



**Watertown Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
Watertown Dept of Public Health  
515 S First Street/Zoom  
April 14, 2025 – 4:30 PM**

**Members Present:** Dr. Donene Rowe, Ald Dana Davis, Ald. Fred Smith,

**Others in attendance:** Carol Quest, Abbigail Kuehn, Kim Hiller, Holly Hisel

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Rowe called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

**2. Citizens to be heard**

None.

**3. Review and take action: Board of Health Minutes of January 21, 2025**

Reviewed minutes dated January 21, 2025.

Motion made to approve the minutes for January 21, 2025, by Davis, seconded by Rowe.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**4. Review & take action: Financial report – Preliminary March 2025**

Reviewed preliminary March financial report 2025.

Motion was made by Smith and seconded by Davis for approval of preliminary financial report for March 2025.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**5. Review and discuss: Environmental Health Fees**

The Inspection Program operates under a contract agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). As part of this agreement, the Department is required to remit a percentage of collected license fees to DATCP on an annual basis.

Effective July 1, 2025, a scheduled fee increase will go into effect, raising the remittance rate from 12% to 15%.

Following approval by the Board, this item will proceed to the Finance Committee and subsequently to Common Council for final approval.

Motion was made by Smith and seconded by Davis to support the increase of the Environmental Health fees and recommend forwarding this item onto the Finance Committee.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

## **6. Review and take action: 2024 Annual Report**

The 2024 Annual Report for the department has been completed. This report highlights the department's work over the past year and provides an overview of the programs and services offered. It is intended for use in community presentations and public outreach efforts to showcase the department's impact.

Following approval by the Board, the report will be forwarded to the Common Council for review and final approval.

A motion to approve the 2024 Annual Report and recommend it for Common Council review was made by Davis and seconded by Smith.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

## **7. Review and discuss: Public Health Policy agenda**

The board members reviewed the 2025-2026 Public Health Policy Priorities that include the following:

- A. Local & Tribal Health Department Funding-Secure funding for local and tribal health departments to carry out essential and mandated public health responsibilities and services
- B. Community Health Funding-Secure funding for community-based organizations, local and tribal health departments, and community partners to address community specific health gaps based on community health needs assessments
- C. Public Health Workforce-Support the recruitment and retention of the public health work force in Wisconsin
- D. Public Health Authority-Assure public health authority for control of communicable diseases and other public health threats.

The state of Wisconsin ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for public health funding.

## **8. Review and discuss: Grant update**

The Federal government cancelled some Wisconsin Department of Health Service grants on March 24, 2025 that impacted funding for the Department. The grant impacted was an Immunization Supplement that was allocated to purchase vaccine refrigerators & freezer.

The State of Wisconsin has taken legal steps to restore the funding.

## **9. Review & discuss: Lot adjacent to Health Department parking lot**

An offer to purchase was sent to the owner of the lot by the City Attorney and the Mayor. There has not been a response from the owner.

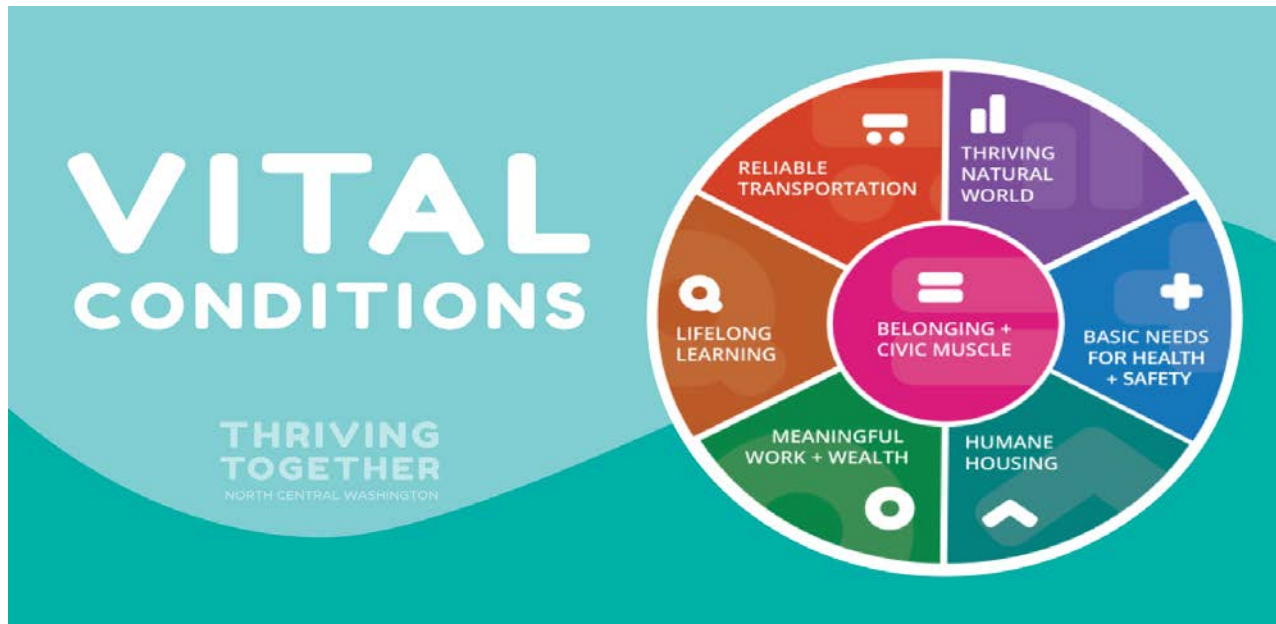
The remaining Public Health ARPA funding will be used to purchase the lot and part towards the building. The remaining funding will be secured from the Environmental Health fund balance.

## **10. Review & discuss: Community Health Assessment (CHA)**

Every three years the Community Health Assessment (CHA) is updated. The CHA is updated with community partners across Dodge and Jefferson Counties. Partners include Dodge and Jefferson County health departments, area hospitals, Rock River Community Clinic, and the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation.

Community members will be invited to provide input in the process through a data walk at libraries across Dodge and Jefferson Counties May12th through May16th.

The format is also changing from the Social Determinates of Health to Vital Conditions. The Vital Conditions framework is a different way of looking at a person's health and conditions that influence health.



The vital conditions are an evolution, not a replacement, of the social determinants model that has been prevalent since its emergence in the early 2000s.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the social determinants of health as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.”

#### **11. Review & discuss: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program updates**

Victoria Parker, the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, attended the Wisconsin Emergency Management Conference in March.

Cyber security is a focus across the state for emergency preparedness. The city has a new IT coordinator and Victoria is working with him to understand what systems the city has in place for cyber security.

Victoria and Holly Hisel became Mental Health First Aid trainers and provided training for the city PERT team and Health Department staff. They will be providing additional training for City Leadership.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be situated at the new fire department. In the fall, a training exercise will be conducted with the City Leadership team in the new EOC space. These exercises are designed to identify any needs or adjustments required for emergency situations. Additionally, the exercise will familiarize City leadership with the processes involved in managing a community emergency.

#### **12. Review & discuss: Environmental Health Program updates**

The Department has an open Environmental Health Specialist position. Interviews are scheduled to fill the position.

The second round of school inspections are being completed.

Seasonal water sampling has started. These samples are being run through the new in-house water lab.

Holly Hisel provided an explanation of the process in the lab. The in-house lab makes this process much more efficient and gives more flexibility in sampling.

Fred Smith noted that he would like a tour of the water lab at the next board meeting.

### **13. Review & discuss: Public Health Program updates**

The nursing position has been filled. Jennifer Zielski started with the Department on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Department staff will be participating in many upcoming community events.

The department will be hosting a Community Baby Shower on May 16<sup>th</sup> in partnership with Watertown Family Resource Center. Families will receive items for their babies as well as connecting them to resources in our community.

Seal a Smile is finishing up in the school. This school year 255 students were seen by the program. The numbers are continuing to increase after COVID.

Work continues to prepare in the event of a measles case. We are working closely with the schools and have had discussions with a few so far. Our community measles vaccination rate is 37% for 6-year-olds. To achieve herd immunity, the rate would need to be 95%. We are very vulnerable as a community. Schools are actively talking to staff to make sure they are vaccinated and protected. Local medical providers play a very important role in helping families understand the benefits of immunizations.

### **14. Adjourn**

Motion made to adjourn and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next Board of Health meeting will be Tuesday, July 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.