

**District Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 19, 2025 (6:30 p.m.)**

**CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER: Roll Call 6:01 p.m. by Tom Calcei**

The District Advisory Council Meeting met on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, in person at the Portage County Combined General Health District, 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, OH. The Meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Bruce Lange, the District Advisory Council Chairman.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:			Representative	Attendance
		-	Jill Crawford	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CITIES:	AURORA	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RAVENNA	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	STREETSBORO	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
VILLAGES:	GARRETTSVILLE	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	HIRAM	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MANTUA	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MOGADORE	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	SUGAR BUSH KNOLLS	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	WINDHAM	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOWNSHIPS:	ATWATER	Thora Green	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	BRIMFIELD	-	Sue Fields	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	CHARLESTOWN	Bruce Lange	Adam Eskeridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	DEERFIELD	Tiffany Havens	Charles E. Dean	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	EDINBURG	Chris Diel	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	FRANKLIN	-	Scott Swan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	FREEDOM	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	HIRAM	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MANTUA	John Festa	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	NELSON	Anna Mae VanDerHoeven	Joe Leonard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	PALMYRA	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
	PARIS	Dorene Spicer	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	RANDOLPH	-	Nick Reynolds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	RAVENNA	Vince Coia	Hank T. Gibson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	ROOTSTOWN	-	Joe Paulus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	SHALERSVILLE	-	Jack Bias	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	SUFFIELD	Jeff Eldreth	Thomas Calcei	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	WINDHAM	-	Brian Miller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Lucy Ribelin, President  
James Bielair, Vice President  
Brock Kertoy  
Diana Clarke

**Staff Present:**

Dr. Mark Arredondo, MD  
Sarah Meduri, BSPH  
Christina M. Jewell  
Justin Rechichar, MPH, MBA  
Amos Sarfo, MS, RS  
Nicole Lipchik, MPH  
Emily Speck, BS  
William Duck, BA  
Mike Spies, BS  
Natalie Menke, BS  
Seth Nolte, BS  
Leah Luli, MPH  
Jim Meyer, BS, AA  
Cassie Clouser, BA  
Brandon Santiago, BA  
Debbie Wine  
Veronica Victoria, BA  
Rebecca Barreca, MSN, RN  
Kirsten Orr, BS, RN  
Morgan Cole, MS, BS, RN  
Olivia Card, MA  
Philesia Condor  
Branden Burns, BS, MBA

Lisa Miley  
Maria Gill  
Julia Sykes, AAS  
Becky Lehman, MPH, MPA, CHES  
Joshua Sexton, BSPH  
Kimberly Plough, MEd, CHES  
Rachel Belvin, BS  
Kylee McCracken, MPH  
Robert Walker, BA  
Amy Cooper, BSND, RD, LD  
Rachael Stratton, BA, CLC  
Briana Robison, MS, MPH, RD, LDN  
Cynthia Hilbish, RDN, LD, CLC  
Lindy Goist, BSAS, RD, LD, CLC  
Chelsea Kyer  
Renee Howe

Other Attendees:

Matthew Kelly, Portage County Auditor  
Christopher Meduri, Portage County Prosecutor  
Thomas McCarty, Portage County Prosecutor  
Larry Jenkins, Jr., Portage County Engineer  
Lori Calcei, Portage County Recorder  
Ann Marie Nobel, The Shepherd's House  
Heidi Matthews, Congressman Dave Joyce's Office  
Lindsay Carr, Ohio Attorney General's Office  
Rebecca Armstrong, State Treasurer's Office  
Jennifer Drlik, State Treasurer's Office  
Monique Moore, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's  
Office  
Beth Bingham, Ohio Senator Bernie Moreno's  
Office

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation led by Brock Kertoy, thanking attendees and praying for blessings on the Portage County Health District and its leadership. Board President Lucy Riblein expressed appreciation for former Health Commissioner, Joe Diorio and praised new Health Commissioner Ms. Rebecca (Becky) Lehman for a smooth leadership transition. Becky's career progression from intern to commissioner was highlighted by Mr. Lange.

The formal meeting paused for dinner and resumed with introductions of county, state, and federal officials, roll call confirming quorum, approval of previous meeting minutes, and election of officers.

## **APPROVAL OF 2024 DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

A motion to accept the 2024 District Advisory Council Meeting Minutes was presented by Sue Fields, Brimfield Township. and seconded by Ed Dean, Deerfield Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

## **ELECTION OF DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL POSITIONS (CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN, AND SECRETARY):**

A motion to close the nominations and elect Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township, to serve as Chairman of the District Advisory Council for the year 2025 was presented by Joe Leonard, Nelson Township, seconded by Nick Reynolds, Randolph Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

A motion to close the nominations and elect Tom Calcej, Suffield Township, to serve as Vice-Chairman of the District Advisory Council for the year 2025 was presented by Ed Dean, Deerfield Township, seconded by, Sue Fields, Brimfield Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

A motion to close the nominations and elect Dorene Spicer, Paris Township, to serve as Secretary of the District Advisory Council for the year 2025 was presented by Lori Calcej, Suffield Township, seconded by Adam Eskeridge, Charlestown Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

**FRIENDS OF PUBLIC HEALTH:** None to report.

## **APPOINTMENT OF BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBER:**

Mr. Lange gave recognition and appreciation to the former Health Commissioner, Joseph Diorio. Mr. Diorio's achievements in his 10 years of service included:

- Recognition of admission to the Public Health Accreditation Board in 2019
- Effective leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Acquisition of the current Health District building and consolidation of WIC

Mr. Lange also gave recognition and appreciation to former retired board member, Dr. Howard Minott of the City of Aurora, for 23 years of service on the Board of Health, noting his extreme dedication and service and being well known for his tenacity and superiority as a board member.

Mr. Lange gave an introduction of Dr. Philip Keyser of Aurora. Mr. Lange received a letter of interest in serving as a member of the Board of Health from the City of Aurora. Dr. Philip Keyser will be appointed as the newest member of the Board of Health and will replace Dr. Minott on the board of health panel. Dr. Keyser was unable to attend the meeting.

A motion to accept and elect Dr. Philip Keyser as a new member to the Portage County Board of Health was presented by Joe Paulus, Rootstown Township, seconded by Adam Eskeridge, Charlestown Township. An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

## **ANNUAL REPORT:**

Health Commissioner Becky Lehman presented highlights from the 2024 Annual Report and outlined priorities for 2025. She emphasized the Health District's focus on "connecting the dots" between residents, communities, and health resources. She gave an introduction of each division and staff. Ms. Lehman shared the annual report, highlighting some key accomplishments for 2024.

In 2024, the Health District made meaningful progress toward long-term financial stability. Interest allocations were applied directly to the building mortgage, reducing overall interest costs and putting the district on track to pay off the building several years ahead of schedule. This approach helps protect levy dollars and ensures more funding can be directed toward services rather than facility costs. Following the challenges of the COVID-19 years, the Health District focused heavily on staff engagement and retention. Annual staff surveys and workplace improvements resulted in strong morale and stability. In 2024, 97% of employees reported plans to remain with the Health District for at least the next two years, ensuring experienced staff remain in place to serve residents efficiently and consistently. The Health District continued its re-accreditation process with the Public Health Accreditation Board, a requirement that occurs every five years. This process involves the submission and review of approximately 250 records to demonstrate compliance with the Board's established standards and performance measures.

The Health District continued to expand programs that directly support residents' health and well-being. Highlights included new grants for family support, nutrition education, and physical activity; expanded fall-prevention programs for seniors; and increased public health education through community events and outreach. The Health District played a key role in emergency response efforts during the Windham tornado, working alongside emergency management, local officials, and community partners. Staff supported on-site response efforts, coordinated volunteer assistance with MRC's who volunteered a record total of 477 hours for 2024, provided food services, and assessed environmental health impacts, demonstrating the district's readiness to respond when emergencies occur.

Ms. Lehman shared the "filling your cup" statement and how the idea of implementing the pop-up food pantry originated from internal discussions and findings within our Community Health Improvement Plan, which identified food insecurity as a significant concern. During a visit to UH Portage's Food for Life program, the idea was proposed by Sarah Meduri, and she told her to figure it out and she did just that. This effort reflects our commitment to addressing critical community needs and promoting access to essential resources.

Food insecurity remained a major focus in 2024. The Pop-Up Food Pantry grew into one of the largest of its kind in the region, now serving 250–300 families monthly with the help of volunteers and community partners. In addition, the Health District launched interactive online maps and tools that help residents locate food assistance, farmers markets, and health services more easily.

Environmental health services also grew, including septic system repairs, improved inspection tools, and expanded online access to records. Expansion of environmental health programs, including septic system repairs, online septic records access, and statewide recognition for staff excellence.

Ms. Lehman shared that the plans for 2025 include continued investment in community partnerships, expanded public education through digital platforms, and new opportunities for residents to engage with the Health District. With upcoming initiatives to include the launch of a weekly farmer's market on the Health District lawn in June, continued "Tasty Tuesdays" food truck program, and increased outreach within communities across Portage County.

An attendee requested clarification regarding the scheduled time for the farmer's market event. Ms. Lehman responded that the event would take place on Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., followed by a yoga on the lawn commencing at 6:00 p.m.

An Open House announcement was made, and Mr. Lange announced the Health District's Open House will be on April 9, 2025 from 2:00-6:00 p.m. Attendees were encouraged to promote the event within their communities.

The meeting concluded with approval of the annual report and adjournment following expressions of appreciation to attendees and officials

Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township, closed with a motion to approve the 2024 Annual Report.

A motion to accept the 2024 Annual Report presented by Charles Ed Dean, Deerfield Township, seconded by Hank Gibson, Ravenna Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township, closed with a motion to adjourn the annual District Advisory Meeting.

Hank Gibson, Ravenna Township, made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Joe Leonard, Nelson Township.

An "aye" vote was cast by all, motion carried.

District Advisory Council meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.

  
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Bruce Lange, Charlestown Township,  
Chairman

