID-19 vaccines thus far. Nursing staff are still administering vaccines at the jail, schools, businesses, home visits and arranging clinics with community partners.

Nursing staff are working on communicable disease outbreaks for norovirus and salmonella as well as COVID-19 outbreaks.

Ms. Ferraro commented that the adjustment back to “normal” has been difficult for staff. The rest of the world is moving on from COVID-19, but staff are still immersed in it. Mr. Howard inquired if the Health District is seeing pushback regarding the vaccine. Ms. Ferraro replied that they are but try to educate individuals on the vaccines and not enforce them.

**D. Environmental:**

Ms. Smith stated Mr. Rechichar is reaching his end probationary period for the Deputy Director of Environmental Health position. She is looking forward to adding an additional Environmental Supervisor to assist the division.

Ms. Cox, Seasonal Worker, is doing very well in the field and already working on her own. She trained with Mr. Bull and Ms. Menke.

Ohio EPA received the Public Nuisance Declaration and report and is working with Mr. Sarfo and Ms. Cianciolo to sample the area.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Diorio attended the Portage County Commissioners meeting regarding the PCHD Solid Waste Program. Mr. Diorio was informed the solid waste contract was on the agenda and discussed the program with Ms. Smith. Chris Meduri, Assistant Portage County Prosecutor was present on behalf of the Health District regarding the contract. Mr. Diorio stated the Health District still completes solid waste services for the community including inspections. Ms. Smith stated there are ten Solid Waste Management District (SWMD) best practices. Six of the best practices include the Health District and the remaining four include

the Sheriff's Department. She further commented that the Board of Health did not agree to get rid of the program nor did the Township Trustees. A new plan was just approved in 2019 which was a ten-year plan. Mr. Diorio stated he and Ms. Smith respectfully asked for an opportunity to come back and talk about the program and contract. Ms. Smith will prepare a cost estimate for the program.

Mr. Diorio stated most people think of solid waste and think of landfills. Portage County had four landfills at one point in time. Two landfills closed and two are orphans, which means they were never properly closed. PCHD staff continue to go to the landfills on a regular basis and identify issues as there are residents living around the landfills. PCHD staff still handle solid waste complaints, infection waste, transfer station and composting centers. He further explained that generation fees are still occurring and going to the SWMD. Mr. Diorio stated at the end of 2020 the SWMD informed the Health District that they were no longer contracting as they did not have any money to fulfil the obligation. The same message was relayed to the Sheriff's office as well. Mr. Diorio asked for the opportunity to go back to the Commissioners to provide more information so they can make an informed decision.

Mr. Sarfo presented the Portage County Stormwater Outfalls maps. Phase I of this program was designed to address stormwater runoff from "medium" and "large" municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) serving populations of 100,000 or greater, as well as runoff from construction activity disturbing 5 acres of land or greater. Phase II regulations include operators of small MS4s in urbanized areas and operators of small construction activities that disturb greater than one acre and less than 5 acres. Portage County communities affected by the Phase II regulations include Portage County, City of Aurora, City of Kent, City of Ravenna, City of Streetsboro, Sugar Bush Knolls, Kent State University, Brimfield Township, Franklin Township, Ravenna Township, Rootstown Township, and Suffield Township.

Storm water runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Resistant surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground. Storm water can pick up debris, chemicals, unprotected soil, and other pollutants as it moves over the surface. The storm water, along with the pollutants, then flows into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged into the waterbodies used for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. The program aims to reduce and/or eliminate the non-point source pollutants entering waterbodies through a variety of methods public education, public involvement, water quality monitoring, and regulatory devices. The ultimate goal is increased water quality.

EPA funds the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) program. Ms. Smith has applied annually for the grant and has received over \$1.25 million dollars to improve failing septic systems or systems going into waters of the state. The program has assisted 67 households already in Portage County.

#### E. Health Education and Promotion & Accreditation:

Ms. Lehman stated the Health Education and Promotion Division is getting back to normal with lots of health fairs coming up. Some programs will continue curbside including Project Dawn which was very successful in maintaining the program throughout the pandemic curbside. Last month, staff helped 19 individual's curbside alone. They believe allowing the program to continue curbside will reduce stigma and allow for more comfortable and easy access. Ms. Lehman stated one of the Health District's community partners, OUR Place, has

been a shining star in the program in reaching hard to reach populations including the homeless. The routinely go under the bridge in Kent among active users and other identified high-risk areas.

Health Education staff are very excited to work the Randolph Fair again this year especially after fair season was cancelled last year. WIC staff will work alongside the Health Education staff for the first time. Ms. Blasiman is thrilled to have more additional space in the merchant room this year. The Safe Communities Program has a new plinko game Ms. Blasiman is excited to share.

Ms. Towne, Mr. Diorio and Ms. Lehman attended five clear impact trainings for performance management. The training was provided by the state as well as the system. The Health District is receiving three licenses for the program. Mr. Diorio stated there are a variety of different reports that can be run and added to the website.

F. Women, Infants and Children (WIC):

The WIC program is continuing to provide services curbside. The report shows less participants served, but Ms. Cooper pointed out that WIC started one-year certifications and the counting is skewed with system issues. The hope of issuing one-year certifications is to reduce barriers.

Ms. Cooper stated the increase from \$9 per person to \$35 per person goes through July. WIC is trying to keep the increase in benefits as a permanent change. WIC participants face food insecurity as well as proper nutrition insecurity.

WIC staff are preparing for farmers markets at both locations. The Ravenna WIC locations is partnering with the Haymaker Market for produce perk benefits. Families could get up to \$60 in benefits if they participate in both programs.

G. Health Commissioner:

Mr. Diorio stated SB110 is not final. The latest language was passed through the House of Representatives, but the Senate may be making modifications. The Bill would require health departments with less than fifty thousand in population to merge with the main health department or meet one of two criteria. The health department has received accreditation and must maintain accreditation, or the health department is in the process of applying for on the effective date of the Bill and must receive or maintain accreditation no later than December 31, 2025. The final version is inclusive of the state budget.

The last clinic held at Kent State Field House was on May 25<sup>th</sup> from 3:00PM to 7:00PM which vaccinated 188 people. Mr. Diorio stated several KSU staff were thanking the Health District and complimenting the agency. Feedback from KSU and community partners was that the clinics were very organized, run smoothly and well thought out. The Health District has vaccinated over 31,000 individuals and at the peak of the vaccination campaign, was vaccinating around 3,000 individuals per clinic. Mr. Diorio stated the Ohio Department of Health dashboard indicates that around 75,000 individuals have received at least one dose of the vaccine, but Portage County needs to be around 113,000 (70% of the population) to reach herd immunity. He stated that unvaccinated individuals should still be taking precautions.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **I. Accept the Resignation of Karen Towne, Population Health Coordinator**

Ms. Lehman stated that Karen Towne has worked for the Health District since 2009. She started as a Public Health Nurse then transitioned to a supervisor, Accreditation Coordinator, Grants Coordinator and most recently, Population Health Coordinator. She also works full-time as a faculty member at Mount Union College. She was encouraged to apply for a prestigious PhD program in environmental health nursing and was selected for a scholarship and Mount Union is matching that scholarship as well. Ms. Lehman stated that she would like to think of it as Ms. Towne taking a break from Public Health and hopes she will return to it again in the future.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to accept the resignation of Karen Towne with regret, as stated above, seconded by Board Member Cutlip. An “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.

## **VIII. BOARD ISSUES AND DISCUSSION:**

### **A. COVID-19 Appreciation**

Mr. Diorio informed the Board that the Health District would like to have a COVID-19 Appreciation Day for staff and community partners that worked alongside the agency throughout the pandemic. The Appreciation Day would also include volunteers, contact tracers, and others who assisted the Health District in COVID-19 response efforts. Staff have created an internal team for planning efforts. The proposed idea includes getting catered food or having local food trucks come in, setting up tents and chairs outside, and hosting games and music on the front lawn of the Health District on Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> from 12:00PM to 4:00PM. Health District staff would get Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup> as a day off and would close the agency for what would be known as Covid Day, as an additional appreciation measure for staff to be recognized for all their hard work and efforts. Ms. Ribelin and Mr. Howard commented that they agree it is a terrific idea and are in favor of the appreciation celebration. Mr. Bierlair also commented that he too agreed and liked the ideas presented.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None**

## **X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

### **a. To Consider the Purchase of Property**

A motion was made by Board Member Ribelin to enter executive session, seconded by Board Member Grimm. An “aye” vote was cast by all, executive session began at 7:42PM.

A motion was made by Board Member Ribelin to exit executive session, seconded by Board Member Bierlair. An “aye” vote was cast by all, normal session began at 8:16PM.

- b. **Resolution #21-83** The Portage County Board of Health to Give Joseph Diorio, Health Commissioner the Authority to negotiate and sign an Agreement for the Acquisition for property located at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266 with intent to relocate the Portage County Combined General Health District.

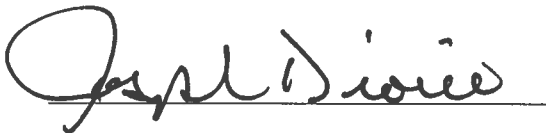
Mr. Diorio stated the property located at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio is listed on the market at 1.2 million dollars. He plans to try to negotiate the price if the Board grants permission to move forward.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-83 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Ribelin.

Vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Howard	Yes	Board Member Everett	Yes
Board Member Cutlip	Yes	Board Member Ribelin	Yes
Board Member Minott	Absent	Board Member Delaney	Absent
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

**Adjournment:** The June 17, 2021, Board meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm. An “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.



Joseph J. Diorio, MPH, MS, RS  
Health Commissioner