

BRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 9:30 a.m., Virtual
MINUTES

PRESENT: Nancy Church (Province) Vice-Chair
David Bailey (County)
John Bell (County)
Michael Bodnar (Province)
Kevin Davis (City)
Joy O'Donnell (Province)
John Sless (City)
Brian Van Tilborg (City)

Dr. Rebecca Comley ((A)MOH)
Jo Ann Tober (CEO)
Brent Richardson (Director, Human Resources)
Lisa DiDonato (Director, Finance)
Alexey Babayan (Director, Foundations)
Lorraine Johnson (Exec. Asst.) (recorder)

REGRETS: Susan Brown (Province), Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Nancy Church called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The meeting was observed by a student in the Ryerson Public Health program.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

3. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A written report for Item 6.2 was distributed to Members subsequent to the posting of the Agenda last week.

Moved by: John Sless
Seconded by: John Bell

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

Carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Brant County Board of Health Minutes of January 19, 2022

Moved by: Brian Van Tilborg
Seconded by: Joy O'Donnell

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health Minutes dated January 19, 2022, be approved as presented.”

Carried.

Two items were noted: Members inquired when the Board's request to change the Millards partner assigned to the Brant County Health Unit's (BCHU) 2021 financial audit would be communicated. The re-appointments of Susan Brown and Joy O'Donnell as provincial appointees to the Board provide a stability in membership.

5. INCAMERA SESSION

Moved by: David Bailey
Seconded by: John Bell

“THAT the meeting move to In-Camera at 9:36 a.m. regarding personal matters about an identifiable individual and risk management/issues that pose potential liability to the organization.”

Carried.

The regular Board of Health meeting resumed at 9:59 a.m.

During the Incamera session, no motions were passed.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

6.1 Financial Position—2021 Year-End Update

Lisa DiDonato presented an oral Financial Position—2021 Year-End Update. Lisa advised that Millards auditors will be on-site on February 28 to commence work. Finance and Audit Committee meeting is scheduled with the auditors for March 11. The Board-approved municipal portion of the 2022 budget was presented at the City of Brantford Estimates Committee on January 31 and was submitted to the County of Brant last fall.

6.2 Ministry of Health 2022 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission

Lisa DiDonato presented the Ministry of Health 2022 Annual Service Plan (ASP) and Budget Submission Report that was distributed to Members prior to the meeting. The ASP template was received on Feb. 2 and is due on March 1. At the Ministry’s direction, individual program narratives are suspended for 2022. There are specific criteria for requesting COVID extraordinary and pandemic recovery funds. ASP amounts reflect previously-approved Board figures including one-time funding amounts. The Province suggested retaining temporary staff for now to aid in surge capacity and assist with catch-up of the two-year backlog of program activities, including the student immunization program, substance misuse, mental health, chronic disease prevention, tobacco cessation, Smoke Free Ontario Act, and others.

Jo Ann Tober responded to questions: The extent to which health units were able to maintain some program delivery during the pandemic is disparate across Ontario. The \$914,128 recovery funding request is at the Ministry’s direction to seek reasonable dollars to aid in the resumption of public health programs and services. It is possible that the Ministry will award partial budget approval and flow some funds, with final approvals expected post-election. If the full budget submission is not approved, mid-year decisions will be made to adjust programming. There is no expectation at this point to come back to the City or County for these recovery funds.

Moved by: Joy O’Donnell

Seconded by: John Bell

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health approve the 2022 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission as presented.” **Carried.**

Moved by: John Sless

Seconded by: Brian Van Tilborg

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept reports 6.1 and 62. as presented.” **Carried.**

7. STANDING REPORTS and BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

7.1 Report from the Chair

Past-Chair John Bell reported that the annual performance appraisal for the Chief Executive Officer was completed in January, and the six-month appraisal for the Medical Officer of Health is scheduled for next week. A summary of each will be provided to the Board. Staff were thanked for adding the Waste Water Surveillance data to the website, recognizing that it needs interpretation. John Bell and Nancy Church attended the Brantford Brant Ontario Health Team (BBOHT) governors’ meeting on Feb. 15 where the Province’s push to merge Norfolk OHT with the BBOHT was discussed. Jo Ann Tober stated that both OHTs’ goals and objectives align. Nancy referenced the Association of Local Public Health Agencies’ (ALPHA) report, entitled *Public Health Resilience in Ontario*.

7.2 Report from the Acting Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Rebecca Comley presented the Medical Officer of Health’s (MOH) Report as provided with the agenda. The report included updates on her activities with Emergency Management, Community Partnerships, Environmental Health, Drugs Strategy, and continuing education/training.

Dr. Comley responded to questions: Drug overdose and death numbers remain consistent. Anti-stigma messaging will take time to shift societal thinking; personal experience is the fastest avenue to becoming informed. The Drugs Strategy Coordinating Committee has a communications element that will expand its presence and message in the community. Local addictions treatment is centred with St. Leonard’s. Progressive addictions treatment takes in the importance of transitioning back into the community and includes non-residential centres. Mike Bodnar recalled a Politician’s Newsletter put out by BCHU years ago and suggested this be resurrected for pre-election messaging.

7.3 Report from the Chief Executive Officer

Jo Ann Tober presented the Chief Executive Officer Report as distributed with the agenda, including updates on the Brantford Brant Ontario Health Team, Ministry reporting requirements, and COVID-19 response.

7.4 Food Safety Disclosure Report

This standing item is in place to report on convictions and closures of food premises ticketed for non-compliance with regulations. Jo Ann Tober responded to questions: Public Health Inspectors are not redeployed to COVID response at this point and are actively conducting inspections.

7.5 COVID-19 Reports

7.5.1 COVID-19 Case Management Report

Dr. Comley presented the COVID-19 Case Management Report as provided with the agenda. There are currently 4 outbreaks, with a continual decrease since early January. Outbreak management by isolation in high-risk settings is shifting under revised provincial guidance. Return-to-school went smoothly and school outbreaks no longer require cohorting. BCHU has an advisory role to schools and boards, and is conducting in-school vaccination clinics with poor uptake. The Waste Water Surveillance initiative involves 34 health units. Collection sites were selected by the Province. There are limitations to its usefulness as an early warning system due to incomplete population coverage (rural areas), delayed gastrointestinal presence of Omicron, and the 5-7 day wait for test results.

Dr. Comley responded to questions: There have been significant challenges in health human resources. At present, any provincial plan to phase out screening and distancing is unknown. It is best if all health units follow the provincial direction. Brant's metrics are moving in the right direction. The number of deaths is correlated with the increased disease prevalence; Public Health Ontario vigorously analyses the data and more information will become available in time. Other than a standing Section 22 Order regarding the isolation of temporary farm workers, all local Orders have been rescinded. Jo Ann Tober responded that, as an essential service, the Health Unit does not restrict unvaccinated people from entering the building. Newly-hired staff are required to be fully-vaccinated as per the provincial definition.

Joy O'Donnell left the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

7.5.2 COVID-19 Immunization Report

Jo Ann Tober presented the COVID-19 Immunization Report, as provided with the agenda. The report highlighted completion of Dose 4 in long-term care, retirement and congregate setting homes, along with Dose 3 for staff in those locations. In-school clinics are half-way done. Micro clinics will continue. Adolescents aged 12-17 are now becoming eligible for Dose 3. On Feb. 14, Premier Ford announced that vaccine certificates will not be required after March 1. Jo Ann answered questions on intervals between Dose 3 and Dose 4, and the availability of rapid antigen test kits to the public.

7.6 Strategic Planning

Nancy Church reported that Strategic Planning Working Group Lead, Susan Brown, has suggested the first meeting be held in mid-March or early April.

Moved by:

David Bailey

Seconded by:

Brian Van Tilborg

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept reports 7.1 through 7.6 as presented.”

Carried.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Human Resources Report

Brent Richardson presented the Human Resources Report as distributed with the agenda. Brent summarized 2021 as both challenging and productive. The volume of recruitment increased to meet COVID demands. Leadership opportunities were offered internally. Sick day use was up due to COVID. The average age of employees continues to decline over the last five years. The Health Unit enjoys a good working relationship with the Ontario Nurses' Association union leaders.

Moved by: **John Sless**
Seconded by: **Kevin Davis**

“THAT the Brant County Board of Health accept Report 8.1 as presented.” **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 Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, dated January 20, 2022, re support for local boards of health vs regional.
- 9.2 Correspondence received from the Ministry of Health, dated January 21, 2022, re one-time funding approvals for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.
- 9.3 Correspondence received Peterborough Public Health, dated February 2, 2022, re COVID-19 vaccine and the Immunization of School Pupils Act.
- 9.4 Order in Council from the Province of Ontario, dated February 3, 2022, re re-appointment of Susan Brown to the Board of Health.
- 9.5 Order in Council from the Province of Ontario, dated February 3, 2022, re re-appointment of Joy O’Donnell to the Board of Health.

10. QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

10.1 The alpha 2022 Winter Symposium will be held online on February 25. Registration deadline is February 18. Nancy Church, Mike Bodnar, Dr. Comley and Jo Ann Tober are booked to attend.

10.2 Southwestern Public Health announced the hiring of Dr. Ninh Tran as their Medical Officer of Health, upon the retirement of Dr. Joyce Lock. A letter of congratulations will be sent to Dr. Tran from the Board.

10.3 Joy O’Donnell shared challenges discussed by the Chamber of Commerce board regarding people dealing with addictions and mental illness, from a business perspective, and how they can differ from the public health approach and in particular the anti-stigma messaging. Joy invited Members to send her ideas and suggestions.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11.1 Brantford Brant Ontario Health Team Update *(March)*

12. NEXT MEETING DATES

Wednesday, March 16, 2022.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: **John Sless**

“THAT the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 11:12 a.m.” **Carried.**

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date