

**BRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**Wednesday, August 23, 2021, 10:00 a.m., Zoom**  
**MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	John Bell (County), Chair	Dr. Malcolm Lock, (Interim MOH)
	Susan Brown (Province), Vice-Chair	Jo Ann Tober (CEO)
	David Bailey (County)	Brent Richardson (Director, HR)
	Nancy Church (Province)	Lisa DiDonato (Director, Finance)
	Kevin Davis (City)	Alexey Babayan, (Director, Foundations)
	Joy O'Donnell (Province)	Janet Kwansah, (Director, Programs)
	John Sless (City)	Ryan Spiteri (Manager, Communications)
	Brian Van Tilborg (City)	Lorraine Johnson (Exec. Asst.) (recorder)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 10:00 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 / APPROVAL**

No agenda was distributed.

On behalf of the Medical Officer of Health Selection Committee, Nancy announced that Dr. Rebecca Comley has accepted the position of Brant County Health Unit's Acting Medical Officer of Health effective September 13, 2021. The employment contract has been reviewed by the Ministry of Health and executed by required parties. Dr. Lock has agreed to remain on in a Public Health Physician role to assist Dr. Comley through a period of transition.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**      Deferred.

**5. FINANCIAL REPORT**      No report.

**6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**6.1 COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

Chair Bell advised that this special Board of Health meeting was called to develop a consensus ahead of the regular Brant County Health Unit (BCHU) Tuesday media briefing with regard to the internal BCHU COVID vaccination policy, and to provide strong, clear, and scientifically-supported recommendations on vaccination policies for municipalities, organizations, and businesses in this community. A draft statement was prepared by staff, edited by Members, and presented for endorsement. Chair Bell requested Board support for Dr. Lock to present this statement at the media briefing.

Members considered the recommendation of a strict policy of vaccination or termination. Dr. Lock, while supporting strong policy, did not support this stand without options of education and regular testing for non-vaccinated employees as laid out in Ministry directives. Many considerations were brought forward: medical and religious or conscientious exemptions, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights; legal opinions already received; risk, duration, and cost of probable litigation; obligation to protect employees and customers; union rights; and ramifications of a human resources shortage in Public Health and all health care sectors plus other essential services resulting from terminations or resignations.

Members referenced announcements by the University Health Network and the City of Toronto for a rigid vaccination policy. Written content of their policies has not been shared. Legally, a policy must be seen to be 'reasonable'.

A Ministry of Health directive requires that long-term care homes have a vaccination policy in place by July 1, requiring proof of vaccination or education, testing and full personal protective equipment for non-vaccinated employees. Directive 6 extended that requirement to hospitals, home and community care services, and paramedics. Public Health has not been included yet. BCHU is updating the current internal vaccination policy in light of legal advice, and ensuring human rights and respect for employees who cannot be immunized.

Susan provided a summary and next steps:

Dr. Lock was open to input from Members (with his discretion) regarding an increased urgency in media statements on COVID vaccination; Dr. Lock will use content from the draft statement prepared for this meeting to the extent that he is confident in supporting it; the City and County mayors can be available to stand with Dr. Lock at the media briefing to support the urgency of the matter; and the BCHU vaccination policy should be brought before the Board as soon as possible.

While employee-level BCHU policies do not require Board approval, Nancy requested that the internal COVID vaccination policy be provided to the Board due to its importance. The policy can be issued without delay as per usual Health Unit processes.

As the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Big Cities Mayors’ Committee, and other groups have written to the Ontario Premier in support of a provincial COVID vaccine certification program, Members agreed that supportive correspondence also be sent from this Board.

Members noted that the Board must be mindful not to impose Board views upon the MOH in what he expresses to the community. Members concurred that the Medical Officer of Health must feel comfortable in his stand and messaging on policy recommendations, and urged BCHU to set a gold standard for the community.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**                      None.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**              None.

**9. IN-CAMERA MEETING**            No Incamera session held.

**10. QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**12. NEXT MEETING DATES**

Wednesday, September 8, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by:                                      David Bailey**

**“THAT the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 11:30 a.m.”**

**Carried.**

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Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date