

Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2022

Presiding: James Lopez, DDS

Attending Board Members: Devica Alappan, MD, Rebecca Covington (Mayor office), Crystal Farley (City Mgr office), Yasmin Cathright, Joy Adegbile

Not Present: Sylvester McRae, MD

Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Joanne Strickland, Tori Endres, Atty Gunby, Pam Kirkland, Kimberly Fuller, Kristi Ludy, Brandi Nelson, Patrick Peck, David Lewis (MCSD), Jeannie Polhamus, (MCSD), Sheryl Wadkins, Octavia White, Peggy Hallmark

In keeping with CDC/GDPH COVID-19 Community Mitigation Recommendations, this board of health meeting was held by conference call. All reports were emailed to all board members. Attendees verified by roll call.

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Decision	Responsibility
Call to order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Lopez called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. • Secretary completed roll call. • Dr. Lopez acknowledged a quorum was present. 	None	None
BOH Office Elections	<p>Dr. Lopez, Vice Chairman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened the floor for nominations for the vacant offices of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2-year term of January 2022 through December 2023. <p>Chairperson - Dr. James Lopez was nominated. There were no other nominations for this position. Dr. Lopez called for discussion. There was none. Dr. Lopez accepted the position of Chairman of the Columbus Board of Health.</p> <p>Vice Chairperson - Dr. Devica Alappan was nominated but declined. She then nominated Dr. Sylvester McRae. There were no other nominations. Dr. McRae was recognized and accepted by the board for the position of Vice Chairman.</p>	<p>Chairperson: Motion made by Yasmin Cathright and seconded by Dr. Alappan and approved by all members present.</p> <p>Vice Chairperson: Motion made by Yasmin Cathright and seconded by Dr. Alappan and approved by all members present.</p>	None
Approval of Agenda	<p>Dr. Lopez:</p> <p>Referred to the January meeting agenda as delivered to all board members. With no questions or discussion from the members, asked for a motion for approval of the agenda.</p>	Motion made by Yasmin Cathright and seconded by Dr. Alappan and approved by all members present.	None

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Approval of Minutes	<p>Dr. Lopez:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called for the answer to Dr. Chhokar’s December meeting question regarding the number of free Uber rides for Columbus Health Department services. The answer was not readily available. • Referred to minutes from the December meeting as delivered to all board members. With no questions or discussion from the members, minutes were approved. 	<p>With no questions or discussion from board members, Dr. Lopez stated minutes approved as sent.</p>	<p>Secretary to email the Uber ride answer to board members.</p>
Director’s Report	<p>Dr. Lopez:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called for the Director’s report <p>Dr. Townsend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomed the board’s newest member Dr. Joy Adegbile, having both MD and MPH credentials. • Thanked newly elected members for serving on the Columbus Board of Health. • Stated that we are still in pandemic and Public Health efforts continue to be primarily focused on COVID response for prevention with vaccinations and testing. Testing numbers are down. Happy to have contracted companies to assist with vaccinations and testing as we get back to our other Public Health services. • One of our issues is that Public Health staff and/or their families are getting infected with the COVID virus which has a negative impact on staffing and being able to function. • Public Health, like other healthcare providers are losing staff to other entities because people can make so much more money, in some cases, twice their salary, by working in COVID response even though that may be temporary. We cannot match what those entities are paying from COVID dollars. 	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

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Director's Report Cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopefully Public Health will soon be able to do something to increase salaries. Board of health members are encouraged to advocate to legislature on behalf of Public Health for increase of salaries and compensations accordingly. • Today is Kimberly Fuller's last day with us as our County Nurse Manager for the Columbus Health Department. This is a tremendous loss for us. She has done a great job for us, and we thank her for her services. • GPHA will have their annual conference in May in Jekyll Island. Information has been emailed to board members by secretary, Peggy Hallmark. 		
Financial Report	<p>Joanne Strickland, District Administrator</p> <p>Presented the FY22 financial overview, through the end of December 2021 sent to board members in the original packet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We began FY22 with an original budget of \$6,120,536. We have had three revisions during this 6-month period and are currently working with a budget of \$6,265,237. Line 3 shows total expenses through the end of December are \$3,102,180.83, which is 50% of budget and on target for 6 months of operations. Line 4 shows the comparison of expenses to last year with an increase of \$36,481.90. <p>Line 5 shows total fee income is \$596,606.69 and lines 6 through 17 shows the breakdown of fund sources and their comparison to the same time last year. Line 18 shows an overall decrease of \$68,311.21 due to no longer receiving income for the administration of COVID testing accounting for a little over \$50,000 of that decrease. Prior year Admin Claiming Income remains down due to timing of receipts from the state. Details of the summary are on pages 2 and 3. Page 4 lists our grants, which were all on target for 6 months of operation.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>	The Financial Report is attached and made a part of these minutes	None

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Excused Absences	Sylvester McRae, MD	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None
New Business	<p>Budget Approval for Relocation of Vector Control & Emergency Preparedness Storage</p> <p>Joanne Strickland presented the budget needed for Vector Control and EP Storage relocation to the Veterans Parkway location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifications for budget approval were emailed with the board of health packet. • Columbus is unique to have a Vector Control Program with a building, staff, agency vehicles, EP trailers and storage, all of which are currently located on the lot behind 2100 Comer Avenue. The proposal is to move all of this to the back parking lot area of the Columbus Health Department on Veterans Parkway. A picture and drawing of the space to be used is included with the proposal emailed. The project will include construction of a Vector Control building to house the office, chemical room, Vector lab, employee workstation, breakroom, bathroom with shower equipment/supplies storage, fencing the area for agency vehicles, as well as moving the current storage building. • We did present the request to the city. They took the request to amend our current lease agreement to include the additional space to the City Council last night and the council did approve the request as outlined. It is not a cost as far as the city is concerned. The cost all falls on Public Health, but they will amend our lease for the needed space. 	Motion made by Yasmin Cathright and seconded by Dr. Alappan and approved by all members present.	None

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<p>New Business Cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to details of the proposed project. A cost comparison was completed to compare having a construction company complete the entire project and us hiring individual subcontractors. The comparison resulted in \$379,200 versus \$266,534; an approximate difference of \$12,000 in favor of individual vendors. • This was not in our original budget and so require that the board vote on the new budget. Fund sources will be some COVID-19 funds, Emergency Preparedness program funds and Columbus Health Department funds. <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – Would like the board to know there has been theft and vandalism at our present Vector Control location and the move will greatly decrease that threat.</p> <p>DISCUSSION:</p> <p>Dr. Lopez – Did you solicit bids to multiple vendors?</p> <p>Joanne Strickland – Our vendor selections are based on the experience of having used them in the past for multiple projects and them understanding our need. We did not send out bids. I would be more than happy to put it out there if that is the board’s wish. Banner Buildings will move the existing storage building at no cost to us.</p> <p>Dr. Lopez – You did get a contractor to bid the entire project that totals a lot more. I believe it was important to ask.</p> <p>Joanne Strickland – Correct. Each of the individual vendors will be responsible to obtain the permits. I did speak with the city from that perspective and understand the different permits. The city did go to the site to see the area and know the utility requirements to be sure it is feasible to complete the project where we are asking.</p> <p>With no further discussion, Dr. Lopez asked for a motion to approve the budget as presented.</p>		

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<p>Program Reports</p>	<p>Epidemiology COVID 19 Update – Brandi Nelson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscogee County has 29,756 confirmed cases to date. The 14-day confirmed cases per 100,000 is 2,200 compared to November’s case rate of 98 in a 14-day period. We have an extreme difference from November to present due largely to how the Omicron variant circulates quickly and spreads rapidly. We strongly emphasize prevention measures at work and in the community. <p>Probable cases (antigen cases) are at 5,071 making the current 14-day average 926 per 100,000. Current PCR positivity rate has gone up tremendously to 37% compared to the previous 11/29 report of 7%. We are in the highest rate of community spread thus far.</p> <p>Primary series breakthrough cases are at 8%, total hospitalizations are at 2,068 and total confirmed deaths are at 609. Our fully vaccinated percentage is 42% compared November rate of 40%.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>Public Information – Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed the board of continued weekly press release updates on COVID case numbers, vaccinations and the media advisory about our mobile Public Health unit providing pediatric COVID-19 vaccinations. • All interviews were pertaining to COVID-19, vaccinations, pediatric vaccinations, increased COVID testing hours, COVID safety, and the spread of the Omicron variant. • Campaigns included HIV/Syphilis testing, Linkage to Care for HIV care and support, and testing at libraries. 	<p>Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes.</p>	<p>None</p>

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Public Information – Cont'd - Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information by social media posts and advertisements covered COVID and Flu vaccines, homebound vaccines, testing locations, help to stop vaping, health habits and exercise, the Fatherhood Initiative and the Body Art Regulations meeting as well as COVID testing opportunities at other provider locations. <p>Environmental Health – Kristi Ludy</p> <p>Referred members to the Environmental Health report of activities covering the months of November and December which was emailed to all members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food Service Program conducted 113 routine inspections, 1 follow up inspection, 10 initial inspections and 4 plan reviews. There were 11 complaints - all were investigated • Pool and spa activity included 8 routine inspections and 1 re-inspection. • Tourist accommodations conducted 16 routine inspections and 1 complaint investigations • The Body Art program conducted 1 inspection and had no complaints to investigate. • Rabies Control had 70 human only exposure investigations, 2 animal only, and 1 human/animal exposure investigation. 48 animals were confined, 1 was tested for rabies and was negative. We had 1 rabies clinic on December 2nd at the Columbus Health Department using the COVID drive through clinic from 5 pm – 7 pm. 126 Rabies vaccines were administered during that clinic. • Vector Control conducted 23 complaints and 21 complaint investigations. The difference in figures occurs when the complaint is received at the end of the reporting period and the investigation falls into the next reporting period. 		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Environmental Health Cont'd- Kristi Ludy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Site Sewage issued 10 new system permits, 5 residential installation inspections, 3 repair permits, 6 repair inspections, and existing system evaluation. • Well Water program evaluated 1 site and issued 1 private well water permit. • The following pages of the report list the facilities inspected with resulting ratings. <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <p>Greeted and thanked Dr. Townsend and board members for their kind words of farewell and expressed her appreciation of Public Health and the opportunities given her.</p> <p>Referred to the FY22 Nursing report representing services provided to patients for the period of July 1 through December 31, 2021 and emailed to board members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients who received services during the period include 9,033 initial visits; 2,080 return visits for a total of 11,113 visits compared to 2,965 total visits for the same period last year. • Community collaborations continue with monthly meetings and include MCAP, Child Fatality Review and CHINS. Community awareness activities continue with rapid COVID testing for first responders, as well as clinical rotations for CSU nursing students. 		

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Program Reports Cont'd	<p>Nursing Report Cont'd - Kimberly Fuller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities for this time frame include continued rapid COVID testing for our first responders and COVID testing in partnership with MAKO, weekly COVID conference calls, daily vaccination clinics, Strike Team and CORE clinics and planning meetings (calendar attached), breast cancer awareness exams and continue with regular Nurse Manager meetings. • Total COVID vaccines administered including homebound visits since December 23, 2020, is 29,532. COVID vaccines are given Monday through Friday from 9 am – 4 pm. No appointment is required, but registration is preferred. Daily testing is available at Shirley B Winston Park, and we are adding Peachtree Mall for testing. <p>There were no questions.</p>		
Adjournment	<p>Dr. Lopez thanked everyone, welcomed Dr. Adegbile and wished well to Kimberly Fuller in her departure.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Lopez – When will we resume in person meetings?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – We are in a COVID case surge at present so that decision has not been made. Until that is not the case, we will continue with virtual meetings.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Adegbile – Does the health department provide N95 masks?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – We do not.</p> <p>With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Lopez at 2:05 pm.</p>		

**Columbus Board of Health minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Peggy Hallmark
NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING TO BE HELD ON
February 23, 2022, at 1:00 PM**