

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Minutes
08/13/2025

Chairperson Leary called the meeting to order at 3:01pm at the Van Buren Cass District Health Department, 260 South Street, Lawrence, MI on August 13, 2025. Roll call taken.

Board members present: Jeremiah Jones, Tina Leary, Robert Linderman, Don Hanson, Priscilla Gatties and Roseann Marchetti

Board member absent: Randall Peat

Employees present: Kelly Adkins, Alisha Bartlett, Nancy Desai, Lauren Jaramillo, Danielle Persky, Holly Young, Dr. Larry Wile

Others: Karen Tan, Roger Boyer

July meeting minutes were reviewed. Motioned by Marchetti and second by Jones to approve the meeting minutes with an edit to Roger Boyer's name as an attendee. All voting yes, motion carried.

Finance Director's Report

Desai noted that there is no monthly financial report or summary of disbursements and will instead review the first draft of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget with the board.

The drafted budget incorporates the major grant funding cuts of last year along with providing two perspectives between what is required through public health code and our dental operation. The major grant lost is the Epidemiology Lab Capacity (ELC) grant. Leary asked briefly about the details of this grant. Persky noted that this was the grant used for communicable disease investigation but was absorbed into revoked COVID funding. Desai stated that not all grants are guaranteed at this point with budgets not solidified at this point in time.

Persky added she requested from Cass County a 5 percent increase in appropriations. Van Buren County approved a standard 3 percent increase. A letter has been drafted with a review of the last five years of appropriations from Cass County and the reasoning behind the increased request. Jones provided guidance on the next steps to having the letter added as a Cass County Committee of the Whole agenda item. The letter was noted to also include Marchetti as a recipient.

Desai noted that expenses do not include a cost-of-living increase and insurance costs are projected to increase by 15 percent, which was built into this draft. Persky added that there is no expectation of approval today as that will take place in October. Money is budgeted for building improvements through the Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) making any projects revenue neutral. Linderman requested a comparison of FY2025 and the proposed FY2026 budget. Desai answered she can work on this.

Gatties asked if there's potential for more grant funding cuts. Persky answered that there is more knowledge now, but a lot is still unknown. Notice of awards has been received and the drafted budget reflects the most up to date information. The goal is to have a plan in place. For example, Emergency Preparedness funding is slated to decrease but as of now we are awarded the full amount. Leary asked what encompasses emergency preparedness. Persky answered this is Zordan's role with a focus on emergency protocols, especially as our communities are in the vicinity of the nuclear power plant. The health department's role is coordinated with Emergency Management at the county level. This can at times be a large lift for public health staff. Leary commented that there have been many drills and staff

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requested to support Palisade's recommissioning. Persky answered the Palisades nuclear plant has agreed to provide 5,000 dollars of funding. Although there was no precedent for this funding, this was requested to support the health department staff through the recommissioning drills when staff were needed after regular business hours for several hours at a time. Persky noted that an invoice for 5,000 dollars has been sent with no payment at this time. Persky stated she will keep pursuing.

Other budgetary notes are that the Eat Well, Be Well funding decreased to \$25,000 for fiscal year 2026 due to the United Way's financial challenges. Reviewing the dental clinic, there is a net loss of 563,000 dollars with there being a consistent deficit year after year. Previously, public health appropriations have been used to cover the dental deficit. A conversation is to be had about what is required as a public health department versus what is an optional activity. Nancy highlighted that we are in a different position today than in the past. Historically, the dental clinic also utilized Medicaid match dollars and COVID funding for support. This is the first year without those funds, and it is not sustainable in this current model. Gatties asked what the ratio of dental assistants is to dentists. Desai responded that there are two assistants per dentist. The challenge is that our clinic has a five day a week operation while dentists generally are working three to four days a week. This means assistants are rotating rather than working directly with one dentist.

Expenditures Report

No report or motion.

Administrator/Health Officer's Report

Persky stated the administrative team has been brainstorming solutions and steps to move forward considering the financial deficit of the dental clinic. An ad hoc committee was utilized during the state audit and was noted as successful. It is requested to create another ad hoc committee focused on reviewing and analyzing dental clinic revenue and expenses taking into account local public health code. The committee's goal is to develop final recommendations to be brought to the Board of Health. Leary answered that time is of the essence with moving forward on this committee. It was decided to have Marchetti represent Cass County, Leary represent Van Buren County, and Gatties as an at-large member along with Dr. Malsbary, Dental Director, Desai, Finance Director, and Persky, Health Officer, as members of the ad-hoc dental committee. Motion to approve the creation of the ad-hoc dental committee by Jones, second by Gatties.

Desai reviewed several final details, going back to the finance director's report. Three staff are currently on medical leave with several utilizing short-term disability. Marchetti asked how many staff the health department has and if all are full-time. Desai answered that there are 63 staff at this time. It's a mix of full-time and part-time staff with the majority being full-time.

Persky went on to discuss updating the employee handbook. This will be brought to the Board of Health for review once a final draft is completed. Persky also highlighted an Environmental Health work shadow experience. Administrative staff attended a restaurant inspection with Caitlin McNair and a pool - campground inspection with George Friday and Cody Davis. The experience showed the work of Environmental Health staff as they approachably talk through solutions and build relationships with the community. Kudos were also shared with Lauren Jaramillo and Holly Young for hosting employee wellness activities. Nancy Desai was highlighted as Persky shared how grateful she is to have Desai as a

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supportive person while working through such a difficult and stressful financial season. Leary also noted her appreciation for Desai's work.

Nursing and Medical Director Report

Dr. Wile highlighted the current efforts nationally to counteract chronic diseases with prevention. Tobacco and alcohol use is down with Americans which is showing more conscientious actions. Dr. Wile reminded the board and public that the health department has free Narcan kits. With students going back to school, it's important to highlight that age group's overdose risk. If you have a student going back to college, send them with a Narcan kit. Leary asked how to recognize when someone needs Narcan. Dr. Wile responded that the warning signs are incoherence, slurring, blue lips, and irregular breathing. It's best to err on the side of using it rather than not using it. The Good Samaritan Act provides legal protection to individuals who administer Narcan during an opioid overdose. Following up with emergency services after administering is necessary.

Dr. Wile encouraged the community to reach out to their Area Agency on Aging if a family member, friend, or neighbor has been diagnosed with dementia. Caregiver support, referrals, and resources for protecting those with dementia. A diagnosis can affect the whole family and extended family, so having resources is important. Arbovirus and Lyme Disease are highlighted in the board packet. A local animal was found to have West Nile Virus (WNV), so it's important to discuss Arboviruses. Leary asked how this animal was found to have WNV. Dr. Wile responded that lab testing is required, if not after death to confirm or if the animal is sick. For humans, the test is not simple. The focus is often to rule out everything with testing. Usual cases are found in adults when their condition is so severe that they are hospitalized by that point.

Dental Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

Environmental Health Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

Health Promotions Report

Updates are discussed in the written report.

For other business, Gatties advertised the upcoming opioid summit on September 25th. This is open to the community with food provided. Persky added that this can be sent out to the board and our provider list.

For public comment, Tan asked what Influenza ILI under the reportable diseases section means. Added was the note of a study looking at how healthcare workers with and without COVID vaccination have incidences of COVID infection. Dr. Wile answered that Influenza ILI stands for "Influenza Like Illnesses." Persky stated that Dr. Wile and Beeching can review the study if Tan would like to send to Persky.

Hanson is recognized for sixty years of dedicated service as he resigned from the Board of Health effective August 13, 2025. Hanson's input was always greatly appreciated. Leary and Persky thank Hanson for his historical knowledge and Environmental Health experience while on the Board of Health.

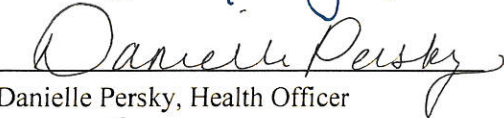
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There was no other business or public comment.

Motion to adjourn at 3:51pm by Jones, second by Marchetti. The next regular District Board of Health meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2025, at 3:00pm in the Dowagiac Community Center at 302 S Front Street, Dowagiac, MI.



Tina Leary, Board of Health Chairperson



Danielle Persky, Health Officer



Lauren Jaramillo, Board of Health Secretary