

BRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 9:00 a.m., Zoom/Classroom 420/421
MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor John Bell, Chair
Ms. Susan Brown, Vice-Chair
Mayor David Bailey
Mr. Mario Colombo
Mayor Kevin Davis
Ms. Joy O'Donnell
Councillor John Sless
Councillor Brian Van Tilborg
Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke
Dr. Jo Ann Tober
Ms. Lorraine Johnson (recorder)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Alexey Babayan, Director, Foundational Standards
Ms. Lisa DiDonato, Manager, Finances
Ms. Janet Kwansah, Director, Program Standards
Ms. Deborah Moore, Manager, Population Health Assessment
Mr. Brent Richardson, Director, Human Resources
Mr. Ryan Spiteri, Manager, Communications

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chair Bell reminded Members to declare a conflict of interest, if one so arises, at the time the item is discussed.

3. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

6.2 Addition of Needle Exchange Program—Legal Opinion to the MOH Report (*Chair Bell*)

Moved by: Councillor Sless

Seconded by: Mayor Bailey

“THAT the Board of Health approve the Agenda as amended.”

Carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Brant County Board of Health Minutes, October 21, 2020

Moved by: Mayor Bailey

Seconded by: Mr. Colombo

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health Minutes dated October 21, 2020, be approved as distributed.”

Carried.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

5.1 Financial Statement ended October 31, 2020

Ms. DiDonato presented the Financial Statement ended October 31, 2020, as distributed with the agenda. Subsequent to the written statement, COVID expenditures will continue to increase for the balance of 2020 related to staff hours and complement, cancellation of vacations, and related time payout. As in past practice, Brant County Health Unit (BCHU) may pay out staff vacation and compensating time within the parameters of the respective collective agreements, and would like to likewise pay out management time. Members agreed to this practice.

The net surplus is expected to be significantly reduced by year-end. The Ministry allowed health units to shift program funds to COVID costs during 2020 to operate within approved budgets. BCHU has begun preparations for COVID mass immunizations, vaccine storage, and related costs for 2021; it is too early for information from the Province on funding or centralized ordering.

5.2 COVID-19 Financial Projections Update

Ms. DiDonato presented the COVID-19 Financial Projections Update, dated November 18, 2020, as distributed with the agenda. Estimates for Q4 project a significant increase in COVID expenses, especially for staff time with the rise in local cases. At this time, current funding commitments from the City and County are expected to be sufficient to cover COVID costs in 2020.

Ms. DiDonato left the meeting at 9:18 a.m.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 Report from the Chair None.

6.2 Report from the Acting Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Urbantke presented the Medical Officer of Health Report, dated November 18, 2020, as distributed with the agenda. The report highlighted seasonal influenza activities; statistics do not include pharmacy numbers as they are not reported through the Health Unit. With the successful completion of a Masters in Public Health, Dr. Urbantke no longer requires low-level supervision for scope of practice under the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons.

By 10:12 a.m. there was full Board attendance and the remainder of the MOH report was discussed.

Chair Bell advised that the Ministry of Health contacted the Health Unit regarding the City's motion to temporarily suspend the Needle Exchange Program (NEP). The Ministry was seeking a legal opinion. The Chair and Vice-Chair had already requested a legal opinion which was shared with Members prior to this meeting. Dr. Urbantke noted previous evidence briefs, literature reviews, an environmental scan of other health units, and individual contacts with surrounding health units. None were operating their NEPs differently than Brant. One health unit initiated a buy-back system for needles which saw an initial uptick in returns but then subsided. This was financially unsustainable. London and Guelph have consumption and treatment sites; both have approximately 23 needle return bins. Dr. Urbantke advised that best practice is to not restrict the numbers of needles dispensed. Members discussed an incentive system to increase returns, tracking individual needles taken and those returned, sourcing additional resources and business involvement, and regaining support for the NEP.

Moved: Mr. Colombo

Seconded: Councillor Sless

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health direct Health Unit staff, in cooperation with the City of Brantford, to investigate, develop and manage a plan for a trial return deposit system for needles and syringes for a period of six months;

AND THAT the matter be brought back to the Board no later than January 2021;

AND THAT a Board of Health sub-committee be struck with membership of Mr. Colombo, Ms. O'Donnell, and Councillor Van Tilborg.”

Carried.

BCHU actively pursues ways to offer the program equally well for clients and residents. Evidence points to more access to bins to make it easier for clients to use them. Members offered City and County support and suggested running a pilot program to gain additional provincial funding through the MPP's office. Communication with the City has been occurring since 2019 to obtain permission to install additional bins.

6.3 Report from the Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Tober presented the Chief Executive Officer Report, dated November 18, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Dr. Tober's report provided highlights regarding the dental operatory renovations, maintenance of public health programs, strategic plan process, and provincial budget. Dr. Tober and Chair Bell attended the Brantford Brant Ontario Health Team (OHT) governance meeting on November 5. Dr. Tober outlined next steps for the local OHT.

6.4 Food Safety Disclosure Report No report.

Moved by: Mayor Bailey

Seconded by: Ms. Brown

**“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept reports 5.1 and 5.2, as well as 6.1 through 6.4 as presented.”
Carried.**

Ms. Moore joined the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 COVID-19 Report

Dr. Urbantke and Dr. Tober presented the joint COVID-19 Report, dated November 18, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Dr. Urbantke advised that late last week the Ministry implemented a threshold change and Brant entered the orange ‘restrict’ zone based on the prior two weeks’ data. Data is reviewed weekly and health units remain in a colour zone for two incubation periods.

Mr. Spiteri joined the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Members discussed the process for swab testing and results, home tests, confusion on many levels about provincial restrictions and regulations, COVID fatigue, and the importance of working together for unified communications through multiple forums. BCHU, City and County communications staff continue to coordinate messaging; a joint event will be pursued. The repetition of clear, concise messaging about masks, distancing, social gatherings, etc. has been constant from early in the pandemic. BCHU staff visited business and other location to educate and assist with understanding restrictions. Mayor Davis, Mayor Bailey, Dr. Urbantke and Mr. Spiteri will take this discussion to the Communications standing item on the joint EOC agenda.

Moved by:

Mr. Colombo

Seconded by:

Councillor Van Tilborg

**“THAT the Brant County Board of Health direct Brant County Health Unit staff to work with the local Emergency Operations Centre to improve communications to the community and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Brant County and Brantford.”
Carried.**

Mr. Babayan left the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

7.2 Quality Assurance and Professional Practice Report

Ms. Kwansah presented the Quality Assurance and Professional Practice (QA&PP) Report, dated November 18, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Ms. Kwansah highlighted activities in continuous quality improvement, quality assurance, and student placement and preceptor development. For most of 2020, staff were redeployed to COVID.

7.3 Population Health Assessment Report

Ms. Moore presented the Population Health Assessment Report, dated November 18, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Staff on the Population Health Assessment Team were redeployed to COVID surveillance, monitoring, data, and Contact Centre duties. Many of the regular public health activities scheduled for 2020 have been deferred.

7.4 Communication Report

Mr. Spiteri presented the Communication Report, dated November 18, 2020, as included with the agenda. Mr. Spiteri stated that the majority of Communications staff time in 2020 has been devoted to COVID; however, staff continue to support program communication activities and general media duties when possible. Members’ questions were answered regarding assignment and tracking of Communications Team time per program and initiative, and channels of communication used to reach different demographics of the population.

Ms. Spiteri and Ms. Moore left the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

7.5 Meeting Schedule for 2021

A draft schedule for 2021 Board of Health Meeting Dates was distributed with the agenda. There were no objections to the proposed scheduled. Appointments will be sent to Members.

Moved by: Mayor Bailey
Seconded by: Mr. Colombo

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept reports 7.1 through 7.5 as presented.”

Carried.

8. CORRESPONDENCE *(Board members may request a copy of items that are not attached from Board of Health Secretary)*

8.1 Correspondence received from Grey Bruce Health Unit, dated October 30, 2020, re COVID and long-term care reform.

8.2 Correspondence received from Grey Bruce Health Unit, dated October 30, 2020, re Municipal Drug Strategy Coordinators Network of Ontario, Safe Supply.

9. IN-CAMERA MEETING

Moved by: Councillor Sless
Seconded by: Ms. O’Donnell

“THAT the meeting move to In-Camera at 11:04 a.m. regarding personal matters about an identifiable individual(s).”

Carried.

The regular Board of Health meeting resumed.

A combined motion was passed during the in-camera session for Items 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

10. QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11.1 Strategic Planning *(2021)*

11.2 Needle Exchange Program *(January)*

11.3 Brant Brantford Drugs Strategy *(January)*

12. NEXT MEETING DATES

Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. – special meeting

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, at 9:30 a.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Ms. O’Donnell

“THAT the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 12:57 p.m.”

Carried.

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date