

Geauga Public Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
470 Center Street, Bldg. 8, Chardon, OH 44024

1. Call to Order

Mr. Richard Piraino, President, called the monthly meeting of the Geauga County Board of Health to order at 5:00p.m.

A roll call found the following Board members present: Mr. Richard Piraino, President, Mr. David Gragg, Pro-Tem, Ms. Lynn Roman, and Ms. Ashley Jones, Pharm.D. Dr. Patricia Levan was not present

Staff members present: Thomas Quade, Health Commissioner, Carol Straniero, Nursing Director; Alta Wendell, Director of Administration; Mark Citriglia, O & M Program Manager; and Karolyn Johnson, Fiscal Coordinator.

Others present: Jeff Szuter and Walter Claypool

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Piraino asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Board Minutes

Mr. Gragg moved to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2021 regular meeting of the Board with corrections. Ms. Roman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comment Session

Public comment session is to last 20 minutes unless the Board moves to extend. Each speaker is allotted 2 minutes to make comments and ask questions. Questions will be answered by the Board after having an opportunity to investigate responses following the meeting. Board responses will be recorded and publicly filed with meeting minutes.

Mr. Claypool said that he came to the office to ask questions about a form he was filling out. When the staff member answered the window, he was asked to put on a mask in order to provide service to him. Mr. Claypool was upset that he couldn't get service without a mask and was unhappy with his experience with the person who provided assistance. He was unhappy with the only having access through a small opening in the window. After he turned in his form, he was given the business card of the inspector he needed to speak to.

Mr. Claypool expressed his concern that he found the offices to be appointment only and appears to be in full lock-down panic mode. He wanted to know when the health department was going to get back to normal, since the governor lifted restrictions.

Mr. Quade stated that the health department is not "panic mode" nor was it locked down. Requiring masks for all eliminates the question of whether someone is vaccinated or not. Mr. Quade stated that he will continue to watch the data showing incident rates. He anticipates that the health department will be changing requirements within the next several weeks.

Scheduling appointments has allowed the office to run much more efficiently. The public does not have to wait in line and their business is taken care of within just a few minutes. There is the ability to do business with the department in several different ways, via email, phone, and drop-box in the lobby.

Mr. Quade said that the inspector received a voicemail from Mr. Claypool, but a phone number was not left nor was it on his form. Mr. Claypool disagreed and said he did leave his phone number both on the form and the voicemail. Mr. Quade indicate he would follow up on the phone number issue.

After the meeting, Mr. Quade followed up and pulled the form. The phone number was not on it.

4. Environmental Health Update

Variances

a. Jeff Szuter/ Liese Toohig

Jeff Szuter was present and sworn in by Mr. Piraino. Mr. Citriglia was also sworn in.

Mr. Citriglia stated that this is a variance request by Jeff Szuter, STS Treatment Systems on behalf of Liese Toohig for the property located at **14318 View Dr., Newbury Twp.** The request involves section 3701-29-06 (G) (3) (c) of the Household Sewage Treatment Regulations which states:

“All components of a sewage treatment system shall be at least fifty feet from any water supply source and vertical open and closed loop geothermal heating and/or cooling system.” Discussion followed.

Mr. Citriglia explained that the owner is having a new sewage treatment system installed at the property and due to the limited space on the property, 0.14 acres between 2 different parcels, the aeration treatment unit will be less than 50 feet to the private water well. The other horizontal isolation requirements for buildings, property lines, and wells are being met.

Mr. Gragg moved to approve the variance to allow the installation of the sewage treatment system within the 10 fee of the road right-of-way isolation distance as shown on the proposed site plan dated May 17, 2021. If any problems should arise with the system, it is the responsibility of the owner to address the situation. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried.

O & M Update

The Ohio Department of Health has signed a contract with Acela Software, however, they do not expect to have this product ready until sometime in 2023. This will be offered to the local health departments but won't be required to use it. Acela is built on their own platform, so all customizations would have to be handled by their staff.

Mr. Citriglia has reached out to the company to see if Geauga Public Health could contract with them to arrange a product sooner. They are able to provide a product that has what we want, but do not have a good O & M module. Their product offers modules for the other programs and then once they develop the O & M module for the State we would get that for free.

Mr. Piraino asked about the program that was approved during the vaccination for Covid. Mr. Quade explained that that was a scheduling software only. The software that Mr. Citriglia is describing will allow the manager of data and will manage the cycle of inspections. This is an automation tool.

Mr. Citriglia stated that the development of this software would be fast-tracked to be ready in October so that in December we will be ready to send communication and invoices in December.

Mr. Citriglia presented information on the other company that is being considered. The company is Summit Technologies which is out of Columbus, Ohio. They already have some modules ready. They are cloud-based technology. It offers integration with GIS, has a customer and contractor portal, daily activity logs and does integrate with ODH. This is built on a platform that allows us to do configurations ourselves which would save money long-term.

Summit Technologies is less expensive both at onset and long-term. Mr. Citriglia explained that the software from Summit has more features that are needed and will also allow for more efficiency for scheduling and information retrieval by the customer. Of the two companies, this is the one that the department would like to contract with. Geauga Public Health will be the first county in Ohio to use this product.

Ms. Roman asked how many clients Summit and Accella have to assure they are fully established. Mr. Citriglia will provide that information along with some recommendations from current clients. (Summit has 28 clients and provided two companies for references. Accella did not provide references when asked)

To help expedite the process, Mr. Quade will ask the prosecutor's office to review the contract and if approved, will present it to the Board at the July meeting for Board approval.

Mr. Quade received some questions about the O & M Program and wanted to be mindful of presenting it so as not to run into trouble with conflict of interest. He wanted to assure the Board had the opportunity of hear the answers to the questions. The following is the list of questions and the answers:

- Question
 - “For any aeration system, the state requires that yearly maintenance is performed by a contracted service provider that meets the requirements of the O&M program. They assess a fee of approximately \$250 for this yearly maintenance of these systems which in most cases includes testing. If the homeowner has this yearly maintenance and testing performed and documented, is there an additional \$250 fee assessed by the GPH O&M program to home owners? If the home owner has any other category system and has a service provider contract, and their contract meets the requirements do they get assessed a fee of \$40 on top of their fee for the service provider?”
- Answer
 - Our fees cover our program costs and include our inspections and testing, etc. Our fees do not cover anything additional a private provider may do. Private providers will decide their own costs for the services they provide. Their service does not replace those we provide.

Mr. Quade explained that the service provider performs certain tasks and Geauga Public Health also performs certain tasks. The department charges fees for the tasks that we perform. That work is what the fee is based on. Per the OAC, the health department has the right of first refusal to perform that work. Because we are performing the work, we will not accept the work of an outside company. The fees are based on the type of system and the necessary maintenance for that system. It is hoped that if the service provider is also performing the same inspections the health district is, that they would alert their customer. Ms. Roman stated the consumer really needs to know what is included in the fees. Mr. Quade stated that is part of the information that Mr. Citriglia will be communicating out to the public and the installers and service providers.

Ms. Jones stated that the question was posed as a result of knowing service providers for certain systems are required to take samples as a requirement of some systems. If this is something the health department does, then will the service providers be told not to take the samples and adjust their fee accordingly? Mr. Quade, stated yes.

Ms. Roman asked if this leaves the health department vulnerable for suit. Mr. Quade stated that because the OAC says that we have the right of first refusal, no. Ms. Roman expressed her concern that service providers may lose revenue. Mr. Quade stated he felt once the program is implemented, this will cause them to have more work because of identifying problems with some of the systems.

Ms. Jones asked if the program is rolled out next year and someone has just had their system inspected by their service provider, will that be sufficient. Mr. Quade said there will always be that person who falls into that scenario. This is information that will be communicated with the public through the training Mr. Citriglia will be providing so they are aware.

Ms. Jones asked if the health department knows what types of service contracts and what they include? Mr. Citriglia stated that we have reached out to the service providers and asked for their service checklists. This is information that would be passed on the property owners. This also will allow us to know what they do as service providers. Mr. Citriglia has been out on inspections with two service providers to observe exactly what they do during their inspections. Ms. Jones asked what type of systems they were. Mr. Citriglia stated that they were NPDES systems. None of those service providers provided any sort of analytical testing. They indicated that testing was not something they were interested in doing. Ms. Jones stated that she recommended reaching out to more than two service providers. Ms. Jones said, “There are many service providers that do sampling and work with accredited labs in the county and to expand to get an open forum with the service providers to get a consensus with open communication with everyone so that everyone is on the same page because there will be a large amount of pushback.”

Mr. Citriglia stated that Lake and Cuyahoga County have programs that have been running more than a year. The data obtained from them does not show any of the service providers provide testing. Most of those service providers also work in Geauga County. Mr. Citriglia reviewed the O & M inspection forms the department has received from the service providers and none included any sampling information. If they are doing sampling, it is not being submitted the department. There will be a presentation for service providers to discuss the program.

Ms. Jones asked if it was manufacture-specific. So when someone gets a certain tank from a manufacture there is required service based on that type of system. Mr. Citriglia stated that all the systems are based on NPDES requirements. If the system that was installed is required to meet NPDES standards, then that is the testing the health department is doing. Ms. Jones asked Mr. Citriglia when looking at the testing for systems, is there overlapping between what the service providers do and what the health department does? Mr. Citriglia stated that he has not seen any overlapping in those services. We do the tests that are required by and must be reported to ODH.

Mr. Piraino asked if the OAC consider pumping part of O & M. Mr. Citriglia stated that it was. Mr. Piraino stated that the program that is being proposed will result in hiring of personnel and other expenses. He inquired why not implement a pumping program. Mr. Citriglia stated that the top tier of systems in the program is the one that that requires the sampling. The rest, approximately 95%, only need to prove they had service on their system. This is why the customer portal is ideal with the new software. The pumper will be able to enter their pumping record into the system themselves. That will satisfy the O & M for that property. The only time other inspections would be done is For Sale of Property, nuisance complaints, if the system is undocumented, or if the owner fails to prove service on their system. Pumping will satisfy the requirements for most of the systems that do not fall into one of those categories.

Mr. Piraino stated that after the service contract runs out, the property owner is supposed to renew the contract, and he has found that 95% of them do not. Why not try to get the manufacturer to make the owner renew the contract? This would eliminate the expense of having the health department do it. Mr. Citriglia said that the new software program will allow us to track who has contracts, the frequency of maintenance inspection the system requires, and whether the property owner is in compliance with those requirements. The compliance is what causes the expense to the health department. This includes taking the samples that are required, which the service providers do not do. Mr. Piraino said he thought service providers were taking samples. Mr. Citriglia reiterated that they do not take samples. Mr. Piraino asked Ms. Jones if that was true. Ms. Jones stated that some do based on the manufacturer. Mr. Citriglia said that if they are taking samples, then they aren't providing those sample results to Geauga Public Health nor Lake or Cuyahoga Health Departments.

Mr. Gragg stated that when he buys a maintenance contract for his new system, he wants to have explained to him what he is getting for the fee the health department is charging that is over and above when the service provider does. He feels that needs to be explained well to the residents.

Ms. Roman asked if the property owner knows what system they have. Ms. Jones said most people don't know what NPDES means.

Ms. Roman inquired about what systems are being prioritized. Mr. Citriglia stated that the requirement from ODH is to begin with any systems installed or altered after January 1, 2015, that have NPDES and any units that have special device approvals. Then the health department is to enter the rest of the systems into the program. Ms. Roman asked how long it will take to get to the systems prior to 2015. Mr. Citriglia stated that the first year, the plan is to enroll approximately 5,000 systems. Out of the 5,000 systems we will have every system to have all those NPDES and special device systems installed after January 1, 2015. Then over the next few years, the rest of the systems will be entered into the program. There will be regular meetings throughout the county and with other agencies as the program evolves.

Mr. Piraino said that since this is such a robust program, that he feels that a mandatory pumping program will allow the residents to understand that this larger program is coming in the future. Mr. Quade stated that what Mr. Piraino and Mr. Citriglia are saying are fairly similar, but the O & M program allows us to be compliant with the regulations of the Ohio Department of Health. Geauga County has had the For Sale of Property program for many years and has called it our O & M program. Geauga Public Health is far behind what other counties are doing with O & M. We need to set the bar for what we think we can do. Mr. Piraino has explained that he read the OAC and based on what he read, the pumping would cover the requirements. Mr. Citriglia reminded the Board that in 2019 and audit was performed by ODH of the sewage program. All our deficiencies were in the O & M program. We will have those same deficiencies if we don't put the program together.

Mr. Piraino stated that he felt that it needed to be put on the manufacturers to assure the owners have a service contract and the requirements. Mr. Quade stated that we have an obligation to make sure that the requirements are being met. Ms. Jones the implementation of the For Sale of Property program caused a spike in the number of systems needed to be replaced. She felt that with this program will also cause a spike in the number of systems that will need to be replaced. Ms. Jones and Mr. Piraino both indicated that there are a significant amount of systems that have been replaced since 2015. He credits the FSP program for that. Geauga County should be commended for what the FSP has done.

Ms. Jones asked if the audit requires there just to be a plan in place. Her understanding from a prior conversation was that Lake County has been doing O & M for 6 years and still having a program up and running. Her concern is that we are setting ourselves up for failure with such a robust plan or do we just need a plan in place. Mr. Citriglia stated that having a plan in place does not satisfy the deficiency, the plan must be implemented. Ms. Jones stated that the amount of systems to begin with should be reduced to be successful. Mr. Quade stated that he feels comfortable if the Board would like to start with a smaller number. He is less comfortable with saying there's several different versions of the program. One of the reasons that the health department is in the predicament with the septic systems in Geauga County is because for a long time, we have done the least we can

do to satisfy the code. The purpose of this regulation is to fix the failing septic systems and to do that we need to have a robust program.

Ms. Jones would like to see starting with 1000 and then when that is complete, do another 1000. Mr. Quade stated he was agreeable to that, but he didn't want to see a sideways approach to the program. Mr. Piraino stated that Lake County had a robust program and fell short in their program. He said the Board was trying to be realistic. The homeowners need to be on board with the program also.

Ms. Jones said it needs to be a joint effort with the homeowners, the installers and others so we can work together instead of constantly having conflicts. It needs to be approached in a new way by coming together to make it a successful plan. Mr. Citriglia said that the department is trying to get involved with the homeowners. At the final inspection we will meet with the homeowner and give them information, educate them and answer questions. This can also be done at the FSP inspection. Ms. Jones stated that the installer should be the health department's advocate.

Mr. Piraino asked how Accreditation is affected by the O & M program. Mr. Quade stated that PHAB isn't concerned with our internal programs, unless it satisfies a measure during the accreditation process.

- Question:
 - "Just following up on the inquiry I sent to see if there has been any discussion regarding a response as some of the townships have programs in place that require yearly pumping and maintenance with associated fees (South Russell is one example of this), as well as installer service contracts requiring yearly sampling and servicing with associated fees."
- Answer:
 - South Russell Village is the only municipality that has a requirement of residents in their village that they show proof of having their septic tank(s) pump at least once in 24 months. For systems that require mandatory service twice per year or once per year, that isn't covered by South Russell Village's ordinance. There are no townships that have mandates and no other municipalities in the county that have rules to mandate pumping or servicing of septic systems. That is handled by the health district. OAC 3701-29 gives the health district authority on O&M and the requirements that have to be met. Once our minimum O&M requirements are set and in place, they serve as the minimum that has to be met per OAC. If a municipality has an ordinance, it will not affect the minimums set forth by the health district that must be met. That is, if the municipality's ordinance is more stringent, it does not affect what the health district enforces. It would be up to the municipality to enforce their ordinance if it is in addition to ours. South Russell Village does not have a "village health district" so they cannot enforce 3701-29.

Mr. Quade stated that South Russell can be more restrictive but not less restrictive. Ms. Jones asked if the Requirement by South Russell that owners having their system pumped would meet the requirements of the O & M program. Mr. Citriglia stated yes, the plan is to meet with them to work out the details.

5. Population Health Update

Mrs. Straniero stated that although we are not where we want to be in regards to vaccine rates in Geauga County at 48%, we are above the state percentage of 45%. Walk-in clinics are still being held all over the county almost daily. The clinics are small, but we will continue to have them because it is for the safety of public health.

We are focusing on the homebound and the incarcerated population. We have all three vaccines in stock. Mrs. Straniero hopes to have regular clinics at the health district offices in the future. Mrs. Straniero stated we have been vaccinating children 12 and over, but there is not much demand. Clinics were held in the north and south part of the county.

Geauga Public Health has been recognized for its community partnerships in vaccine distribution. An ODH press release was distributed to the Board. Mrs. Straniero also received an email from ODH Office of Performance and Innovations congratulating us and thanking us on how well we are keeping up with the socially vulnerable and how difficult that is to do.

Mrs. Straniero reported that Childhood Immunization Clinics are being held again. They are being held at the Middlefield Care Center and at the health district offices. We will be reaching out to the schools so they can inform the parents that back to school immunizations will be held.

The staff have met all deliverables and timelines for all the grants while doing all the work for the clinics. The grants account for approximately \$240,000.00 in revenue. Many of the grants have been renewed for the 2021-2020 year. Mr. Quade commended Mrs. Straniero, the PHS team, and Mr. Litke on this major accomplishment.

6. Administration Update

Mrs. Wendell stated this year's performance reviews were done through BambooHR. The supervisor did their portion of the evaluation and the staff did a self-evaluation. Once both were completed, the supervisor and staff member were able to see each other's comments. A survey was sent to staff previously asking for their 1 year and 3 year goals and objectives. This will allow tracking on how far they are toward reaching their goals. This information was uploaded into their profile so it also could be discussed during their review.

The time-off request module of BambooHR was launched on June 14, 2021. This will allow staff to request time off from their supervisor by simply going into the Bamboo HR app. The supervisor would receive an alert and would then approve or decline the request.

Mr. Quade expressed that BambooHR can also be used as part of the accreditation process. Measures would be assigned to staff and then when they find something that meets the measure, they can upload the document for use when needed.

BambooHR will also be used for on-boarding new staff. Most of the documents that are needed for HR, will be forwarded to the staff member for them to complete digitally. That document then becomes part of their digital personnel file. The only documents we have to print are the ones for the auditor's payroll department.

This will also be a great tool to keep track of training. Staff will be able to upload any certificates they receive for training they've taken.

The clerk in Vital Stats will be retiring soon. The clerk that was hired to help during Covid will be moving to the Administration Division to begin training in Vital Stats.

Mr. Gragg stated that the staff have really gone above and beyond during the pandemic. He felt that some sort of recognition should be done for the staff. Mr. Quade thanked Mr. Gragg for the kind words. Mr. Quade stated that something was in the works that would be focused on the accomplishments during the year. More information will be forthcoming. Mr. Gragg asked Mr. Quade to let the Board know how they can assist.

a. Finance Report

Mrs. Johnson explained variations in the revenue and expense items shown on the finance report.

Mr. Gragg moved to approve the June 2021 financial report as recommended by the health commissioner. Ms. Roman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

7. Health Commissioner Update

The PEP Risk Control visit was conducted recently. In 2019, the concerns were lack of a policy manual and lack of pursuit of accreditation. These are no longer concerns of PEP. The site visitor stated that no recommendations will be submitted.

Mr. Quade is receiving recognition from Kenston Board of Education next week. He recently received recognition from Chardon Board of Education and Education Association. He was very moved by the acknowledgement.

Mr. Quade has been asked to chair the United Way Community Investment Committee. This allows us to transition into the idea of social determinates of health with their priorities. This will help us direct the conversation about who they fund and how those funds impact health. Mr. Quade stated he is very excited to work with this group.

Program videos will be developed for every program the health district has. They will be short videos of about 90 seconds to explain a little more about what the programs entail. These will be posted on social media and our website.

The Board was provided with information about Covid rates within Geauga County. We are in a very good place. The threshold that we were trying to reach was under 50 for 14 consecutive days. We are at 6 right now at day 16. Mr. Quade stated that he will be looking at our policies regarding masking. Mr. Quade attributes that to our vaccination rates. In June, none of the cases were in the population of 70 and over. The population under 20 years old have a 13% vaccination rate and accounted for 27% of the cases in June.

Mr. Quade provided the Geauga Public Health recommendations to the Board. These are recommendations, not orders. These are also posted on the website.

Dr. Levan asked a question, which was sent to the prosecutor for an answer.

- Question (via email):
"Board of Health:
Given that OSHA has just suspended the legal requirements for employers to report work-related injuries resulting from vaccinations so as to not discourage vaccinations, but they will still hold businesses liable for "adverse injuries and death" if they mandate vaccination, might it not be appropriate for the Geauga Health Department to warn businesses NOT to mandate these experimental vaccines? The FDA acknowledges on its website that recipients of a vaccine under EUA status must be "informed, to the extent practicable...that they have the option to accept or refuse the vaccine, and of any available alternatives to the product." Might it not also be pertinent to mention **that EUA is only for "serious or life threatening diseases" NOT diseases with a 99 percent survival rate** which have "adequate, approved, and available alternatives"? It is a very serious matter to mandate employees take a vaccine which its developers claim "hacks the software of life" just to keep a job! (<https://dcdirtylaundry.com/bombshell-moderna-chief-medical-officer-admits-mma-alters-dna>)
Please let me know that you will consider this matter.
Concerned in Geauga County"
- Answer
 - The issue of warning private businesses about perceived potential legal liabilities due to negative outcomes based on their own businesses policies is outside the scope of our public health practice. We are not attorneys and do not dispense legal advice or warnings to that effect. It remains the position of Geauga Public Health that while we believe that increased vaccination coverage in a population decreases the likelihood of community spread, the individual decision to get vaccinated is best made between an individual and their health care provider. We have not advocated for mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies for other businesses and it is not our own internal business policy.

8. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss

9. New Business

a. 2021 Geauga Public Health Personnel Policy Revisions

Mr. Quade explained that some changes were needed to the policy manual. He provided a list for the Board's review.

Mr. Gragg moved 6.23.21-a to approve the 2021 Geauga Public Health Personnel Policy revisions as presented. Ms. Roman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Meetings

Regular Board of Health Meeting, **Wednesday, July 28, 2021** at 5:00 p.m. at 470 Center St., Bldg. 8, Chardon, Ohio.

12. Adjourn

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting Ms. Roman moved to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Quade
Secretary, Geauga County Board of Health

a