



**Watertown Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Watertown Dept of Public Health
515 S First Street/Zoom
December 16, 2025 – 3:30 PM**

Members Present: Dr. Donene Rowe, Ald. Fred Smith, Dr. Todd Huhn, Ald. Dana Davis
Virtual: Patty Gedemer

Others in attendance: Carol Quest, Abbigail Kuehn, Kim Hiller, John Katisch

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 September 23, 2025

Minutes from September 23, 2025 meeting was reviewed. Motion by Ald Davis to approve; second by Dr. Huhn

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. Review and take action: Finance Reports – Preliminary November 2025

Carol noted that the building's boilers were replaced recently due to substantial issues and parts being unavailable for repairs. The boilers were over 50 years old and were inspected annually.

The cost of the boiler replacement will be offset by funds remaining from an open staff position. The cost for the boiler replacement is \$17,871.00.

Financial reports were reviewed. Motion by Ald. Davis to approve; second by Dr. Huhn.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

5. Review and take action: 2026 Budget

Carol Quest shared the updated proposed budgets for 2026.

The full budget with the personnel accounts was approved a week ago by the City Council. The non-personnel accounts reflect a 0% increase.

Motion for approval was made by Dr. Huhn and seconded by Ald. Davis.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

6. Review and take action: Community Health Assessment

The Community Health Assessment is done every three years. The health department works with its community partners in Jefferson & Dodge counties to develop the assessment. Partners include Jefferson, Dodge & Watertown Health Departments, three or four hospitals depending on the participation in Dodge County, the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation and Rock River Community Clinic. Public Health is required to complete this task every five years and adopted the three-year cycle as required for the hospitals for efficiency.

This work is done across the two counties because our populations are fairly similar and there is shared programming that is considered for the community health improvement planning. This work collaboration started in 1995.

This year's community health assessment used vital conditions for its framework. This helps explain what impacts a person's health. Mental health has been on the community health assessment since 1995 in some capacity and it rose to the top priorities in our community again.

The board members were shown a video called "Together for Health", which explained key areas of the Community Health Assessment.

The Community Health Assessment document has been approved by Watertown Regional Medical Center and Fort HeathCare.

One of the areas that will be focused on is youth mental health and social media. Finding ways to create environments where young people feel that they don't have to be on social media and are comfortable putting their phones down and interacting with others. This area will look at creating a community that supports that concept for young people.

A youth summit was held recently at Turner Hall with youth in attendance from both Jefferson & Dodge counties. The summit allowed for a deeper conversation with youth about their social media use, connections in the community, strengths in the community, and brainstorming what they thought could help their generation in these areas. Many students vocalized that having someone to lean on when you need help is important. The summit produced some great input and ideas.

Motion to approve the 2025 Community Health Assessment by Ald. Davis, seconded by Dr. Huhn.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

7. Review and discuss: Foundational Public Health Services – Access to & Linkage to Clinical Care

The Foundational Areas and Capabilities is a framework that is a requirement for Local Public Health to perform with a high degree of competency.

Public Health is vital in connecting community members to clinical care. While Public Health focuses on population health with a prevention emphasis Watertown Department of Public Health provides limited clinical care for example: well child check, immunizations, tuberculosis medication dispense.

We work closely with providers to connect community members to the services they need.

Carol and Abbey serve on different Watertown Regional Medical Center boards and Dr Rowe and Carol serve on the Rock River Community Clinic, which is the federally qualified healthcare center look alike.

The department provides many different levels of service to ensure we have linkages to clinical care for community members.

8. Review and discussion: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program updates

The department continues to work with the City Emergency Manager, who is the Fire Chief, on making sure our City policies and plans are up to date. The Emergency policies for Emergency Operations Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, Building Safety and Emergency Plan and Weather Plan will be going to the Public Safety and Welfare meeting in January 2026. The policies will then move on to the Council for approval.

Education and trainings will continue in 2026 for City leadership.

Victoria Parker, emergency preparedness coordinator, completed FAST training to provide function assessment of individuals that may come to a community center or shelter during an emergency.

9. Review and discussion: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program updates

The department is an agent under contract with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

DATCP recently updated the lodging code fee schedule. At the next meeting, an updated fee schedule will be reviewed for lodging based on the changes that DATCP has made.

Completed the annual water sampling across the two counties and we are currently working on policies to complete public water testing in 2026.

10. Review and discussion: Public Health Community Health Program updates

A Public Health Nurse has been hired and will be starting January 7, 2026.

Two new boilers were installed in the building.

The department had several nursing students this semester.

MCH objective for 2026 will include developmental milestones for children. Our staff will be looking at Ages and Stages Questionnaires, which is something that we do during our TalkReadPlay parenting program visits. The department will be talking more openly with the community about what milestones children should be meeting as well as continuing to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and helping families recognize if their child is not developing like other children their age and how they can be referred for assistance.

The MCH objective in 2025 was social connections. We have had great success and will continue the social connections events for the families participating in the Departments programs.

The 2025 Annual report will be coming out soon.

The community garden produced and harvested 272 pounds of produce that was shared with Dodge & Jefferson county senior meals programs. The garden spans around the Health Department parking lot and was tended to by staff and volunteers.

The vacant lot is purchased and needs to be rezoned for the building.

Seal A Smile update. To date the program has seen 139 students with 203 sealants applied. There were 65 students with decay, and 10 had urgent dental needs.

11. Adjourn.

Motion made to adjourn by Ald Davis and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next Board of Health meeting will be Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Quest

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.