



**Watertown Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Watertown Dept of Public Health
515 S First Street/Zoom
July 15, 2025 – 3:30 PM**

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

Others in attendance: Carol Quest, Abbigail Kuehn, Holly Hisel, Jermey Schmidt, Elizabeth Fritz, Virtual: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Zack Goodrow, Katie Van Der Linden

1. Call to Order

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

2. Citizens to be heard

None.

3. Review and discussion: Introduction of new board member

New board member Todd Huhn was introduced, appointed by the Common Council in June 2025.

4. Review and discuss: Years of service recognition for Andrea Turke

Former board member Andrea Turke was recognized for her service on the Board of Health since 2011. Andrea was a tremendous advocate for public health and was very active in community health, including work on the coalition Get Health Watertown.

5. Review and take action: Board of Health Minutes April 14, 2025

Minutes from April 14, 2025 meeting was reviewed. Motion by Ald Davis to approve; second by Patricia Gedemer. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

6. Review and take action: Finance Reports – Preliminary June 2025

Financial reports were reviewed. Motion by Todd Huhn to approve; second by Patricia Gedemer. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

7. Review and discuss: Warming Shelter

Carol Quest shared information about a proposed warming shelter created by a local group, Building a Welcoming Watertown. The goal of the Board of Health is to assist with identifying improvements to the proposed plan and support Building a Welcoming Watertown. Carol also described the difference between the proposed plan by Building a Better Watertown, and the City's existing emergency Warming and Cooling Center/Shelter plan.

Elizabeth Fritz of Building a Better Watertown and Jeremy Schmidt of Community Action Coalition addressed the board with information regarding the proposed plan and provided local information regarding unhoused citizens.

Written comments regarding the proposed plan from board member Todd Huhn were circulated and reviewed by the committee. Carol Quest provided possible opportunities for improvements for the proposed plan: use existing plans created by Red Cross, include food safety training, and ensure volunteer and participant safety including background checks for volunteers.

8. Review and discuss: Foundational Public Health Services

Carol Quest reviewed Foundational Public Health Services and provided an overview of different programs within the Environmental Health division that fall into the Environmental Health foundational area. The department is an agent of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, responsible for the inspection and licensing for over 650 food and recreational facilities in Watertown and Jefferson County. As a contract county of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, staff sample and inspect roughly 300 transient non-community well water systems in Jefferson and Dodge counties. Watertown is the Radon Information Center for Watertown and Dodge and Jefferson Counties, providing Radon awareness activities and offering free Radon test kits.

Beginning January 1, 2025, the department officially began utilizing our water analysis laboratory for transient non-community water samples. Victoria Parker and Holly Hisel provided the board with a tour of the water laboratory.

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

Victoria Parker participated in a Red Cross training.

On Saturday, June 21, 2025, a cooling center with extended hours was activated due to the heat advisory and power loss for hundreds of households in the city. The Watertown Senior and Community Center was opened as a cooling center, and closed after the progressive restoration of power by Wisconsin Energies.

City leadership will be participating in an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) training in September at the new fire station.

Mental Health First aid training will be provided in September for interested city staff.

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

The food and recreational license year concluded on June 30. License renewal payments were due June 30; second notices with late fees were sent out last week. Failure to pay by August 15 will require facility closure.

Environmental Health staff continue to work with recreational water facilities (pools) that are chronically in non-compliance with water chemistry each month.

New Environmental Health Specialist Sydney Bohman recently started and continues to complete training.

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

Sharps containers in the park were recently checked and replaced by department staff. The containers are provided to keep the community and city workers safe.

Department staff participated in the Lights and Sirens event last week. We gave out "Mr. Yuck" information provided by the Wisconsin Poison Center and created an interactive activity for kids.

Seal a Smile program concluded for the 2024-2025 school year: 255 students; 289 teeth sealed, and 486 varnishes. The program provided \$58,256 worth of dental care. There has been no confirmation regarding the grant for next year.

Our department hosted a Social Connection event in June at a local park for program families in conjunction with Watertown Family Connections Play Group. Watertown Fire Department visited with children and showed them the fire truck, equipment and gear. Health department staff were also able to share information regarding our other programs, including car seats and immunizations.

The new public health nurse, Jennifer Zielski started in April, continues to progress in training. One Bilingual Communication Specialist obtained their Car Seat Technician certification and is now available for car seat checks for Spanish speaking clients. Our department is pursuing opportunities for funding to purchase more car seats.

Rock River Free Clinic has moved from the Watertown YMCA to Dr Turke's former medical office. Plans are moving forward for the Johnson Creek office for medical, dental and behavioral health services.

There is no update regarding the purchase of land next to the health department.

12. Adjourn.

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

Next Board of Health meeting will be Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Quest". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

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.