Portage County Combined General Health District
Board Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2026
6:00 PM

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The Portage County Combined General Health District Board of Health met on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, OH, 44266. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Board Vice President Bierlair.

Board Members in Attendance:	James Bierlair, Vice President Diana Clarke, Member Linda Grimm, Member Dr. Philip Keyser, Member Amy Everett, Member Brock Kertoy, Member
Board Members Not in Attendance:	Lucy Ribelin, President
Staff in Attendance:	Becky Lehman, Health Commissioner Sarah Meduri, Administrator Mark Arredondo, Medical Director Amy Cooper, Director of Community Health Kerry Fairchild, Supervisor of WIC Portage Patrice Ortiz, Director of Nursing William Duck, Environmental Health Supervisor Natalie Menke, Environmental Health Supervisor Christina Jewell, Administrative Assistant
District Advisory Council:	None
Others:	None
Media Present:	None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Board of Health Meeting: On September 15, 2026, Board Member Clarke presented a motion to accept the Board Meetings Minutes for August 18, 2026, 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 Everett	Absent	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

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

N/A

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Karin Wright introduced herself as pastor of Suffield UCC in Mogadore and a Shalersville resident. She and her family operate Wright Family Farms raising lamb, chickens, and pork. Ms. Lehman explained that the Health District met Ms. Wright through her husband's participation in the farmers market. Ms. Wright is interested in filling the vacancy on the Board of Health. The vacancy resulted from Chad Delaney's June resignation; his term continues through March 2029. Because the position was originally filled by the District Advisory Council (DAC), a special DAC meeting is required to consider an appointment. A date will be forthcoming for that meeting.

V. ACTION ITEMS:

B. **Expenditure Ratifications: $71,822.81**

Invoice Batch #	1287	$	3,144.38
Invoice Batch #	1327	$	3,079.16
Invoice Batch #	1377	$	8,318.20
Invoice Batch #	1423	$	13,324.51
Invoice Batch #	1473	$	5,052.76
Invoice Batch #	1513	$	15,794.44
Invoice Batch #	1593	$	10,753.35
Invoice Batch #	1629	$	11,453.01
Invoice Batch #	1640	$	903.00

Ms. Lehman presented the ratification of payments in lieu of Mr. Burns. She stated that the payments are the typical expenditures with nothing out of the ordinary.

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

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 Everett	N/A	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

C. Travel Expenditures

Travel requests were presented for seasonal professional conferences, including environmental-health programming and the Government Finance Officers Association conference in Cleveland. Ms. Lehman reported no unusual requests.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy 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 Everett	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

D. Resolution #26-54 An Amendment to the 2026 Portage County Combined General Health District Annual Appropriations for Revenue Previously Certified.

Ms. Lehman presented a budget amendment to place funds in the correct line items, including camps and parks and materials and supplies. The latter transfer supported final supplies within the WIC budget.

A motion was presented by Board Member Kertoy to approve resolution #26-54, seconded by Board Member Clarke.

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 Everett	N/A	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

E. **Resolution #26-55** A Journal Entry Reversal / Expense Correction for Portage County Combined General Health District.

Ms. Lehman presented an expense correction, primarily by closing the current WIC grant cycle at the end of September and beginning the new cycle October 1st. The principal transfer was approximately $11,000 and was intended to apply allowable grant funds to prior utility costs, with corresponding movement into the general fund.

A motion was presented by Board Member Clarke to approve resolution #25-55, seconded by Board Member Dr. Kertoy.

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 Everett	N/A	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

F. **Resolution #26-56** The Portage County Combined General Health District to Enter into an agreement with Clonch & Sons, Inc., for the 2024 Water Pollution Control Loan Fund Designer & Installer Contract #202416 for 10219 Universal Drive, Palmyra Township.

Mr. Duck presented a resolution to enter into an agreement for the WPCLF program and Clonch and Sons Excavating, Inc., for work under WPCLF contract #2024-16 at 10219 Universal Drive in Palmyra Twp., to install a new aeration system. Mr. Duck shared that this would close the grant funding on the 2024 monies.

A motion was presented by Board Member Grimm to approve resolution #26-56, seconded by Board Member Kertoy.

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 Everett	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

G. **Resolution #26-57** The Portage County Combined General Health District to Enter into an Agreement with Werab Enterprises, LLC., for the 2024 Water Pollution Control Loan Fund Designer & Installer Contract #202417 for 4714 Case Avenue, Rootstown Township.

Mr. Duck presented a resolution to enter into an agreement for the WPCLF program and Werab Enterprises, LLC, for the WPCLF contract #2024-17 at 4714 Case Avenue in Rootstown Twp., to install a sewer connection.
Mr. Duck reminded the Board that Portage County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) has assumed administration previously handled by NDS. He shared that new process is

working well, with improved communication, a more streamlined application, and approximately five new applicants have been approved. Mr. Duck is preparing for the next group of projects for 2025 funds and expects to assemble a bid package soon. He shared that RPC can also connect applicants who do not qualify with other programs; Evelyn Beaman of RPC was recognized for her assistance.

A motion was presented by Board Member Dr. Keyser to approve variance #26-57, seconded by Board Member Kertoy.

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 Everett	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

H. **Resolution #26-58** The Portage County Combined General Health District Addendum for Acceptance to Enter to Extend Current Contract with Aaron Belknap for Plumbing Inspection Services and Permit Health Commissioner, Rebecca Lehman, to Sign the Contract Pending Completion.

Ms. Lehman presented an addendum to Aaron Belknap's contract for plumbing-inspection services. Mr. Belknap moved from an employee role to a contract role, and the arrangement continues to be effective while the Health District recruits a suitable replacement for a certified plumbing inspector. The annual not-to-exceed amount would increase from $15,000 to $40,000 because his services are being used more frequently than anticipated. Ms. Lehman reported that scheduling, supervision, and invoicing are functioning well.

A motion was presented by Board Member Everett to approve resolution #26-58, 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 Everett	Yes	Board Member Clarke	Yes
Board Member Dr. Keyser	Yes	*Vacant*	-

VII. DISCUSSIONS:

Administration:

Sarah Meduri welcomed Patrice Ortiz, Director of Nursing and Kerry Fairchild, WIC Supervisor for the Ravenna location who attended the meeting. Ms. Meduri reported that both were integrating well. Samantha Fitzpatrick, a registered dietitian relocating from Florida who has WIC experience, was scheduled to begin October 5. Following the termination and reposting of the marketing coordinator position, Josephine "Josie" Ahart is also scheduled to begin October 5th.

Ashley Morrison, a medical student with NEOMED, visited the Health District to meet the team and begin a practicum reviewing its social media, particularly YouTube. Ashley will create a video explaining what happens during a WIC appointment. Sarah said the video is intended to make the experience more welcoming and address the stigma, uncertainty, and concerns some clients may have.

A new leadership resource guide was distributed to help supervisors apply policies consistently and recognize matters that require follow-up, such as a possible FMLA need. The employee welcome guide was updated to explain public health governance and the Board of Health. Maria Gill narrated the revised training videos, and the intern welcome guide was updated for consistency.

The Health District participated in a full-scale tornado-response exercise with Portage County EMA and community partners. The full-scale exercise simulated a tornado affecting multiple locations. Participants responded to evolving scenarios that tested coordination across several functions. The Emergency Operations Center managed the overall response, executive leadership addressed policy and funding decisions, Public Information Officers developed and distributed accurate and timely messages, and community partners coordinated information and response activities. Amy and Christina also worked on site as part of the health district's simulated response team.

A measles press release was sent to the media and posted on the Health District's website and social media. Morgan Shearer and Ali Rogalski worked with a veterinary partner on a rabies-education video. Becky Lehman and Sarah Meduri attended the State Personnel Board of Review conference. Becky Lehman and Olivia Artman were selected to present on GIS and community partnerships at the Ohio Public Health Association epidemiology and nursing conference. Sarah Meduri also shared Natalie Menke's recognition of the GIS presentation with Emily Speck, and Olivia Artman's participation in foodborne-outbreak response training in Summit County.

Olivia and the nursing team have been actively conducting disease investigations and outbreak-response work. Olivia participated in foodborne outbreak-response training in Summit County. The update referenced Cyclospora and the investigations associated with that outbreak as an example of why continuing education is important to maintaining readiness for future incidents.

The pop-up pantry served 269 families during the most recent month. This was one of the program's higher-volume months and reflects continued community need. Vaccines will be offered at the next pop-up pantry on October 1st, allowing the program to provide both food and vaccination services.

Finance:

Ms. Lehman presented the cash-basis report and stated that it was tracking generally as projected. The funding balance is temporarily lower because property-tax receipts had not yet been received; Mr. Burns anticipated an increase of slightly more than $500,000 in the following month. The state audit was completed with zero findings for the third consecutive year.

Environmental Health:

Will Duck relayed a message to the board on behalf of Ali Rogalski who requested that the Board be thanked for its support concerning the properties at 1203 and 1205 Goodyear Park Boulevard. At the previous meeting, the Board authorized an action to collect fees. The Prosecutor's Office did not pursue collection because the system was replaced and the nuisance was abated. Ms. Rogalski credited the Board's action with prompting timely compliance.

On September 2nd, Mr. Duck presented to the Akron Cleveland Association of REALTORS in Aurora about septic systems, including how they function and their role in the point-of-sale process. The presentation was well received, and he hopes it will lead to additional training and discussion. He also reported that he would speak at a homeowner education event hosted by the Portage County Soil and Water Conservation District on September 17th. Approximately 20 people have registered. His presentation will address common concerns about septic systems and provide an opportunity to answer questions and connect with homeowners.

Mr. Duck reported that the next group of Water Pollution Control Loan Fund applications included approximately five applicants. He would begin working on those applications and obtaining bids. He also attended a quarterly meeting on September 1st with Water Resources and the County Engineer's Office regarding the Chinn Allotment project. The project remained on schedule for completion in 2027, although utility issues and work affecting some residents' driveways had caused concerns.

Natalie Menke reported that the 2027 food program cost methodology had been finalized. The proposed fees would be presented to the Board the following month for the first of three readings. Preparations for the public hearing were underway, and letters of notification were nearly ready to be mailed.

Ms. Menke reported that the fair went well, with no significant issues. Staff completed approximately 89 inspections during fair week. That figure did not include visits to vendors exempt from licensing. Staff also checked those vendors' labels and documented their names and exempt status.

Ms. Menke reported that the mosquito program had identified a few additional positive results. She stated that no positive findings of the other type discussed had been identified in Portage County as of the meeting.

A tire amnesty event is scheduled at the Health District's location for Tuesday, October 20, tentatively from 8:00 a.m. to noon. The event will be held in collaboration with the Portage County Recycling Center, which would provide trucks and haul away the tires, and the trustees' program, which would provide staffing. Ms. Menke said staff would prepare a flyer and begin advertising the event. The collection would be open to Portage County residents, with residency verified at the

event. During the discussion, a question arose about the number of tires a person may transport without a tire hauler license.

Lastly, Ms. Menke reported that the Health District would host a certified pool operator course on October 6th and 7th. An instructor who previously worked as an inspector would teach the course, and registration was open.

Community Health:

Patrice Ortiz, Nurse Practitioner, thanked the Board for approving her hiring and said she was pleased to join a team committed to serving the community. She explained that she and Ms. Cooper were presenting their updates together at this meeting, but future reports would separate the Nursing Division from Community Health.

Ms. Ortiz reported that the communicable disease team had confirmed Portage County's first measles case earlier in the month. The person affected was under 18 and had passed the infectious period by the time of the meeting. They continued to monitor contacts, conduct interviews, and investigate additional reports; no other cases were confirmed. To increase access to the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, the Health District held an on-demand clinic the previous Tuesday at the Nelson Township Community House in collaboration with the township. Morgan Shearer, a Public Health Nurse also provided vaccines during home and field visits. Approximately 70 doses from the outbreak vaccine supply had been used.

Ms. Ortiz reported that the Cyclospora outbreak had slowed down and that the communicable disease team was monitoring two cases. She said the Health District had received its supply of the 2026–2027 influenza vaccine formulation and had approximately 12 vaccination clinics planned for October, both at the Health District and at community locations. During discussion, Board members asked about the expected influenza strain. Staff said they were not aware of information identifying a predominant strain at that time.

Dr. Mark Arredondo reported that COVID-19 activity was increasing, while influenza and respiratory syncytial virus activity remained lower. He said the Cyclospora outbreak appeared to be subsiding. He also discussed rabies advisory and emphasized that rabies is a serious viral disease that can be transmitted from animals to people. He advised residents to keep their distance from wildlife, avoid animals that appear sick or dead, and keep pets current on rabies vaccinations, including pets that remain indoors because bats can enter homes.

During the rabies discussion, Board Member Clarke noted an increase in reported bat exposures. Ms. Menke shared that young bats are learning to fly in late summer, can enter homes or end up on the ground. Staff advised that a person with a possible exposure should wash the wound promptly and seek medical evaluation. They explained that the Health District refers people with possible bat exposures to an emergency department for an assessment, particularly when someone wakes to find a bat in the room and cannot determine whether a bite occurred.

Ms. Lehman shared that the Health District has a memorandum of understanding with University Hospitals Portage Medical Center for follow-up rabies vaccinations. A person who begins treatment at the emergency department may be able to receive subsequent doses at the Health District, avoiding additional emergency department visits. Staff also described the 10-day observation process for dogs and cats involved in bite incidents and said they were not aware of

any rabies-positive raccoons in Portage County. They noted that the county did not receive its usual rabies baiting in the Aurora area this year.

Kerry Fairchild shared that all electronic benefits for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program had been distributed. They will monitor redemption rates and expect the process to run more smoothly next year as participants and vendors become familiar with the electronic format. Ms. Fairchild thanked the Board for approving the hiring of a dietitian who is scheduled to begin on October 5th, bringing Portage WIC to full staffing. She said WIC was hosting a Stark State University dietetic intern through October and expected a Kent State University dietetic intern to begin afterward. Kerry also thanked the Board for her hiring.

Ms. Amy Cooper reported that Community Health had a busy August. Staff provided education during events on the Health District's front lawn and at the county fair. Fair activities included an educational game presented with the Environmental Health team, blood pressure checks for seniors and veterans, and participation in a fairground's scavenger hunt for children. The fair also coincided with Overdose Awareness Day. Amy estimated that staff distributed at least 50 naloxone kits during that event, although she did not have the final count available.

Ms. Cooper reported that the Thrive Together Farmers Market had concluded its second season the previous week. Attendance varied, with some markets drawing 150 or more customers and others drawing approximately 60. She said the market improved access to healthy food for Portage County residents, particularly in Ravenna. By the end of the season, vendors accepted SNAP, WIC, senior nutrition benefits, and benefits through the hospital's Food for Life program. The market also connected residents with benefits through Job and Family Services. Staff would review the season and begin planning for the following year.

Ms. Cooper reported that the Health District had been awarded a $100,000 youth resiliency grant. The project would engage local high school students in public health, invite them to participate in Community Health Improvement Plan meetings, and encourage teachers to help interested students explore public health careers. Work was expected to begin in October, with a kickoff meeting scheduled for October 13th.

Ms. Cooper also reported that she and Ms. Lehman had submitted two grant applications. One was a rural health transformation grant focused on chronic disease prevention and aligned with the Health District's Community Health Improvement Plan. The proposed work included community health workers, support for residents' self-monitoring, opportunities to increase physical activity, hands-on cooking classes, and a stronger referral process among physicians and community partners. Ms. Cooper described the initial grant period as nine months, followed by annual funding within a three-year cycle, with the possibility of renewal for two additional years. The second application sought continued funding for the Health District's harm reduction and naloxone program.

Health Commissioner:

Becky Lehman shared that the roof replacement project with JBL was moving forward and was expected to be completed by the end of September. Work would take place and she did not anticipate any disruption to daily operations. The Health District also expected its website to meet ADA accessibility requirements by the end of October.

The Health District had begun working with Kent State's School of Architecture and Design on a class project to evaluate possible changes to the entryway, lobby, health education area, and WIC and nursing clinic spaces. The project would examine how vacant work areas could be used more effectively and how the layout could better support current workflows. Staff were scheduled to meet with the project team the following week.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS: None

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Accept the Termination of Sarah Power, Marketing Coordinator. Effective August 20,2026.

Motion made by Board Member Grimm.

Motion seconded by Board Member Kertoy.

An "aye" vote was cast by all; a motion was carried.

b. Accept the Hiring of Josephine Wheeler Ahart, Marketing Coordinator. Onboarding October 5, 2026.

Motion made by Board Member Grimm.

Motion seconded by Board Member Clarke.

An "aye" vote was cast by all; a motion was carried.

c. The Board of Health to call a special District Advisory Council (DAC) meeting to discuss and appoint a new Board of Health member.

Motion made by Board Member Kertoy.

Motion seconded by Board Member Everett.

An "aye" vote was cast by all; a motion was carried.

X. BOARD ISSUES AND DISCUSSION: N/A

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Board Member Clarke at 6:49PM and seconded by Board Member Grimm.

An "aye" vote was cast by all; a motion was carried.

Rebecca Lehman, MPH, MPA, CHES
Health Commissioner

Next Board Meeting: October 20, 2026