

AGENDA
GEAUGA PUBLIC HEALTH
March 15, 2023

1.0 Call to Order

2.0 Opening of Meeting

2.01 Pledge of Allegiance

2.02 Declaration of Quorum

2.03 Certification of Delivery of Official Notices of Meeting

6.0 Old Business

6.01 House Bill 110 Review

6.02 Lake County General Health District Cross Jurisdictional Agreement

7.0 New Business

7.01 For Sale of Property Program

8.0 Citizens' Remarks

- Session to last 20 minutes unless Board moves to extend.
- 2 minutes per speaker to make comments and ask questions.
- The Board will answer questions after having an opportunity to investigate responses following the meeting. This is not a press conference where answers should be expected on the spot.
- Board responses will be recorded and publicly filed with meeting minutes.

9.0 Executive Session

10.0 Adjournment

1.0 Call to Order

The special meeting of the Geauga County Board of Health was called to order at 5:01 p.m. on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, by President Richard Piraino. The meeting was held at the Geauga County Office Building located at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Chardon, Ohio.

2.0 Opening of Meeting

2.01 Declaration of Quorum

The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Carolyn Brakey, Esq.

Ashley Jones, Pharm D

Richard Piraino

Lynn Roman

Dr. Mark Rood

Minutes were re-recorded by Gina Parker.

Also present from the Health District staff:

Dan Lark

Adam Litke

Carol Straniero

Alta Wendell

Others Present: Members of the public.

2.03 Certification of Delivery of Official Notices

Certification of delivery of the official notices of the special meeting of the Board of Health was made by Adam Litke, Administrator.

6.0

Old Business

6.01

House Bill 110 Review

Bryan Kostura explained that the audit of the program is ongoing. Files and electronic records are being reviewed. The 800 physical files have been reviewed. Those are still being cross-referenced with the other databases. In database #1, the inspections from 2022 and 2023 are up-to-date and consistent with the permits that were paid for and the correlating inspections. Database #2 contained scanned images of complete and incomplete records. It also contained records that were associated with incorrect addresses; those are trying to be fixed for accuracy. Not all information from the GPH servers were shown in Database #2, so ADP was tasked with

running a full scan of the GPH servers so information can be confirmed between inspections and payments received to provide a full and accurate review. Once the review is complete, a finding of fact and recommendation will be presented to the Board.

Discussion:

Richard Piraino asked if there was a timeframe for completion. Bryan Kostura said the review of Database #2 was expected to be complete by the end of the next week. The review, as related to the full server, will take longer as it needs to be completed after hours so it doesn't bog down the system during the daytime.

Richard Piraino asked for the date range of records. Bryan Kostura said the records date back to 2010.

6.02

Lake County General Health District Cross Jurisdictional Agreement

Carolyn Brakey explained why the agreement was important. She said it was a cost-saving measure that would also ensure longevity for Geauga Public Health. She said the Board of Health has a fiduciary duty to address a possible levy renewal and the budget shortfall now since costs will continue to increase in the future. The Board owes it to the residents to explore all available options. She emphasized that GPH is not broke; it contains a healthy reserve, but that cannot be relied on.

Lynn Roman said that she and Carolyn Brakey began studying the current situation—obstacles faced, opportunities available. They looked at the current organizational structure, services provided, costs associated with the services, and the feasible immediate options. They had discussions with the Ohio Department of Health and other local health departments. They explored the partnering of health departments to ensure services are met as described by the 2012 “Public Health Issues” report issued by the Association of Ohio Commissioners. By partnering with other health departments, more funding options are available.

Carolyn Brakey said she and Lynn Roman recommended that the Board of Health vote on a cross jurisdictional agreement with Lake County. It will allow GPH to remain in control of the services in the county, while providing a cost-savings to residents. The Geauga County Board of Health will remain in place and will continue to control its policies, programs, and services. They recommend Vital Statistics continue to be overseen by GPH employees, this program would not benefit from a cost-savings by contracting out to another department.

Carolyn Brakey moved and Ashley Jones seconded a motion to enter into a cross jurisdictional cooperative agreement pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code section 3709.08 with Lake County General Health District for the administration and operation of Geauga County's public health services as identified in a public meeting as a cross jurisdictional cooperative agreement. Motion carried with a roll call vote. Mr. Piraino, yes; Ms. Jones, yes; Ms. Roman, yes; Mrs. Brakey, yes; and Dr. Rood, yes.

Discussion:

Dr. Mark Rood shared steps that were taken prior to a cross jurisdictional agreement with another health department, such as interviewed administrator for that position, obtained applications for the Environmental Health director, and looked at the work that needed to be done (like no specific expertise in the area of credentialing) on a budget that did not support that level of service. The agreement would allow GPH access to those services that would not be accessible on its own.

7.0

7.01

For Sale of Property Program

Bryan Kostura, Esq., legal representative for the Board, explained that the For Sale of Property (FSP) program was discontinued to make way for the implementation of the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program. He explained that he had reached out to the Geauga County Prosecutor to get a legal opinion for enforcement of the FSP and O&M programs at the same time. He stated the prosecutor is still in the process of creating a legal opinion. Bryan Kostura recommended that the Board moves to allow Adam Litke the ability to handle all the management and enforcement action and furtherance of the FSP program consistent with the prosecutor's legal opinion.

Lynn Roman moved and Dr. Mark Rood seconded a motion to allow Adam Litke to handle the management and enforcement of the For Sale of Property program consistent with the prosecutor's legal opinion; motion carried. Ashley Jones abstained.

8.0

Citizens' Remarks

Richard Piraino outlined the process and policies for providing public comment. Those who would like to comment but not attend the meeting are invited to email info@geaugacountyhealth.org and their comments will be forwarded to the Board.

Citizens made the following comments regarding the cross jurisdictional cooperative agreement:

- *Happy Sunshine Week and appreciation for the opportunity for citizens to be able to speak at public meetings such as this.*
- *More effort should have been made to avoid a cross-jurisdictional agreement.*
- *Geauga County residents can support a levy to help fund the budget shortfall.*
- *What benefit does Lake County receive from this agreement?*
- *Concerns that programs will not function as they have previously and feels that the health department has been functioning well for many years.*
- *Suggestion of letting the Geauga County residents vote on the agreement.*
- *Asked about the personal complaint process and asked if employees must be in the union or if they have an option.*

- *Will Geauga County keep its independence from Lake County?*
- *What are the terms of terminating the contract?*
- *What were the details of the cross jurisdictional agreement; such as when was it created, when was it discussed, and was it approved by the prosecutor?*

Geauga Township trustees made the following comments regarding the cross jurisdictional cooperative agreement:

- *Why didn't the Board of Health ask the residents to authorize a levy before pursuing the agreement?*
- *If there are any future levies, will they be just for Geauga County or both Geauga and Lake counties?*
- *Geauga County citizens respect their sovereignty.*
- *Suggestion to have the townships provide input going into the agreement.*
- *Who would be responsible for deciding the township's assessment costs for GPH if there is a monetary shortfall in the future.*
- *Surprised that nobody knew about the agreement.*
- *Township would contribute more financially if asked.*
- *Has seen firsthand what happens when you work with another organization.*

Geauga Public Health employees made the following comments regarding the cross jurisdictional cooperative agreement:

- *What happens if the agreement with Lake County doesn't work?*
- *Why was the contract with Lake County extended in December if the agreement is being decided now without public input?*
- *Felt it was decided quickly and was a mistake.*
- *How are employees to move forward if they are unaware of how the changes will affect them and their programs?*
- *Felt that the current environment is not good for employees and changing it over to Lake County is only going to make it worse.*
- *Employees learned about the contract at the same time as everyone else.*
- *Upset to hear that they will be losing their jobs to work for Lake County.*
- *Felt employees deserved more respect.*
- *Who will serve the public after March 31?*

Carolyn Brakey said it was not necessary to put a levy on the ballot or assess the townships since there was an opportunity to save money without cutting services. To do so would be breaking the Board's fiduciary duty not to pursue it. The Board has been discussing the issue since November at public meetings.

Richard Piraino said that GPH will be staffed, but they cannot guarantee all staff will be hired back. He said it is not the Board's intention to lay off workers and have them lose their jobs. He said the Board has to look at what's best for the county and the health department. The health department is not dissolving. O&M, which is mandated by the ORC, has not been implemented yet because it is a very tedious system and GPH cannot operate it with the staff available. The Registrar and Deputy Registrar will remain in Geauga County, just as the other GPH employees.

Lynn Roman said that Lake County is simply the supplier of GPH employees. They are being reimbursed based on the health care costs and salaries. Public Health is based on population, not land size, and the population of Geauga County is less than 100,000. She said they can go into executive session to discuss human resource issues, not the structure of the agreement. The structure of the agreement was being discussed currently. Employees will have until March 31, they will get two-week's severance pay, and paid vacation time. She said GPH may be able to go back to its "former state", but she is recommending the 5-year agreement with the option of early termination with a 2-year transition time. She said there is currently a part-time health commissioner and out of the applicants that applied, they are not as skilled as who is currently in place. It is hard and expensive to hire a health commissioner.

Ashley Jones said the Board of Health would maintain control; employees will be GPH employees, but contracted through Lake County; all services will still be provided at GPH. As Geauga County is a health and wealthy county, it makes it more difficult to access additional grants. One benefit with a cross jurisdictional agreement is that it allows for access to grants and funding that the county would not be able to get on its own.

Dr. Mark Rood added that although the population is generally healthy, a lot of the work that is done at the health district also has to do with environmental health.

10.0
Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary

President