

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

January 9, 2019

Present: Lee Harrison, MD, Chair
William Youngblood, Vice Chair
Karen Hacker, MD, Secretary
Anthony Ferraro
Ellen Stewart, MD
Edith Shapira, MD
Donald Burke, MD
Caroline Mitchell (via phone)

Absent: Kotayya Kondaveeti, MD
Joylette Portlock, PhD

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was held at the Health Department office at 542 Fourth Ave. Dr. Harrison called the meeting to order and announced that an executive session was held to discuss litigation and personnel matters. Dr. Harrison thanked Allegheny County Councilmember Cindy Kirk for attending the meeting.

2. **Approval of Minutes from November 7, 2018**

Dr. Harrison asked if there were any comments or questions about the minutes. There were none.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the minutes, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Election of Officers for 2019**

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to nominate Dr. Harrison as the Chair, Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously. Dr. Harrison abstained from voting on the motion.

Action: Dr. Harrison moved to nominate Mr. Youngblood as the Vice-Chair, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Youngblood abstained from voting on the motion.

4. **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

5. **Old Business**

A. Environmental Health Programs Enforcement Update

Jim Kelly, ACHD Deputy Director for Environmental Health, provided an update to the Board on his bureau's enforcement actions. He stated that Water Pollution Control has 3 open enforcement cases, and that Solid Waste has 7 open cases. Regarding ALCOSAN, Mr. Kelly stated that ACHD is working with the PaDEP to manage a corrective action plan for each municipality within ALCOSAN's area. He stated that the consent decree with ALCOSAN is nearing finalization and is awaiting the signature of ALCOSAN's director.

The Food Program had 3,071 year-to-date complaints, has issued 34 year-to-date consumer alerts and 41 year-to-date permit suspensions and closures. Plumbing had 240 year-to-date complaints. Housing and Community Environment had 3,912 year-to-date complaints. Mr. Kelly stated that the HCE program dealt with many complaints such as mold and sewage back ups that were exacerbated by this having been the rainiest year on record.

The Air Program had 9,318 year-to-date complaints, 1,149 of which were submitted via phone or online. The remaining complaints were submitted via the SmellPgh app. Mr. Kelly provided an overview of the Air Program's open enforcement actions. Such enforcement actions include a \$1.4 million dollar fine of the old Westinghouse facility, the fine is under appeal; the case of US Steel's Edgar Thomson Works is in court, and has been sent by the EPA to the Department of Justice; the case of US Steel's Clairton Works has had a plan approved that requires the demonstration of two consecutive quarters of improvement, the briefs are due to the hearing officer in January, and the second quarter penalties have been appealed; a final enforcement order has been drafted for the case of MRIE, which is a fracking sand transfer station, Mr. Kelly stated that this facility has been pro-active; drones with thermal cameras are being used to track the underground fire at Pittsburgh Glass Works; and that the Harsco slag facility is considering significant changes to completely enclose their slag piles to prevent lime dust from going into neighborhoods.

Mr. Kelly informed the Board that a fire occurred at US Steel's Clairton Works on December 24th. The fire damaged the #2 and #5 control rooms, and that US Steel's ability to remove sulfur from the gas streams has been affected as a result. Mr. Kelly stated that six exceedances have occurred since the fire. Since the fire happened, US Steel has extended coking times and used more natural gas. Mr. Kelly also informed the Board that ACHD issued a public health notice this morning regarding this issue. He stated that ACHD is working with US Steel regarding this issue. Mr. Youngblood asked if US Steel was cooperating with ACHD, Mr. Kelly stated that they were. Mr. Youngblood asked if it would be a good time for the Board to visit US

Steel. Mr. Kelly responded that right now would not be the best time, as they have all hands on deck responding to this issue. Dr. Hacker stated that the Board's request for a visit to US Steel was well taken and that a date for such a visit should be requested in the future. Ms. Mitchell asked if there is an anticipated date for fixes to be completed. Mr. Kelly and Dr. Hacker stated that the damage was still being evaluated, repairs are continuously ongoing, and there is not yet an estimate for a completion date. Mr. Youngblood asked what caused the fire. Mr. Kelly stated that was not yet certain. Mr. Ferraro asked if US Steel's cooperation was satisfactory. Mr. Kelly stated that it was, and that communication has been open.

At this time, Dr. Harrison thanked Allegheny County Councilmember Sue Means for attending the meeting.

B. Request for Expansion of Prevention Point Pittsburgh

Aaron Arnold, the Executive Director of Prevention Point Pittsburgh, stated that the Board previously approved Prevention Point's expansion to the Spencer United Methodist Church in Carrick. However, neighbors of the Church were concerned. Mr. Arnold stated that Prevention Point worked with stakeholders to find another site at the Fairhaven United Methodist Church in Overbrook.

Dr. Harrison asked Michael Parker, ACHD Solicitor, if all ducks were in a row regarding this request. Mr. Parker stated that they were. Dr. Hacker thanked Mr. Arnold.

Action: Dr. Burke moved to approve Prevention Point Pittsburgh's expansion, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. New Business

A. Announcement of new Deputy Director

Dr. Hacker informed the Board that Abby Wilson had departed ACHD and stated that Abby had been very helpful. Dr. Hacker introduced ACHD's new Deputy Director for Public Policy & Community Relations, Otis Pitts. Dr. Hacker stated that Otis had received his JD from Illinois and his MPH from Yale. Otis also has environmental health experience, having previously served as Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Health for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

B. Annual Report of 2018 Activities and the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny's Annual Report

Dr. Hacker gave a presentation to the Board regarding these two topics. Dr. Hacker reminded the Board that the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny is comprised of five priority areas: access to care, chronic disease health risk behaviors, environment, maternal & child health, and mental health & substance use disorders.

Regarding access, the rates of uninsured County residents decreased from 6% in 2015 to 5% in 2016, the PHA Dental Task Force began to focus on reducing emergency room utilization for dental care, and four municipalities have passed complete streets resolutions. Dr. Hacker noted that such resolutions are an example of Health In All Policies.

Regarding chronic disease health risk behaviors, the Live Well Allegheny campaign had 12 new communities join (for a total of 62), 3 new school districts (for a total of 16), 11 new employers (for a total of 27), and 6 new restaurants (for a total of 42); ACHD worked with Grow Pittsburgh to implement community gardens in low income/low access neighborhoods and with Just Harvest to expand SNAP transactions at farmers' markets; a downward trend continues regarding the percentage of mothers who smoke while pregnant; and ACHD is assessing tobacco sales within Allegheny County, Dr. Hacker noted that there are more than 400 establishments within the County that are exempt from the Clean Indoor Air Act.

Regarding the environment, Allegheny County was declared in attainment of ozone standards; there has been a continuous downward trend of PM2.5 at all monitors except the Liberty monitor; a major enforcement action was taken against US Steel's Clairton Coke Works; ACHD received a grant to develop a climate change action report; and ACHD's SO2 SIP was approved by the EPA.

Regarding maternal & child health, ACHD received funding to launch an Asthma Task Force; Healthy Start opened its Center for Urban Breastfeeding to provide lactation support to new moms with the intent to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates; and Dr. Hacker stated that although there is a downward trend overall regarding infant mortality, the racial disparity gap is not closing on this topic.

Regarding mental health & substance use disorders, ACHD continues to engage in qualitative data collection; has distributed more than 16,800 doses of Naloxone; has noted a decrease in emergency department visits for overdoses; and noted that 108 police departments in Allegheny County carry Naloxone as of September 2018.

Regarding next steps for the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny, Dr. Hacker stated that the workgroups will continue, and will embark on the next Community Health Assessment in 2019.

Dr. Hacker then gave the Board updates about each of the Bureau's accomplishments in 2018. The Bureau of Assessment, Statistic, and Epidemiology has been monitoring the impact of the universal blood testing regulation, which is on track to have over 21,000 children tested in 2018; and released the first annual Childhood Lead Report. BASE also completed the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey at Pittsburgh Public Schools, published a ten-year summary of reportable diseases, and published a report of animal bites in 2017.

The Bureau of Community Health Promotion & Disease Prevention held an infant mortality summit, provided lead blood testing at two WIC sits and at the immunization clinic, the

STD clinic continues to offer free rapid Hep C screening, and the Bureau also provided more than 4,000 home visits to mothers in Allegheny County.

The Bureau of Environmental Health revised its civil penalty policy, conducted 104 in-home lead investigations for 108 children, implemented online plumbing permits, completed 12,073 food inspections, and the Title V permit backlog continued to decrease from 46% in 2017 to 31% in 2018.

The Bureau of Public Policy & Community Relations provided Naloxone to 121 organizations, trained 2,972 people in overdose detection and naloxone rescue, and documented 281 saves; revised and passed new swimming pool regulations; merged ACHD's website with Allegheny County's website for greater consistency; created a separate ACHD Facebook account to allow for greater opportunities to communicate directly with the public; and awarded five grants for opioid overdose interventions in the hardest hit communities.

The Public Health Laboratory implemented a new test for detecting measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella-zoster virus antibodies; implemented a new syphilis testing platform with a decreased turnaround time; implemented blood lead point-of-care testing services at two WIC sites; and established communications with State and Federal officials for becoming a Laboratory Response Network B Reference Laboratory.

The Bureau of Administration implemented OnBase software for travel expenses and contracts to increase efficiency within ACHD; implemented a data base tool to house all fixed assets and IT hardware; and completed the installation of the EPIC electronic medical records system in all three of ACHD's clinics, which eliminated paper-based processes.

Dr Hacker ended her presentation by providing some details about the more than \$3 million worth of grants that ACHD received in 2018. Dr. Harrison asked if there were any questions. There were none.

C. Environmental Health Fund Request: Lead-Based Paint Risk Assessor Refresher Course: \$4,500

Jim Kelly stated that this request was for \$1,200, not for \$4,500. This request is to fund three staff from the HCE program to take the lead based paint risk assessor refresher course in order to maintain their certification.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the EHF request for \$1,200, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Environmental Health Fund Request: X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) Machine: \$7,500

Mr. Kelly stated that this request was for maintenance of the XRF machine, which is used to detect lead in paint.

Action: Mr. Ferraro moved to approve the EHF request for \$7,500, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Clean Air Fund & Environmental Health Fund Request: Contract Position to Manage the Clean Air & Environmental Health Funds

Jim Kelly stated that this request was for \$24,765 from the Clean Air Fund and \$8,255 from the Environmental Health Fund to hire a part-time administrator for both funds. The administrator will assist with various administrative and process improvement goals around the RFP and grant award processes.

Dr. Harrison asked if someone could be found to work half-time in this position. Mr. Kelly stated that they could be.

Action: Dr. Stewart moved to combined CAF and EHF request, Mr. Youngblood seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

F. Request for Final Approval, re: New Source Review

Mr. Kelly stated that this is a requirement of the Clean Air Act, and is required by the SIP. He noted that ACHD doesn't have much choice in this.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to grant final approval for the new source review, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion

Motion passed unanimously.

G. Announcement of Clean Air Fund Awardees

Jayne Graham, ACHD's Air Quality Program Manager, announced the recipients of awards from the Clean Air Fund. Awardees included Etna Borough and Tree Pittsburgh, to buy trees; the Southwestern Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership, to continue their lawn mower and equipment exchange program; the Group Against Smog and Pollution, to expand education activities; Duquesne University, to engaged in community education focused in Clairton; and Pittsburgh Bike Share, for education events, conducting research into bike use, and using an electric tricycle to service their stations.

7. Director's Report

Dr. Hacker had nothing additional to report.

8. Announcements

There were no announcements.

9. **Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

A. Thaddeus Popovich, re: MRIE

Mr. Popovich stated that he is a resident of Franklin Park and a co-founder of Allegheny County Clean Air Now. He commended ACHD for overseeing US Steel. He stated that ACHD needs to take more sand and silica samples from MRIE.

B. Angelo Taranto, re: Metalico

Mr. Taranto stated that Metalico is a recycler located on Neville Island. He stated that although he was encouraged regarding November 2018's enforcement order, he is requesting a meeting with ACHD to discuss how the civil penalty will be applied to Metalico. He stated that Metalico shouldn't be allowed to pay fines and continue to pollute.

C. Mark Dixon, re: Air Quality Complaints

Mr. Dixon reminded the Board that more than 11,000 air quality complaints submitted through Smell Pittsburgh are printed on his scroll. He stated that 8,163 complaints from 2018 had a rating between two and five, on a one-to-five scale. He stated that December had 916 complaints that had a rating of at least 2. He stated that this was the fourth-worst month in the history of the app. He stated that he is eager to see a change in the number of smell complaints and not just regulatory busyness.

D. Mary Amoroso, re: Excessive Smoke from Burning

Ms. Amoroso stated that she was in a dispute with her neighbor regarding smoke from burning. She stated that smoke from her neighbor's burning fills her barn. She asked for assistance from the Board and stated that she can not wait for months for a solution.

E. Chie Togami, re: Poor Air Quality

Ms. Togami was not present to offer comment.

F. Rachel Filippini, re: Air Quality

Ms. Filippini stated that she was the Executive Director of the Group Against Smog and Pollution. She stated that the Liberty Monitor is not showing improvement and noted that it already had three exceedances in the first eight days of 2019. She asked why it took ACHD more than two weeks to warn the public after the fire at Clairton. She urged ACHD to continue strong enforcement actions and to move forward on new coke oven regulations.

G. Jeffrey Nobers, re: US Steel Mon Valley Works

Mr. Nobers stated that he was the Executive Director of the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania. He stated that the Guild is a labor and management organization that promotes quality construction and the responsible growth of the region. He stated the Guild's 44,000 members all live in Western Pennsylvania and care about our shared environment. He stated that US Steel has offered steady employment for the region and asked ACHD not to discount

economic impacts. He stated that idling could jeopardize the entire Mon Valley Works and asked ACHD to work cooperatively with US Steel.

H. Nancy Robinson, re: Air Quality

Ms. Robinson was not present to offer comment.

I. Terri Supowitz, re: Air Quality

Ms. Supowitz stated that she was a resident of Wilkinsburg. She read from Mr. Dixon's printed scroll of Smell Pittsburgh complaints.

J. Don Furko, re: Importance of Clairton Works in the Mon Valley

Mr. Furko stated that he was the President of United Steel Workers local 1557 and that he is commenting on behalf of the local's members. He stated that there are 3,000 union employees in the Mon Valley Works, and that each job there supports three to five other jobs. He stated that safety and environmental stewardship are the two most important values for the local. He stated that ACHD's enforcement order concerns him, as it could idle the batteries. If the batteries are idled, it will likely result in layoffs. He urged ACHD to work cooperatively with US Steel to find the right balance to protect the environment and jobs.

K. Tom McIntyre, re: US Steel Mon Valley Works

Mr. McIntyre stated that he is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Pittsburgh Building & Construction Trades Council. He stated that Clairton is critical to the future of the Mon Valley Works. He stated that the union members take great pride in the quality of their work and have good, steady jobs. He said that everyone lives here and shares the same environment and that everyone wants an environmentally-friendly and sustainable economy. He stated that US Steel has invested millions of dollars to improve the environment and he asked ACHD to work cooperatively with US Steel to find a balance.

L. Alison Fujito, re: Vaccine Safety Issues

Ms. Fujito spoke about autism and vaccines in the context of mitochondrial dysfunction. She cited a Dr. Andrew Zimmerman, a pediatric neurologist. Dr. Zimmerman wrote that in a subset of children with mitochondrial dysfunction, vaccine induced fever and immune stimulation that exceeded metabolic energy reserves could cause regressive encephalopathy with features of autism spectrum disorder. Ms. Fujito stated that screening should be offered for mitochondrial dysfunction before vaccination.

M. Jenna Date, re: Air Quality for Pittsburgh Residents

Ms. Date stated that she has lived in Pittsburgh since 1994 and has lived in Lawrenceville for the past seven years. She stated that she is grateful for fence-line monitoring and for the promised epidemiological study. She stated that the health of residents is at risk and asked why industry takes precedent over ACHD's stated mission.

N. Debra Smit, re: Air Quality Complaints

Ms. Smit stated that she is with the Breathe Project. She asked ACHD to explain the lag in reporting the fire at Clairton to the public. She asked what ACHD is doing to protect residents. She asked if the hospitals were put on notice. She stated that the issue is clean air, not the economy.

10. **Adjournment**

Dr. Shapira moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Youngblood seconded the adjournment.