

February 10, 2023

The Benton County Board of Supervisors met in special session at 10:00 a.m. at the Virginia Gay Hospital Conference Room in Vinton. Supervisor Seeman called the meeting to order along with Supervisor's Primmer and Bierschenk present. This is a joint meeting with the Benton County Public Board of Health along with Virginia Gay Hospital CEO Michele Schoonover and Katie Cox, Director of Public Health.

After both Boards called the meeting to order, and Dr. Mangold, Chairman of the Board of Health giving a quick overview of the reason for today's meeting, it was turned over to Becky Nowachek with Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Nowachek provided a handout and discussed what is public health and what do they do. Also touching on what roles and responsibilities the local boards of health have pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 137.104. A large part of public health is promoting health care equity, quality and accessibility. It is a partnership of local public health, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, non-profit organizations, health care providers, policymakers, businesses and many others working together to protect and improve the overall health of Iowans. Discussion regarding the areas of work activities along with population and non-population status and where home-health fits in place.

Currently Benton County is currently active in a 3-way contract drafted in 1994 between Benton County Board of Supervisors, The Board of Public Health and Virginia Gay Hospital. County Attorney Ray Lough was also in attendance and was involved with the current document and will also help us make changes in drafting a future contract. Lough stated that at that time this merger was drafted, the county was very fortunate to have Virginia Gay Hospital (VGH) step up and assist providing public health needs. Katie Cox acts as the liaison between the county and the hospital. The funding comes from Benton County tax dollars and grants from the state. It is also worth noting that VGH has had to absorb some of the shortfalls therein. The concept from back then is substantially different than the current needs of today along with the constant fiscal year requirement changes.

Maggie Mangold mentioned how they have been trying to address the changing needs and possible revised contract in the past, but made no progress. The purpose of today's meeting was to educate everyone on the public health needs and to find out if all three parties are still on board. Mangold felt the Board of Health wants to be more engaged when it comes to the budgeting portion and prioritizing the public health needs. This may be something we need to model after a state contract and hold yearly reviews and tweak accordingly. Other topics discussed ranged from immunizations, school audits, activities that are billable and non-billable along with the record number of suicides and mental health illnesses the county has seen. This would be something they would like to potentially work on getting a project set up for.

All parties agreed the meeting was educational without a doubt. The public health professionals work to keep things from happening or recurring through implementing education programs, recommending policies, administering services and conducting research. There was no action taken today and will continue status as is for the FY 24 Budget but this was the first step taken towards possible changes to be made for FY 25.

**Primmer moved/Bierschenk seconded:** To adjourn. Motion carried.

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Tracy Seeman, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor