



Benton County Board of Health Minutes

Friday, December 12th, 2025

7:00am – 8:00am

**Benton County Service Center - Conference Room
811 D Ave. Vinton, IA 52349**

BOH Members Present: Tai Burkhart, Lori Mott, Jean Ohlen, Karl Holmes

BOS Members Present: Ron Tippet

Staff Present: Barbara Fetzer, Matt Even, Andrea Morris, Grace Schmidt & Monica Cox

Guests Present: Brent Flickinger, BCPH preceptor; Mary McFetridge, AmeriCorps Member & BCPH Student Intern; Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor

Meeting called to order:

- Chair Burkhart called the meeting to order at 7:01 AM.

Approval of Agenda:

- Motion by Mott to approve agenda, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

- Motion by Ohlen to approve minutes, seconded by Mott, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Environmental Health Report

- The Environmental Health team shared updates with the Board of Health, including Even & Morris attending the IHHS Environmental Health Quarterly Webinar, new updates and information being added to the county website, sharing the Get the Lead Out Program with stakeholders, and brainstorming ways to promote the Private Well Grant Program. Morris has completed the NOWRA A-Z course. The department also shared an activity summary with monthly and year-to-date figures.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on November 2025 Expense Report

- Motion by Mott to approve the November 2025 Expense Report, seconded by Holmes, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on November 2025 Revenue Report

- Motion by Ohlen to approve the November 2025 Expense Report, seconded by Mott, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on Delegation of Signatory Authority

- Chair Burkhart signed the Delegation of Signatory Authority form for Andrea Morris of the Benton County Environmental Health Department, delegating her to review and execute contracts on the Board of Health's behalf.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on amendments to Private Well Grants Program Policy

- The Board & EH discussed proposed amendments to the Private Well Grant Program policy. The primary change involves allowing reimbursement to property owners for cistern plugging, provided the work is completed by a certified contractor or conducted under the supervision of a qualified Environmental Health staff member. Motion by Mott to approve updates to the Private Well Grants Program Policy, seconded by Holmes, motion passed unanimously

Environmental Health – Discuss promotion of the Private Well Grants program

- There was a discussion on strategies to improve promotion of the Private Well Grant Program in Benton County. Morris met with Greg Walston from ISU Extension to brainstorm outreach ideas, including participating in the Extension's booth at the Benton County Fair to distribute program information. Morris will also attend a locally held pesticide applicator training in coordination with ISU Extension staff, and will take a few minutes to present information about the PWG program. It was also discussed the idea of sending out postcards using grant funds to well owners in the county.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on FY2027 budget request

- There was discussion on the budget related to increased spending authority in response to increased grant funding, and strategies for maximizing the use of available grant resources. The total grant funding is \$45,000. The department is considering the

purchase of hand tools and equipment, updated footwear in accordance with revised county policy, and publications to promote the Private Well Grant (PWG) Program. New line items relate to cistern plugging and well assessments. Health insurance rates are still pending, and the department is awaiting further information from Assured Partners. Motion by Mott to approve the Benton County Environmental Health Department's FY27 Budget Request, pending minor adjustments, adjusting for the proposed 0% salary increase based on information from the Board of Supervisors, and based on recommendations from the Auditor's office; seconded by Holmes, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health - Public Health Report

- Schmidt presented the December PH report. During this reporting period, the department carried out a broad range of public health preparedness, response, education, and administrative activities. Public Health Emergency Preparedness efforts included leading Stop the Bleed trainings and distributing kits at local libraries, delivering and training staff on AED use and maintenance, and attending regional preparedness planning workshops. Immunization work focused on completing licensed childcare audits, participating in state and federal immunization webinars and coalition meetings, and coordinating with Linn County Public Health to support increased vaccination referrals affecting Benton County residents. Staff also engaged in disease investigation and monitoring, attended Iowa HHS trainings on Legionella and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and continued monitoring of a latent TB patient.
- Additional efforts included ongoing professional development and mentorship, community education initiatives such as SafeSitter training and student engagement, strengthening partnerships through suicide prevention and behavioral health collaboration, finalizing the Benton County Resource Directory, and participating in county safety, wellness, and administrative meetings to support staff well-being and organizational operations.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on November 2025 Expense Report

- Motion by Mott to approve the November 2025 Expense Report, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on November 2025 Revenue Report

- Motion by Ohlen to approve the November 2025 Revenue Report, seconded by Mott, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on FY2027 budget request

- Schmidt presented the FY27 budget request. Wage data for Schmidt & Cox was supported by data from the 2024 Local Public Health Wage Survey and referenced alongside ISAC Wage Survey information. No significant changes are anticipated for most line items, though a couple line item titles will be updated to better reflect current grant names and purposes. No major changes in expected grant funding levels are anticipated at this time. The office equipment line item was reduced, based on spending trends from previous years. Health insurance rates remain pending, and the department is awaiting additional information from Assured Partners.
- The Board also discussed approaches to clearly delineate the use of grant funds—particularly those related to time and salary reimbursement—while ensuring the budget presentation does not appear artificially inflated. Motion by Mott to approve the Benton County Environmental Health Department's FY27 Budget Request, pending minor adjustments, adjusting for the proposed 0% salary increase based on information from the Board of Supervisors, and based on recommendations from the Auditor's office; seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Opioid Dollars for Benton County Iowa – Jean Ohlen

- Ohlen stated that she is on the Opioid Taskforce for Benton County, and has a few ideas in relation to how funds could be spent. Ohlen broached the idea of Schmidt speaking at a potential event that talks about awareness of opioid use issues in Benton County.

Public Comment

- No public comments.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Mott to adjourn, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 AM.

Next Meeting:

Friday, January 9th, 2026

7:00am – 8:00am

Benton County Service Center - Conference Room

811 D Ave. Vinton, IA 52349