

**Portage County Combined General Health District
Board Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2025
6:00 PM**



I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The Portage County Combined General Health District Board of Health met on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, OH, 44266. The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM by Vice Board President Bierlair.

Board Members in Attendance:

James Bierlair, Vice President
Linda Grimm, Member
Dr. Philip Keyser, Member
Brock Kertoy, Member
Diana Clarke, Member
Chad Delaney, Member

Board Members Not in Attendance:

Amy Everett, Member
Lucy Ribelin, President

Staff in Attendance:

Becky Lehman, Health Commissioner
Sarah Meduri, Director Personnel and
Administrative Services
Branden Burns, Director of Finance
Justin Rechichar, Director of
Environmental Health
Amos Sarfo, Environmental Health
Supervisor
William Duck, Environmental Health
Supervisor
Natalie Menke, Environmental Health
Supervisor
Amy Cooper, Director of Community
Health
Rebecca Barreca, Director of Nursing
Programs
Christina Jewell, Administrative &
Account Clerk
Mark Arredondo, Medical Director

District Advisory Council:

Bruce Lange, Charlestown Twp.

Others:

None

Media Present:

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Board of Health Meeting: On March 18, 2025, Board Member Dr. Keyser presented a motion to accept the Board Meetings Minutes for February 18, 2025, seconded by Board Member Grimm.

An “aye” vote was cast by all, and the motion carried.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

III. PORTAGE COUNTY TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION: (District Advisory Council)

Mr. Lange stated that he is ready for tomorrow night’s District Advisory Council meeting. He stated that 17 of 18 townships in Portage County had confirmed their attendance. Mr. Lange also noted that there are some new trustees attending and that they will see PCHD’s new facility. He thanked the staff for putting together the District Advisory Council meeting.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

V. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Expenditure Ratifications **\$ 92,997.90**

Invoice Batch No.	2969	\$	8,094.97
Invoice Batch No.	3027	\$	704.01
Invoice Batch No.	3107	\$	7,787.48
Invoice Batch No.	3133	\$	9,094.53
Invoice Batch No.	3168	\$	8,698.03
Invoice Batch No.	3215	\$	4,336.54
Invoice Batch No.	3263	\$	12,296.45
Invoice Batch No.	3347	\$	1,664.51
Invoice Batch No.	3366	\$	12,309.48
Invoice Batch No.	3378	\$	28,011.90

Mr. Burns requested approval from the board to ratify the payments from this past month's expenses.

Board Member Kertoy presented a motion to accept the above expenditures and ratify these expenses, seconded by Board Member Delaney.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

B. Travel Expenditures

Mr. Burns requested approval for the travel expenditures presented to the Board.

A motion was presented by Board Member Grimm to approve said travel expenditures, seconded by Board Member Dr. Keyser.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

C. Resolution #25-18 Amendment to the 2025 Portage County Combined General Health District Annual Appropriations Previously and to be Certified.

Mr. Burns stated that this month's budget amendment was for \$140,000 which included a budget allocation to pay the Ohio Department of Health remittance fees and transferring funds for the None 4 Under 21 program through Safe Communities. The budget allocations made, mainly in the general fund and moving funds to specific funding such as the Safe Communities, "None for Under 21" event and accepting the funds from Elk and Elk for their \$10,000 donation towards the event.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy to Approve Resolution #25-18, seconded by Board Member Delaney.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes

Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes
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D. Resolution #25-19 A Journal Entry Reversal / Expense Correction for Portage County Combine General Health District.

Mr. Burns requested approval for the journal entry reversal / expense correction presented to the Board. Mr. Burns noted that some funding was added to purchase nursing supplies and for the new PRC program (Prevention, Retention & Contingency), which will be assigned a project code by the Auditors office soon and then those expenses will then be refunded by a grant through JFS.

A motion was presented by Board Member Clarke to Approve Resolution #25-19, seconded by Board Member Dr. Keyser.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

E. Resolution #25-20 A Resolution to Establish Fees for Participation in the Portage County Farmer's Market.

Mr. Burns explained that this resolution is for the new Farmer's Market that PCHD plans to start in June 2025. The Prosecutor's office stated that a resolution submitted for approval to the board would suffice to initiate the allowed program. The fee is to allocate vendors for the Farmer's Market on a weekly basis, \$15 per week or a monthly basis, \$36 per month. The fees will be used to provide cooking demonstrations for items provided at the Farmer's Market and other activities to provide for the community during the Farmer's Market.

Board member Delaney inquired on the weekly and monthly fee. Mr. Burns stated that it was recommended to request a fee as a token of assurance for attendance of the vendor. He mentioned that this fee is less, in comparison to surrounding vendors.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy to Approve Resolution #25-20, seconded by Board Member Grimm.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

F. Resolution #25-21 PCHD & Local Public Health Services Collaborative Agreement, Allowing HC to Sign Agreement.

Ms. Barreca stated that this resolution is for a contract with the Local Public Health Service Collaborative. It is a non-Profit organization that would assist with the direction of the clinics. She explained that it is a group that assists health departments with insurances and processes that help to cut costs and help with fee schedules and purchasing for vaccines, provide the fee for the vaccines and assist with the billing which would replace the current clearinghouse that PCHD pays for billing.

Ms. Lehman noted that this contract is a little different than the others as we're just requesting the board for permission to sign the agreement this year because the funding will most likely not be available to pay for the services until 2026. However, Ms. Lehman stated that the LPHSC will not even place PCHD on the calendar for setup until it was approved by our Board of Health. She also shared that this is a group that has been put together by the AOHC, the Health Commissioners Association brought this board together to assist other health departments.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy to Approve Resolution #25-21, seconded by Board Member Dr. Keyser.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

G. Variance #25-22 A Variance Request for OAC 3701-29-06(G)(3)(A) & (C) to Install Replacement Sewage Treatment System Within the Required Isolation Distance of the Property Line and Water Well at 5984 Laubert Rd., Atwater Twp.

Mr. Duck explained that this is a variance request for a replacement sewage treatment system. Mr. Duck explained that the owner had a point-of-sale inspection done in which the system failed. The point of sale and then the system both need to be replaced. Mr. Duck also noted that upon evaluation, there was no way to site the replacement discharging system without violating the isolation distance to the properties, water well and the property line, resulting in two sections of code Administrative Code 3701-29-06G3(A) and (C) and we are requesting a variance for these property owners. A design plan was submitted, and it is included in the packet as well.

H. Variance #25-23 A Variance Request for the Portage County Board of Health for the Household Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) Variance for OAC 3701-29-03(C)(5) Continuing Education Requirement for the Septic Contractor, Brian

Koons of Ferg's Excavation & Septic Services.

Mr. Duck stated that this variance request is for a septic contractor who failed to complete their septic CEU's. They completed six CEU's in 2025, so they need a variance so we can register them and allow them to do work in Portage County and they are required to get the six additional CEU's, for a total of 12 needed for next year's registration.

- I. Variance #25-24** Variance Request for OAC 3701-28-07 (D). An Isolation Distance Reduction from the Proposed Deck to the Existing Well at 506 Heimbaugh Rd., Suffield Twp.

Mr. Duck stated that this is a variance request for 506 Heimbaugh Rd. in Suffield Township. He noted that the owner is proposing a deck addition to his property, and the deck will be within the isolation distance of 10 feet of his water well. So, he is requesting a variance to build the deck which will be removable to ensure access to the well can be made for service.

A motion was presented by Board Member Clarke to Approve Variances #25-22, #25-23 & #25-24, seconded by Board Member Delaney.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

VI. DISCUSSIONS:

- **Administration:** Ms. Meduri stated that all open positions are now filled. The pop-up pantry for February served 224 families. Ms. Meduri stated that in the 1st quarter of 2025, it served 673 families. She shared that she had the opportunity to present to the Department of Health on the weekly call about the pop-up pantry, collaborative partners and the PCHD team along with our MRC's, who volunteered a total of 477 hours last year. Ms. Meduri shared that other health departments are modeling PCHD to establish a pop-up food pantry as well. Ms. Meduri and Ms. Cooper were recently at the Akron Round Table, thanks to United Way, who extended an invitation. Ms. Meduri shared that 1 in 7 people in the US suffer with food insecurities. PCHD is currently monitoring local food banks and the budget cuts that could affect these programs.

Ms. Card and Ms. Speck recently completed a Food Resource Dashboard through GIS with a QR code. The layered map can filter by date or location and get specific retailers or food banks within the area. Ms. Meduri shared that various community partners are currently using it and sharing on social media. Ms. Meduri shared the recent Pulse survey results and provided them in the last page of her Admin report. She also gave a comparison of 2024 to

current, and the results have dramatically improved the staff's feedback.

- **Finance:** Mr. Burns shared that the cash basis report which showed January and February off a bit, but the levy funding will be in for March, which will level out the expenses of January and February. He also noted that the finance division has a finance intern, Michael, who is doing a great job. He is currently forecasting, budgeting and narrowing down costs for the 2026 budget. He will be completing his internship with PCHD at the end of April.

Mr. Burns shared that Open House is April 9th from 2pm – 6pm, here at our location and we plan to have food trucks and lots of community partners who hope to connect with the community. The goal is to connect with the community so that they can see why we need the levy, and how we utilize those levy funds for the community through the multiple programs and education PCHD provides.

- **Environmental Health:** Mr. Rechichar expressed gratitude for the professional development, encouragement of the Health Commissioner and support through the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Menke gave the board an update on their new hire, Mr. Santiago, who is an EHSIT. She noted that Mr. Santiago previously shadowed with EH and is doing great. Ms. Menke also shared that the Ohio Department of Health will be coming in for a survey. Four of the inspectors will be taking tests as part of the survey.

Ms. Menke also shared that EH had their 1st Mobile Rodeo on March 3rd with Streetsboro Fire Department. She noted that this was the largest turnout thus far with at least 20 mobiles who attended to have their inspections completed. EH plans to have a 2nd Mobile Rodeo on April 2nd as they are working on food license renewals, which run from previous March to the current March for licenses.

Mr. Duck shared that last month he was absent from the board meeting due to his attendance at the WWETT Show, which is a water & wastewater equipment, treatment & transport show. It is the world's largest annual trade show for wastewater and environmental service professionals. Mr. Duck stated that the show had about 12,000 people in attendance, which included (55) countries. He is hoping to go back next year with a goal to speak at the show. He enjoyed his week and met new people, some with much bigger challenges than PCHD's.

Mr. Duck stated that he and his team continue to work with Ms. Plough on quick informative videos. Recently, they completed a video of a septic alarm and what that means when activated. The videos are helpful snippets to share with the homeowners to help them understand what the issue is with their septic system and how it works. He also shared that with the weather changing and getting warmer, the EH complaints are rolling in. Overall, things are good.

Mr. Rechichar shared that he is continuing to enter data into Clear Impact and working on enhancing the board discussion report. He also shared the monthly report with a live link to the website that provides tangible data. Though there is not much activity on the reports since

it's only been a couple of months, once more information is entered, the data table will be more active and he hopes to add in the mosquito program in the summer, if approved by the board for a seasonal worker as well as adding in a campground program at some point in time. There are also plans to include the pool program into the Clear Impact software. He noted that he met with Mr. Greg Chumney from the Ohio Department of Health in regard to the survey that Ms. Menke spoke about.

- **Community Health:** Ms. Cooper shared that the Community Health Assessment Steering Committee has met with Illuminology, who PCHD has contracted to perform our community health assessment. She noted that they've been discussing the primary data collection. So, the steering committee developed questions for the adult survey and the youth survey, which will be going out via email or mail, next week.

Ms. Cooper shared the PRC program, which is the Prevention Retention Contingency program for our family support services program through Job and Family Services. She stated that the agency just got it up and running in February and issued 5 of the milestones, which was education and material goods for families.

Ms. Barreca shared that their new public health nurse, Ms. Cole, just started this past Monday and is a lovely person. Ms. Cole has a bachelor's degree in nursing, and she also has a master's degree in health promotion. She feels that her credentials are very important for us as she will be learning to run the vaccine clinic so that Ms. Barreca can focus more time with assisting Ms. Orr, a public health nurse with the CMH program.

Ms. Barreca shared that the new Helmer vaccine freezer has arrived, and they are currently taking periodic temperatures to ensure it is fully calibrated and ready for vaccine. She also shared that she has partnered with Mr. Sexton for a sexual health educational program. They are collaborating with colleges and universities to bring sexual health education to them. Ms. Barreca also shared the idea of a Teddy Bear Clinic for children. Children can bring in their teddy bear or stuffed animal and the Community Health team can give a more visual experience of what vaccines look like. Ms. Barreca stated that Dr. Arredondo was giving her some good ideas since this is a development stage of the "Get Vaccinated" grant that Ms. Cooper assisted with. This grant focuses on the quality and improvement of increasing the vaccination population in our area. Currently the thoughts are; Are we reminding people? Is it working? What if the person does not show up for their appointment? What's the plan to get them to come back?

Ms. Barreca stated that the CMH numbers are tremendous. She stated that Ms. Orr has been doing a fabulous job on this program. She noted that the last highest number reported was in September 2024, with approximately \$4,400 billed with 2 nurses at the time. Last month, with just 1 nurse, she billed approximately \$4,500. She commended Ms. Orr on her hard work.

There was a discussion amongst board members and Ms. Barreca and Dr. Arredondo pertaining to Covid vaccinations and the current impact of the increase of cases of Measles. The discussion was debating the pros and cons of vaccinations and the decisions each

American is entitled to. However, Dr. Keyser expressed how he felt that the Covid vaccination mandate polarized the world and may have caused the resistance of maintaining the upkeep of vaccinations. Ms. Barreca shared that she tries to maintain transparency to answering questions pertaining to the particular reasons people are negating vaccinations. Whether it's hearsay or somewhat factual, she can educate them with the current data provided and offer insight to the person to better educate them and their decisions. Overall, everyone agreed that education is the benefactor in pursuing vaccinations.

Ms. Cooper introduced Ms. Steighner, Supervisor for the WIC Lisbon office. Ms. Steighner addressed the board and shared a brief update on her staff. She noted that Columbiana-Lisbon has been very busy, and they continue to provide some outreach for daycare and preschools in the registration packets. She shared that March was International Nutrition Month, so the staff provided some presentations and demonstrations with the aid of their current WIC intern. She shared their upcoming events for the summer months with a Farmers Market & Family Fun Day in partnership with their community partners.

Ms. Cooper noted that on a Federal level, their funding for WIC was approved through September 30, 2025. She stated that there are other food programs that may be receiving budget cuts, so that always brings more people to our door and she feels that our agency will get busier. She noted that we can do the best we can to serve our families. Lastly, all of the health educators have been working to update all the boards for the District Advisory Council meeting.

- **Health Commissioner:** Ms. Lehman shared that just recently, she received an email stating that PCHD had been awarded the Integrated Harm Reduction grant for 2025. She noted that this is a grant that PCHD has received since the beginning of the program. Ms. Lehman shared that the region this time around was divided into several sections, and they were unsure if they would receive any funding at this time due to the amount of entries for our regional section. Ms. Lehman was very pleased with the hard work Ms. Cooper and her team provided in writing for this grant.

Board member, Ms. Clarke, inquired on what harm reduction is and what does this grant cover? Ms. Lehman stated that it provides some sexual education but mainly provides Narcan and substance abuse testing strips.

Ms. Lehman touched on the Farmers Market. She shared her memory of the moment she and Ms. Cooper visited this building before it was purchased and their vision for the front lawn was to have a Farmers Market and the fact that the finance team, led by Mr. Burns, has put together the Farmers Market team. She excitedly noted that it's coming to fruition and is her dream come true. The Farmers Market is scheduled to start on Tuesdays beginning on June 17th through September 9th from 3:00pm to 6:00pm. This is already on the PCHD website, Ms. Gill, our website coordinator, has developed a beautiful page. Ms. Meduri has posted it on Facebook, and shared that it already had 66 shares. This will be integrated with our Tasty Tuesdays, which starts next month and will continue during the time of the

Farmers Market and end on September 30th. Mr. Burns has completed the contract register and enable Snap benefits for the Farmers Market.

Lastly, Ms. Lehman shared that Ms. Plough will be hosting Yoga on the Yard at 6:00pm after the Farmers Market on Tuesdays during the Farmers Market and then the plan is to do a rotation of promoting programs and services. Such as food demonstrations and how to wash your hands properly and other topics to promote services.

VII. OLD BUSINESS: None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Accept the hiring of Brandon Santiago, EHSIT
 - Motion made by: Board Member Kertoy
 - 2nd: Board Member Clarke
 - All those in favor – aye vote
- b. Accept the hiring of Morgan Cole, PHN
 - Motion made by: Board Member Kertoy
 - 2nd: Board Member Clarke
 - All those in favor – aye vote
- c. Accept the hiring of Melissa Colella, Peer Helper
 - Motion made by: Board Member Kertoy
 - 2nd: Board Member Clarke
 - All those in favor – aye vote
- d. Permission to advertise, post and hire a Seasonal Worker for Mosquito Program for the Environmental Health Division, pending NOA
 - Motion made by: Board Member Clarke
 - 2nd: Board Member Grimm
 - All those in favor – aye vote
- e. Salary Ranges: 2 years
Mr. Burns noted that the revisions were for the Clerk salary range and the Seasonal Employee to ensure the table accommodated for the 2-year range.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy to Approve Salary Ranges, seconded by Board Member Delaney.

A vote on the motion is as follows:

Board Member Ribelin	Absent	Board Member Grimm	Yes
Board Member Bierlair	Yes	Board Member Kertoy	Yes
Board Member Delaney	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Everett	Absent	Board Member Keyser	Yes

f. Budget:

Mr. Burns stated that for the 2026 Budget, he's projecting revenue at \$5.4 million, and a total of expenditures at \$5.4 million, being a net zero budget. He shared that our goal would be to exceed our projected amount for revenue and then hit our expenses or be a little bit below. However, he decided to provide the 2024 actuals. He stated questions arise; you can reflect to what was completed in 2024.

He mentioned that the carryover will remain at \$3.216 million as we did last year, hopefully we may be able to add to that carryover, but he noted that we do a conservative budget. He shared there is a listing of all employee salaries with a proposed 3% increase, which is just a placeholder for the budget. He informed the board that the Budget Commission does require a guesstimate of what you think you may be looking at the end of the year.

Mr. Burns explained that he budgeted to be a conservative budget to give a perspective for 2026, which would be \$2.793 million. The next page is going to go over our expenses. This takes that \$5.4 million and breaks it down per fund, and what that looks like in our 31's and 32's, salaries, fringes and our contract work and some of our supply categories. He noted in the general fund, in the 8's, which is a debt repayment plan for the mortgage, which has \$195,000 budgeted there. That's again we're working towards the goal of paying off the building by the first quarter of 2027. He explained that it is well above the annual payment for the mortgage. But the goal is, as we do well financially, we want to take that money and get rid of the debt for the residents of Portage County. So, the goal is to have this building paid off five years earlier than the mortgage is currently structured for.

The rest is general expenses, the last two pages is a breakdown of the revenue. Which shows a health levy. We have a 4-mil levy here in Portage County to fund our operations and then it breaks it down by fund. He noted that there are some intergovernmental transfers and there are the interest allocations that we're now getting

- Motion made by: Board Member Clarke
- 2nd: Board Member Delaney
- All those in favor – aye vote

IX. BOARD ISSUES AND DISCUSSION: N/A

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION: N/A

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was moved to adjourn by Board Member Grimm at 7:23 PM and seconded by Board Member Kertoy. An "aye" vote was cast by all, a motion was carried.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Lehman', written over a horizontal line.

Rebecca Lehman, MPH, MPA, CHES
Health Commissioner