



**Watertown Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
Watertown Dept of Public Health  
515 S First Street/Zoom  
January 21, 2025 – 3:30 PM**

**Members Present:** Dr. Donene Rowe, Carol Quest, Andrea Turke, Ald. Fred Smith,

**Via Zoom:** Ald. Dana Davis, Patricia Gedemer

**Others in attendance:** Abigail Kuehn, Kim Hiller

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Rowe called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

**2. Citizens to be heard**

None.

**3. Review and take action: Board of Health Minutes of October 15, 2024**

Reviewed minutes dated October 15, 2024

Motion made to approve the minutes for October 15, 2024, by Fred Smith, seconded by Andrea Turke.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**4. Review & take action: Financial report – Preliminary December 2024**

Financial report Preliminary December 2024.

The Health budget is a tax levy budget. The revenue accounts are over budget due to an increase in program participation. The revenue accounts have been adjusted for this change in the 2025 budget. There are some expense accounts that will be updated by the Finance Department.

Environmental Health is a non-levy budget. The Environmental revenue is over the budgeted amount and has been adjusted for the 2025 budget. The agent expense account is over budget due to increased Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) fees.

Emergency Preparedness is a non-levy budget. The revenue and supplies accounts were used for Public Health ARPA grant expenses.

Some items that Public Health ARPA funds were used for included:

AED for Fire Department  
IT Switch for Health Department  
Tuckpointing Health Department building  
Electronic Health Record software  
Stryker chair for Fire Department  
Pocketalk translator units for department

Health Department conference room tables & chairs  
Portion of generator installation cost for Senior Center  
Contract for HIPAA policy review  
Public Announcement system for Senior Center  
Audiometer for Health Department

The Public Health ARPA grant was set to sunset in December 2024. This funding has been extended to 2025.

Seal A Smile budget is a non-levy budget. The revenue and expense accounts are on track for revenue and expenses.

Motion was made by Andrea Turke and seconded by Fred Smith for approval of preliminary December 2024 financial report.

Unanimously passed.

## **5. Review and discuss: Lot adjacent to Public Health Parking lot**

The Mayor, Carol and the owner of the vacant lot adjacent to the Health Department parking lot had a brief discussion to determine if the owner was interested in selling the property. Carol & Abbey met with the Mayor, City Attorney and Public Works to discuss the process needed to consider purchasing the property.

The Plan Commission will consider a request to allow the Mayor to work with the property owner to purchase the property. The Finance Committee will also consider the request to purchase the property.

The plan would include building a structure on the lot. The building would be used for storage and program delivery. The building would feature drive through space for immunization clinics and car seat installation. Currently, the health department delivers a majority of the car seats checks & installations in the city. Car seat installation services are provided throughout the year and the building would provide a safe location for families and shelter from inclement weather

Carol will be working with the Assistant City Engineer on building design and research how to best utilize the space within the code requirements of the city.

This project has been on the capital budget request for several years.

There are Public Health ARPA funds available to purchase the lot and building. The funding available is approximately \$180,000. There are some payments that are still outstanding so that amount may be different.

It was suggested that the lot should be reassessed for an updated value. It is currently assessed at \$39,600.

Next steps would be consideration by the Plan Commission and Finance Committee.

Motion was made by Fred Smith to support the acquisition of the lot and recommend proceeding to the earliest Plan Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Patty Gedemer.

Motion unanimously passed.

## **6. Review and discuss: Grant Deliverables**

Reviewed the Consolidated Grant deliverables. Consolidated Grant provides support for Immunization, Childhood Lead, Maternal Child Health (MCH), and Radon. Grant funding has continued to be reduced over the last few years.

The State Public Health Associations are putting together budget priorities and having discussions with the Governor's office about the need to support foundational public health services.

## **7. Review and discuss: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program updates**

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Victoria Parker and Environmental Health Specialist Holly Hisel took Mental Health First Aid training to be able to provide training to City staff.

They are working with the City-wide PERT and provided a two-day training to help individuals who work for the city to have the tools they need to respond to traumatic events.

City Emergency Plans. It has been several years since the City Emergency Plans have been reviewed and updated. Victoria has been supporting the editing & updating project of the Emergency Support Functions.

The Hazard Vulnerability Assessment has been completed. This is an annual requirement that identifies the top five emergency situations that may happen in the next year.

The following are the top five potential emergency situations:

- 1 Severe Weather
- 2 IT System Outage/Failure
- 3 Infectious Disease Outbreak
- 4 Seasonal Flu
- 5 Supply Chain Shortage/Failure

## **8. Review and discuss: Public Health Environmental Health Program updates**

The transient non-community water lab is up and running.

Annual routine inspections continue. There is a focus on public swimming pools that have a repeat number of violations and are not coming into compliance.

DATCP (Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection) is reviewing the lodging code.

January is Radon Action month. Watertown is the Radon information center for Dodge & Jefferson Counties. Holly is certified as a Radon Measurement/Mitigation Professional and Kaylie is certified as a Radon Measurement Professional. The majority of the radon grant is used to purchase radon kits that are provided free to Dodge and Jefferson County residents.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smoking individuals. There are 21,000 lung cancer deaths attributed to radon annually. It is a colorless, odorless gas that comes from the ground and gets trapped in our homes. Approximately 50% of homes tested have an elevated radon level. Between 300 – 400 kits are distributed throughout Jefferson and Dodge Counties annually.

## **9. Review & discuss: Public Health Community Health Program Updates**

The Early Childhood Equity Strategy Learning Collaboration ended in November. Carol and Abbey determined priorities to work on through the health department and with other community organizations. With the collaborative ending, these priorities will continue to be worked on through the Welcome Baby coalition.

The coalition is working on closed loop referrals and is currently testing a pilot program with the health department and Watertown Regional Medical Center to better close the loop on referrals that the Health Department receives from them. The department is now on Watertown Regional Medical Center's Tiger Connect which is a confidential texting program where the nurses can text and notify that a referral has been enrolled in a health department program.

Tiger Connect has shown to be beneficial and has cut down on phone tag for notifications to the Center for Women's Health if there is a depression screening that comes back high when clients are enrolling. The Center is notified so that they can follow up with the client and ensure they are getting the services they need.

For 2025, the department will be reaching out to the Jefferson County WIC program to start discussions on what closing the loop would look like for that program. Referrals are received from WIC, and it would benefit the program to know when we have referrals enrolled in programs with the Health Department.

**Electronic Health Record system.** The system is up, and running and prenatal care clients are being entered into the system for 2025. We are currently working on QI projects that will revolve around the EHR. New clients will be entered automatically into the system when we receive a referral for them. The EHR will be brought into home visits to input information directly into the program. The system will be able to track how many clients have issues with food, transportation and housing. The reports will also show what is being done to address those issues, where clients are being referred to and who is receiving services. The system will be beneficial for data collection.

**PH Nurse position.** Vacant due to retirement in January 2024. The position was filled in February 2024 but then RN resigned in May. The department has been interviewing and offering the position since May 2024 but have not been able to secure someone for the position. A pay scale study is requested from McGrath and the position is requested to be reevaluated. Lost several candidates due to taking other positions because of the pay. The department is in great need to fill this position and the request will be coming through Finance.

**Seal A Smile.** Kim has been responsible for setting up clinics with the schools, and completing paperwork as well as assisting at the clinics. The program started in May 2012. The program has seen a total of 2,258 students and placed 4,715 sealants at no cost to students in the WUSD in grades 2, 3, 6 & 7. Our current hygienist has been with the program for 10 years. The program is also looking for another hygienist.

## 10. Adjournment

Motion made to adjourn and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next Board of Health meeting will be Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carol Quest  
Director/Health Officer

Note: The minutes are uncorrected. Any correction made thereto will be noted in the minutes of the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.