

**Portage County Combined General Health District**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**July 20, 2021**  
**6:00 PM**



**I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

The Portage County Combined General Health District Board of Health met on Tuesday, July 20, 2021, 705 Oakwood Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266. The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm 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  
   Charles Delaney, Member

Board Members Absent:              Dr. Howard Minott, Member

Staff in Attendance:                  Joseph Diorio, Health Commissioner  
   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  
   Mamie Sawyer Brewer, Public Health Nurse  
   Ellen Cox, Seasonal Worker

Advisory Council:                      Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township

Others:                                      None

Media Present:                           None

## II. INTRODUCTION OF STAFF:

The Board welcomed Mamie Sawyer Brewer, Public Health Nurse and Ellen Cox, Seasonal Worker. Ms. Sawyer Brewer came to the Health District from Canada with a robust public health background and is very happy to continue working in public health at Portage County Health District. Ms. Cox is working as a Seasonal Worker within the mosquito and vector program. She has enjoyed her experience at the Health District and Mr. Diorio stated she has caught on quickly and doing very well. She will be leaving the Health District in August to go back to school in the fall and play volleyball.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Board of Health Meeting: July 20, 2021 – Board Member Cutlip presented a motion to Accept the Board Meeting Minutes of the July 20, 2021, seconded by Board Member Everett. An “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.

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

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

Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township Trustee and Chairman of the District Advisory Council is looking into the COVID-19 recovery money allocated to Charlestown Township.

Ms. Ribelin joined the meeting at 6:04pm.

## V. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Expenditure Ratifications

Invoice Batch No. 2332	\$ 7,830.20
Invoice Batch No. 2352	\$ 17,586.70
Invoice Batch No. 2436	\$ 25,013.99
Invoice Batch No. 2449	\$ 7,087.47
Invoice Batch No. 2509	\$ 17,141.05
Invoice Batch No. 2535	\$ 10,352.30
Invoice Batch No. 2598	\$ 40,976.84
Invoice Batch No. 2643	\$ 19,369.20
Invoice Batch No. 2697	\$ 1,768.00
Invoice Batch No. 2725	\$ 4,930.19
<b>Total Invoice Batch</b>	<b>\$ 152,055.94</b>

Ms. Stall stated the batches include COVID-19 grants, audit expenses, vaccines and HealthSpace.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to accept the above Expenditures and Ratify these expenses, 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

## B. Travel

Mr. Rechichar stated the fairgrounds contacted the Health District regarding a horse show and was inquiring to setup a temporary campground for the show. Mr. Rechichar worked with the fairgrounds on the setup of the campground, but some materials were located out of county. He used a PCHD vehicle to travel to get the posts needed for the completion of setup of the temporary campground. Due to using a PCHD vehicle, there was no mileage for his travel.

Board Member Everett presented a motion to approve the travel 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

## C. **Resolution #21- 84** Amendment to the 2021 Portage County Combined General Health District Annual Appropriations for Revenue Previously Certified.

Ms. Stall stated the budget amendment appropriates money into line items to spend grant money which include mostly COVID-19 grants.

Board Member Everett presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-84 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

D. **Resolution #21-85** A Journal Entry Reversal/Expense Corrections for Portage County Combined General Health District

Ms. Stall stated payments were made out of the wrong mosquito grant that are being corrected. Ms. Blasiman also submitted her time in the Motorcycle Ohio Grant which is crediting the Health Education and Promotion Fund from advancing money to pay her.

Board Member Cutlip presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-85 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

E. **Resolution #21-86** The Portage County Combined General Health District Acceptance to Enter into Contract with *Cartvertising LLC* for Shopping Cart Advertising Services for the 2021-2022 Portage County Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and Permit Health Commissioner, Joseph J. Diorio, to Sign the Contract Pending Completion.

Ms. Smith stated the contract with Cartvertising would be covered under a thirteen cycle Stormwater grant which includes thirteen months from 2021 to 2022. The advertising would include educational messaging on shopping carts at Marcs. The amount would not exceed four thousand dollars and would be located on the shopping carts at the Marcs in Kent, Ohio.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-86 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Bierlair.

\*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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

F. **Resolution #21-87** The Portage Co Combined General Health District's acceptance to enter into a contract with SC Strategic Solutions, LLC to provide Professional Services and Imaging software for the Stormwater and Wastewater Program Operation and Maintenance Scan Projects and Permit the Health Commissioner to sign the Contract Pending Completion

Ms. Smith stated the Health District is embarking on a scanning project regarding paper documents to electronic format for the environmental division. The project includes scanning 117 cabinets and then digitalize them into an OCR, readable document. The Health District started discussing the project in 2017 and talked to several companies and had each of them come onsite to provide a tutorial. Each company scanned documents and provided a sample to the Health District as well as a quote. Strategic Solutions, LLC has the ability to do exactly what is needed and also can convert information to HealthSpace.

Mr. Diorio commented that it is a multi-phased approach to get paper documents scanned to electronic format. The vision is to eventually have a parcel number tagged to the document as addresses are unreliable. Staff would have access to the data and would be able to attach and email information out as requested. Then, the Health District would like to create a specific septic layer. Eventually, the data would be available to anyone, and individuals would be able to click a parcel and identify what type of system it has and all information available. Mr. Diorio stressed the importance of making documents electronic, so they are not lost and are accessible remotely.

Ms. Smith stated the project goal includes twenty thousand records and Strategic Solutions, LLC has dedicated staff to work on the Health Districts project to identify different systems, chronologize them and add in specific information to tag to each parcel. The environmental staff will educate Strategic Solutions, LLC in order to ensure accurate tagging of information. Ms. Smith stated the environmental staff would then work with homeowners and realtors on educating them on the different type of systems. Mr. Diorio stated employees can add to the documents directly, input coordinates of the system and capture data by using the technology the Health District is already using. The Health District will begin in environmental division and move to other divisions to try to become more paperless.

Board Member Cutlip presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-87 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

**G. Resolution #21-88** The Portage County Board of Health Acceptance to Allow Joseph Diorio to sign the Agreement with Portage Path Behavioral Health for Debriefing Sessions and Trainings for Health District Employees

Ms. Meduri contacted multiple organizations to discuss debriefing sessions for staff to unpack the weight of the pandemic and discuss coping strategies, stress management, and provide counseling and resources to staff. Ms. Meduri stated Portage Path Behavioral Health has by far had the most comprehensive plan and resources available to assist staff. Staff will receive a pre-assessment to identify areas of concern prior to Portage Path coming onsite to the Health District. Then, staff will be divided up into their respective divisions to talk as a group. Sessions will range from two to three hours each. Five additional sessions can be used however the Health District sees beneficial. The leadership team will also receive training separately which will range from two to three hours for critical topics, encouraged best practices and how to facilitate wellness into the workplace.

Ms. Ribelin asked how staff are receiving the idea of debriefing sessions in the workplace. Ms. Sawyer Brewer quickly responded that as a new hire, she really appreciates that PCHD cares and that work life balance is promoted and supported. Ms. Meduri stated that she has been stressing the importance of talking about mental health in the workplace as well as taking time for self-care.

Ms. Stall stated Mr. Delaney wrote a very nice article in the Record Courier regarding the pandemic and mental health crisis which included public health workers taking on the enormous emotional, psychological, and physical burden of keeping our communities healthy and safe as Mr. Delaney wrote. The Board and staff thanked Mr. Delaney for recognizing the Health District staff and his continued support. Ms. Meduri thanked Mr. Delaney for being a valuable resource for her to brainstorm ideas for supporting staff of the Health District.

Board Member Ribelin presented a motion to Adopt Resolution #21-88 as stated above, seconded by Board Member Bierlair.

\*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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

## **VI. DISCUSSION REPORTS**

### **A. Administration and Personnel:**

Ms. Meduri conducted exit interviews and offboarded MRC Team Leader, Lisa Morde and Population Health Coordinator, Karen Towne. She also onboarded Nursing Billing Clerk, Heather Harouff. Ms. Meduri was excited to announce the Health District was able to fill the Public Health Nurse position after several months. Kayla Scheufler is starting with the Health District on July 26<sup>th</sup> and is thrilled to have more work-life balance. Ms. Meduri stated that though the Health District is unable to compete monetarily with private sector companies especially the hospital, the Health District is able to offer other incentives. She explained that the benefits of holidays, vacation, personal days, and a wellness program are great examples of perks and benefits for recruitment and retention strategies. She explained that over the course of the last sixteen months people have learned the importance of work-life balance and the prioritization of mental health in the workplace. Ms. Meduri had lengthy discussion with the applicant regarding the Health Districts benefit package and workplace culture which promotes work life balance and self-care, which was important in her decision to join the Health District.

The Health District's insurance company Public Entity Pools of Ohio (PEP) conducted a technology audit of inventory, IT risks and security. An IT Risk Control Specialist came onsite to conduct the audit with Ms. Meduri and Mr. Diorio. There were only four recommendations which Ms. Meduri, Mr. Diorio and Quality IP, were very happy about. The recommendations included implementing a stronger password policy, incorporating more data encryption of sensitive information, developing, and implementing a removable media policy and conducting penetration testing on the network. Mr. Diorio and Ms. Meduri are meeting with Quality IP to discuss the recommendations and next steps.

Ms. Meduri is going on vacation in August and Ms. Condor will be completing the Board Packets and sending information to the Board.

B. Fiscal and Accounting:

Ms. Stall stated the Cash Basis Report shows the Health District is fiscally looking very well for mid-year.

The Health District had their financial audit. Ms. Stall commented that with WIC added to the Health District the audits will now be conducted annually. The 2020 Audit included COVID-19 grants. Ms. Stall talked to the auditors at great length regarding the complexity of the grants and the state sending money sporadically and backdating the grant dates. She commented that it was very difficult to follow normal purchasing processes and staff worked very hard to keep track of grant monies.

C. Nursing:

Ms. Sawyer Brewer represented the Nursing Division on behalf of Ms. Ferraro. She stated that COVID-19 has not gone away but slowed down for a few months. The Health District has provided thirty-two thousand three hundred forty two (32,342) vaccines to the community since December 2020. The nursing division staff are still vaccinating at nursing homes, home bound individuals, jails, and hosting vaccine clinics including back to school clinics.

The nursing staff are working within their normal programs including Get Vaccinated Ohio program. Ms. Sawyer Brewer stated due to COVID-19 the Health District lost touch with some doctors to promote immunizations and are hopeful to get the immunization rates up again. Mr. Howard asked for an update on the legislature which could make all immunizations voluntary. Mr. Diorio will work with the nursing division to provide an update.

D. Environmental:

Ms. Smith was pleased to inform the board the environmental staff are completing all required inspections within the environmental division.

Mr. Diorio and Ms. Smith presented to the Portage County Commissioners regarding the Solid Waste Contract. They were allotted fifteen minutes to discuss the contract. 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. Ms. Smith stated the Health District, Board of Health, Township Trustees and Sheriff's Department should have been notified of any change in the plan or funding.

Mr. Bull and Ms. Menke created mosquito education billboard posters. Ms. Smith stated Ms. Cox has been working in the mosquito program and has been doing a great job. The Environmental Division is working with Sumerol Tire again to host another tire drop off day and will present their work on a state call.

Ms. Smith stated the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) program has brought in \$1.25 million dollars to assist low to moderate income homeowners to repair or replace their malfunctioning household sewage treatment system. Ms. Smith plans to apply for the grant again in August.

Ms. Smith updated the Foxwood Estates Nuisance Declaration and stated that EPA is sampling the discharge points next week.

Mr. Rechichar wrote for a food grant and a multi-media grant which will allow the Health District to outfit a conference room with a smart board, glow germ and a podium.

E. Health Education and Promotion & Accreditation:

Ms. Lehman stated the Health Education and Promotion staff are eager to get out for community events and are busy planning for the Randolph Fair. Ms. Blasiman has a larger area within the Merchant Building this year and is very excited to be able to spread out.

Ms. Plough is working with the Miller House to provide yoga through the Yoga is for Everyone program.

Ms. Holtz is working with community partners to expand Project Dawn. She is conducting a train the trainer model where she trains community partners, and they train their staff. The Health District is the only Project Dawn provider in Portage County.

The Safe Communities Coalition is meeting in person again but still allowing a call-in option. Ms. Lehman commented that it is a very strong coalition and three new members just joined in the last few months. One individual is from Stark County and specifically wanted to be part of Portage County as they identified it as a strong coalition. Ms. Mitchell is training with Ms. Blasiman as part of succession planning in preparation of Ms. Blasiman's retirement next year.

Mr. Walker completed all the deliverables for the PHEP 2021 grant. Ms. Lehman is working on year two of the accreditation cycle reporting. Mr. Diorio is reviewing the report.

The Community Health Improvement Plan meetings were held in person and virtually through Zoom. Ms. Lehman commented there was not a lot of movement in it due to COVID-19 response.

F. Women, Infants and Children (WIC):

Ms. Cooper stated it is a busy time of year for the WIC Division with the farmer's markets. She stated the Haymaker Market was very successful.

The WIC waivers have been extended for curbside services through November 2021. WIC staff are concerned for the delta variant for pregnant women and young children.

The WIC program noticed a slight bump in caseload which Ms. Cooper attributed to a strong marketing campaign.



**G. Health Commissioner:**

Mr. Diorio stated the Health District's Epidemiologist, Penny Paxton will begin to provide weekly updates to the leadership team on Wednesdays. Portage County is starting to see an uptick in COVID-19 cases. As a whole, forty eight percent (48%) of the population or seventy-seven thousand seven hundred and forty (77,740) individuals have started the vaccine. Herd immunity is reached at around seventy percent (70%) or one hundred thirteen thousand (113,000) individuals. The Health District continues to vaccinate and educate the community, but the demand for vaccine has diminished. Mr. Diorio stated that he suspects as fall approaches with back to school and extracurricular events, more families will be interested. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Medical Director (MD) indicated that last year there was the normal strain and then B117 strain which was fifty percent (50%) more virulent. This year the new Delta strain is fifty percent (50%) more virulent than the B117 strain. Mr. Diorio stressed that what is coming in Ohio with the Delta variant is far more contagious than what was present last year. The vaccine does not make individuals immune to the disease but prevents hospitalization and death. Ms. Sawyer Brewer commented that people are getting very lax and not wearing masks. People think the virus is gone but it is still spreading rampantly.

The Health District is still working with cases, isolation, and quarantine as well as providing recommendations for schools. The Health District has four Epidemiologist Assistants to support these efforts. Currently, the Health District is only able to provide recommendations and not requirements for masks. Vaccine is offered at every school aged clinic to try to promote it with other back to school immunizations.

Mr. Diorio is working on negotiations for the building located at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio. He hopes to come to a final agreed upon price. An appraisal is setup and ready to go when they reach an agreement. Mr. Diorio also planned a meeting with an architect to start talking about plans for the building and provide more visualization for staff.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Accept the hiring of Heather Harouff, PT Billing Clerk

Board Member Everett made a motion to accept the hiring of Heather Harouff, seconded by Board Member Ribelin. An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

- b. Accept the hiring of Kayla Scheufler, Public Health Nurse

Board Member Bierlair made a motion to accept the hiring of Kayla Scheufler, seconded by Board Member Cutlip. An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

c. Permission to Post, Advertise and Hire one full-time Environmental Supervisor

Ms. Smith stated the Environmental Supervisor position will replace Justin Rechichar as he was promoted to Deputy Director of Environmental Health. The Environmental Division has been down a supervisor for almost four years said Ms. Smith. Staff have worked a lot of overtime and they are ready to get back to full staff. She hopes to interview and tailor the position and programs to the strength of the supervisors.

Board Member Cutlip made a motion to grant permission to post, advertise and hire one full-time Environmental Supervisor, seconded by Board Member Everett. An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

d. Permission to Post, Advertise and Hire one part-time Clerk

Mr. Diorio stated the Administrative Clerk would assist Ms. Meduri with a variety of tasks including board packets, inventory and other administrative tasks. Mr. Howard stated he is very impressed with the direction of the agency and PCHD staff.

Board Member Bierlair made a motion to grant permission to post, advertise and hire one part-time clerk, seconded by Board Member Grimm. An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

e. Personnel Policy 4.04 Vacation

Ms. Meduri presented the proposed Vacation Policy to the Board. She commented that part of the recruitment and retention strategies is to remain competitive. As a public agency, the Health District is unable to adjust salary ranges the way that private organizations can nor have similar incentives, hiring bonus or pay rates. The Health District can get creative to entice new applicants and keep current employees by looking at time off. She emphasized that many individuals are now looking for more work life balance. By increasing time off through the Vacation Policy, the Health District may attract more applicants and deter current staff from leaving. The current accrual is three weeks' vacation after eight years of service, four years vacation after fifteen years of service and five weeks after twenty-five years of service. The new policy would increase the accrual rate faster. Staff would receive three weeks of vacation after five years of service, four weeks of vacation after ten years of service and five weeks of vacation after twenty years of service. Ms. Meduri looked into what other agencies policies are and worked with Portage County payroll to ensure the proposed policy would work and not have issues. The new accrual rate would go in effect July 26<sup>th</sup>, the start of a pay period and would not be retroactive.

Mr. Bierlair stated his department adopted the federal vacation policy which would effectively give an increase of one extra week of vacation every five years. Mr. Howard stated to take a look at the implications of changing to the federal vacation accrual schedule. Mr. Diorio asked the Board to vote on the policy as presented.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Adopt Personnel Policy Vacation 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

f. Personnel Policy 4.05 Holidays

Ms. Meduri presented the proposed Holiday Policy which includes the new federal holiday for Juneteenth Day to commemorate the end of slavery in the US.

Board Member Bierlair presented a motion to Adopt Personnel Policy 4.05 Holidays 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	Virtual Vote Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Grimm	Yes

**IX. BOARD ISSUES AND DISCUSSION:**

Board Member Everett announced she will be on vacation for the August Board Meeting.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mr. Howard stated he would like the Board to enter into executive session to discuss the renewal of the contract for Health Commissioner, Joseph Diorio.

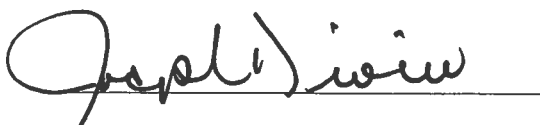
A motion was made by Board Member Ribelin to enter into executive session, seconded by Board Member Cutlip at 7:29pm.

A motion was made to move back to regular session and exit executive session by Board Member Bierlair, seconded by Board Member Cutlip at 7:40pm.

Board Member Ribelin made a motion to approve the contract for Joseph Diorio, Health Commissioner, for three (3) years and two (2) months with ten (10) percent pay increase, seconded by Board Member Everett.

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

**Adjournment:** The July 20, 2021, Board meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm. An “aye” vote was cast by all, motion carried.



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