

BRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 9:45 a.m., Conference Call/Boardroom
MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Helen Mulligan, Chair
Councillor John Bell, Vice-Chair (via phone)
Mayor Kevin Davis (via phone)
Councillor John Sless (via phone)
Councillor Brian Van Tilborg (via phone)

Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke
Dr. Jo Ann Tober
Ms. Lorraine Johnson (recorder)

ABSENT: Councillor Robert Chambers

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Brent Richardson, Director, Human Resources
Mr. Glenn Roach, Interim Director, Finances (via phone)
Ms. Dee Perera, former Director, Finances (via phone)
Mr. Simon Salole & Ms. Diane Paxton, Millards Accountants (via phone)

The meeting was held by conference call due to COVID-19 physical distancing.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mulligan called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. Item 6.1 was held at the beginning. The In-camera session was held at the end of the meeting.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

3. IN-CAMERA MEETING

Moved by: Mayor Davis
Seconded by: Councillor Sless

“THAT the meeting move to In-Camera at 11:43 a.m. regarding risk management issues.” Carried.

The regular Board of Health meeting resumed.

A motion was passed under item 3.1 of the in-camera session.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

9.5 Order in Council re Provincial Appointee (*Dr. Tober*)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 Brant County Board of Health Minutes, March 18, 2020

Moved by: Councillor Sless
Seconded by: Councillor Van Tilborg

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health Minutes, dated March 18, 2020, be approved as presented.” Carried.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

6.1 2019 Audited Financial Statement

Ms. Perera introduced Mr. Salole and Ms. Paxton of Millards who conducted the financial audit. The result was a clean audit without changes because of accounting practices. A more detailed report was received by the Finance and Audit Committee.

Ms. Paxton presented the Draft 2019 Audited Financial Statement, as distributed via email on April 14. There were no significant issues in 2019; the balance sheet was similar to 2018. Liabilities are due to the Province, but none owing to the City or County. The over-expense of \$72,144 was due mainly to the Ministry of Health’s decision not to provide top-up funding for the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) as expected; if this is not recoverable from the Ministry, the amount will need to be secured. In the Ontario Senior Dental Care Program, the unspent \$189,090 is owed to the Ministry. This was budgeted for dental equipment and hinged on renovations to the dental suites to accommodate the new program. Submitted in February 2019, the capital request for dental renovations has not yet been approved; therefore, no equipment was purchased. Other unused funding for the Healthy Smiles Program and Tobacco-Prosecution Program are also due to the Ministry. In general, Ms. Paxton stated that many agencies could see an impact in 2020 from COVID-19 which, at this point, is incalculable.

Members received responses to comments about the balance sheet and amortization, make-up of the reserve funds, and current liabilities. Questions regarding COVID-19 impact in 2020 were referred to Item 6.2.

Moved by: Councillor Bell

Seconded by: Councillor Van Tilborg

“THAT the Board of Health accept the draft audited Financial Statement for the calendar year ending December 31, 2019, including the general Program-Based Grant programs and specifically-funded programs listed herein:

- Schedule 1 Brant County Health Unit Cost-Shared Programs**
- Schedule 2 Harm Reduction Program Enhancement**
- Schedule 3 Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program**
- Schedule 4 Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program**
- Schedule 5 Healthy Smiles Ontario Program**
- Schedule 6 Infection Prevention and Control Nurse Initiative**
- Schedule 7 Infectious Disease Control Initiative (SARS)**
- Schedule 8 Small Drinking Water Systems Program**
- Schedule 9 Smoke-Free Ontario Programs**
- Schedule 10 Vector Borne Diseases Program**
- Schedule 11 9000 Nurses Initiative**
- Schedule 12 Ontario Senior Dental Program**
- Schedule 13 Electronic Cigarettes Act Program.”**

Carried.

Mr. Salole, Ms. Paxton, and Ms. Perera left the meeting at 10:03 am.

6.2 Report from the Finance and Audit Committee

A Finance and Audit Committee meeting was held on April 15, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. Councillor Sless reported that Millards presented the draft 2019 Audited Financial Statement. As well, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Roach reported on COVID-19 expenses in follow-up to discussion at the April meeting. The cost for MOH expanded hours is approximately \$5000 bi-weekly. Supplies purchased as of April 3 total \$24,000, plus incremental increases in management and staff time worked, total approximately \$50,000. As the duration of COVID and volume of case numbers are unknown, it is difficult to project to year-end. Additional COVID funding may be available from the Ministry of Health, but no specifics are available. As of 2020 Q1, the Health Unit has a surplus in both cost-shared and 100%-funded programs relative to the approved budget. All COVID-related expenses are being tracked and, at this time, the Health Unit is not requesting more funds from the City or County.

Members’ inquired about the following: projected spending rate and capacity regarding cash flow, and the potential halt to budgeted capital or discretionary expenses. COVID activities paused many usual program-related expenses. The only major capital item is the dental renovations; the Ministry has not approved this, and action at this time would be precluded by COVID activities. The reserve funds from historical sources were investigated a number of years ago, and all obligations have been met. These funds were approved to be retained for undetermined purposes. Members requested a financial report for the May Board meeting outlining current position, projections, and discretionary expenses.

Moved by: Councillor Sless

Seconded by: Councillor Bell

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept the report from the Finance and Audit Committee as presented.”

Carried.

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

7.1 Report from the Chair

Chair Mulligan announced the provincial Order in Council appointing Susan Brown to the Board of Health, effective April 9, 2020. Ms. Brown will be attending the May Board meeting.

Dr. Urbantke joined the meeting at 10:31 a.m. (Several program reports were presented prior to her arrival.)

7.2 Report from the Acting Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Urbantke presented a verbal report from the Acting Medical Officer of Health focused mainly on COVID-19. Brant has 68 lab-confirmed positive cases, 32 resolved cases, 573 negative tests, and 7 individuals are currently hospitalized. Twenty cases are a result of suspected community spread transmission, 30 cases are close contacts of a confirmed case, 11 cases are travel related, and the transmission of 7 cases is still under investigation. There are currently no active long-term care or retirement home COVID-19 outbreaks. Brant County Health Unit (BCHU) will start posting statistics on its website this week; these statistics have been provided during regular media sessions.

BCHU initiated its Infectious Disease Emergency Response Plan and is operating under the Incident Management System with Dr. Urbantke as Incident Commander. BCHU participates daily with the Joint Municipal Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Case and contact management is a main focus for public health units, along with the promotion of social distancing, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette to contain the pandemic. The Province directed increased testing and new guidance was received late last week to focus on priority groups including hospital inpatients, residents of long-term care (LTC) and retirement homes (RH), healthcare workers, first responders, Indigenous, and residents of other congregate living facilities. The range of symptoms was also expanded. Health units are now required to report daily on the number of swabs done in LTC/RH and other congregate living facilities. Updated LTC directives require active twice per day screening for all those in the homes, universal masking, and declaration of a COVID outbreak with one lab confirmed positive in a staff or resident. There have been two declared outbreaks in Brant, each for a single staff member testing positive. Both have been declared over with no further positive tests after 14 days from last exposure. To date no resident has tested positive. Prior to the pandemic, BCHU worked with LTC/RHs regarding outbreaks and regular infection prevention and control education.

Over the weekend, BCHU worked with the Brant Community Healthcare System and set up a call with Public Health Ontario and the Ministry's EOC to consult with regard to the hospital outbreak. BCHU continues to follow any hospital staff living in the community and discharged patients who have been identified by the hospital as part of COVID case and contact management.

BCHU, in partnership with the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Brantford Police Services (BPS), streamlined a method for residents to report COVID-19 related complaints to the appropriate agency. Details are posted to the BCHU website. As usual, violations of provincial orders and/or City or County bylaws result in the attendance of City or County Bylaw Officers or BCHU Enforcement Officers, supported BPS or OPP, if necessary. A graduated approach to compliance uses education and warnings before ticketing. Between March 30 and April 13, BCHU responded to 64 complaints including 56 for lack of physical distancing, three for self-isolation violations, and five were workplace related. BCHU Enforcement Officers also conduct daily, proactive, general education visits to establishments like grocery stores, banks, small delis, dollar stores, and pharmacies to ensure the number of people inside is reasonable, line ups are managed for distancing, and staff are aware of their responsibilities.

To date, BCHU Public Health Inspectors (PHI) have inspected 29 farms in preparation for temporary farm workers. Bunkhouses must ensure the 2-metre separation can be maintained during the 14 day isolation period when the workers arrive, and recommend ongoing social distancing as possible. So far, inspections have been completed prior to the arrival of the workers and PHIs are working closely with farmers to meet the requirements and accommodate timing as much as possible.

BCHU has used a multi-media approach throughout the pandemic including social media and traditional print ads. Regular communications are sent to physicians, LTC/RH, Board Members, and staff. Dr. Urbantke records a weekly

social media video. BCHU holds regular bi-weekly media sessions. The Health Unit works with partner organizations on joint messaging. Dr. Urbantke answered Members' questions on contact tracing, seasonal farm workers, enforcement, allowable outdoor businesses, wearing masks, providing more data, and patient capacity at the hospital.

Dr. Urbantke provided an update on opioids. In March, Brant had 2 deaths, 10 overdoses and 1 adverse reaction due to opioids. In 2020 Q1, there was a slight improvement over 2019. Staff continue to connect with People With Lived Experience and pass along COVID information to individuals not easily reached via traditional communication channels. Health Unit staff continued with harm reduction activities, and keep in touch with the police regarding changes or trends, for example, the use of crystal meth and the increased use of stimulants which do not respond to Naloxone.

Dr. Urbantke left the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

7.3 Report from the Executive Director

Dr. Tober presented the Chief Executive Officer Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Dr. Tober updated Members on COVID-19 operations including the significant re-deployment of staff from all public health program areas. Nursing staff work in case management and contact tracing. Nursing and other staff operate the contact centre, conduct daily monitoring calls to people in isolation, and call with negative results. The approach is aggressive to ensure self-isolation and monitor symptoms. Health Unit staff continue to maintain specific critical programming, including response to complaints and animal bite reports, telephone contact with new mothers and expectant women in the teen prenatal program, and sexually-transmitted infection testing and tracing. This approach will continue until the COVID-19 pressures ease off and the transition can be made back to regular programming. Dr. Tober confirmed the number of resolved cases is included in the total number of positive cases. Dr. Tober responded to Members' questions about contact tracing, staffing capacity and options for recruitment, shifts and weekend coverage, and overtime hours.

7.4 Food Safety Disclosure Report No report.

Moved by: Councillor Bell
Seconded by: Councillor Sless

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept reports 7.1 through 7.4 as presented.” Carried.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Healthy Growth and Development Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Healthy Growth and Development Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report provided highlights of 2019 activities and statistics on prenatal classes and community outreach, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, positive parenting, healthy growth and development promotion, and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program.

8.2 Prevention of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Prevention of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report provided highlights of 2019 activities and statistics on Healthy Living, Youth Wellness, Mental Health, Health Equity, and Injury Prevention program areas.

8.3 Substance Use and Smoke-Free Ontario Act Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Substance Use and Smoke-Free Ontario Act Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report provided highlights of 2019 activities and statistics related to substance use including public education on alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and e-cigarettes, enforcement of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and support for smoking cessation.

8.4 Harm Reduction Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Harm Reduction Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Harm reduction continues to be a main program with 2019 activities including education, Naloxone dispensing, and training

on used needle retrieval. In 2019, the number of needles distributed through the Needle Exchange Program was down; however, the rate of used needles returned increased. Although impacted by COVID-19, most aspects of harm reduction are still available within the community.

8.5 Food Safety Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Food Safety Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report provided data on food safety activities during 2019, including high-, medium-, and low-risk food premises inspections and certification of food handlers. Public Health Inspectors continue to inspect food premises that remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.6 Healthy Environments Program Report

Dr. Tober presented the Healthy Environments Program Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. Health Unit staff responded to 405 complaints throughout 2019, more than half were related to tick identification. Health Unit staff continue to respond to priority complaints during the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.7 Human Resources Report

Mr. Richardson presented the Human Resources Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report outlined staff demographics, recruitment, turnover, disability management, and labour relations activities during 2019. Succession management continues to be an area of focus, with 42% of the BCHU workforce eligible for retirement within the next five years. Compared to the previous year, the 2019 turnover rate was up and recruitment was down. Employees averaged 4.76 sick days. The year-end launch of ADP for integrated payroll and time management should assist with improved reporting and tracking of sick days going forward.

8.8 Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Tober presented the Strategic Plan Update, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report outlined the four objectives in the active 2016-2026 Strategic Plan, and set out the activities completed in 2019 and those planned for 2020. A review of the Plan was originally scheduled for 2020/2021; however, COVID-19 demands may have an impact. Dr. Tober advised that the Strategic Plan pillars support public health issues such as social determinants of health, health equity, etc., and are not specific to time. Public health units usually review/update their plans every five years. Members discussed the Board's role and participation in this Plan and future review activities, possible amendments without a full Plan revision depending upon needs, and questioned the availability of resources and time in the current financial and pandemic environment.

8.9 2019 Core Program Indicators Report

Dr. Tober presented the 2019 Core Program Indicators Report, dated April 15, 2020, as provided with the agenda. The report displayed indicators by program area and, for the most part, reflect targets set up and statistics required by the Ministry of Health annually. The indicators for 2020 are expected to be the same; however, the re-deployment of staff to COVID-19 activities has put many program plans on hold and will have an impact on 2020 results.

Moved by:

Councillor Sless

Seconded by:

Councillor Bell

“THAT the Board of Health accept reports 8.1 and 8.9 as information.”

Carried.

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

- 9.1** Correspondence received from Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA), dated March 27, 2020, re COVID-19 Action Plan and Public Health
- 9.2** Correspondence received from ALPHA, dated March 17, 2020, re Board Meetings and Social Distancing
- 9.3** Correspondence received from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, dated March 30, 2020, re Cannabis consumption establishments/special occasion permits.
- 9.4** Correspondence received from Order in Council from Province of Ontario, dated April 1, 2020, re work deployment measures for boards of health under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.
- 9.5** Order in Council received from Province of Ontario, dated April 9, 2020, re provincial appointment of Susan Brown to the Brant County Board of Health.

Moved by: Councillor Bell
Seconded by: Councillor Sless

“THAT the Board of Health receive the correspondence as listed.”

Carried.

10. QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

12. NEXT MEETING DATES

Wednesday, May 20, 2020, at 9:30 a.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date