



Benton County Board of Health Minutes - AMENDED

Friday, January 9th, 2026

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, Tracy Bruns

BOS Members Present: Ron Tippet

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

Guests Present: Sarah Berndt, Iowa PCA; Jim Stephenson, Iowa PCA; Mary McFetridge, BCPH Student Intern & AmeriCorps Member; Diana Strahan, HACAP; Ally Emerson-Brown, ASAC; Jane Larkin, Iowa HHS

Meeting called to order:

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

Introductions:

- Introductions were made by all individuals present, including Board of Health members, Board of Supervisors member, BCPH staff, BCEH staff, and guests.

Elect Chair & Vice Chair of the Benton County Board of Health

- For the role of Benton County Board of Health Chair, the floor was opened for nominations. Tai Burkhart and Lori Mott were nominated; there being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. A roll call vote was conducted, with Jean Ohlen voting for Tai Burkhart, Tracy Bruns voting for Tai Burkhart, Lori Mott voting for Tai Burkhart, and Tai Burkhart voting for Lori Mott; Tai Burkhart received three votes, and was elected the Benton County Board of Health Chair.

- For the role of Benton County Board of Health Vice-Chair, the floor was opened for nominations. Lori Mott was nominated; there being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Motion by Chair Burkhart to elect Lori Mott as the Benton County Board of Health Vice-Chair, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and/or act on 2025 2026 meeting schedule

- The Board discussed the proposed 2025 2026 meeting schedule of the 2nd Friday of every month at 7:00am, this schedule will remain in place tentatively, pending the availability of a 5th Board of Health member. This item will be placed on next month's agenda as well, in case further discussion is needed.

Complete conflict-of-interest statement

- Board of Health members who were present in-person submitted their signed Conflict of Interest Statement for 2026, and those who were in attendance online were instructed to email or fax theirs in to be documented.

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 – Discuss Private Well Grant Allocation

- There are plans for BCEH to do advertisement of services using these funds, and staff have met with Iowa HHS to learn more about how allocation and reallocation may look in the future for Benton County.

Environmental Health – Environmental Health Report

- Staff presented their report, including activities such as finalizing septic system and time of transfer documentation, and scanning old files into the computer. Morris also promoted the Private Well Grant Program at a pesticide applicator class recently held in Benton County. Continuing education work has also been completed. There were 6 animal bite reports received in December.

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

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

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

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

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on policy for the investigation of human exposure to rabies

- BCEH collaborated with Black Hawk County to review their policies, with the goal of maintaining consistency and streamlining documentation for the department. Coordination also occurred with the Vinton Police Department to ensure the policy aligns with law enforcement processing and response, will be reaching out to the Belle Plaine Police Department. A motion was made by Ohlen to approve the updated policy for the investigation of human exposure to rabies, seconded by Bruns. The motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Acknowledgement of the retirement of Barbara Fetzer after 40+ years of service to Benton County

- The Benton County Board of Health acknowledged the retirement of Barbara Fetzer after 40+ years of service to Benton County. Members and staff present thanked her for all her hard work. January 23rd, 2026 is planned to be her final day of work.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on designation of signatory authority

- Schmidt & Chair Burkhardt signed the Delegation of Signatory Authority Form for 2026; this will be submitted to Iowa HHS through Iowa Grants.

Public Health – Public Health Report

- Schmidt shared the department's Public Health Report, including updates on activities for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant, the Local Public Health Services Grant, continuing education opportunities. There has been a variety of work done with local partners & stakeholders, including local libraries and community coalitions. Cox has completed a variety of disease investigations.

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

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

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

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

Area Substance Abuse Council (ASAC): Brief Behavioral Health Update – Ally Emerson-Brown

- Ally, a Prevention Specialist with ASAC, provided a presentation on the alignment of Iowa's Behavioral Health system. She reviewed the concept of behavioral health, and discussed the future direction of Iowa's prevention services, noting that the system alignment was designed to consolidate & streamline mental health and substance use services statewide. She explained that system navigation is a free support service designed to help individuals and communities better understand and access these behavioral health & substance use resources. The presentation included an overview of Iowa's 7 new districts, with Benton County identified as part of District 6. Ally also shared current youth trends observed in Benton County, including increased anxiety and depression, vaping, and social isolation. She emphasized that prevention efforts are most effective when the entire community is actively involved.

Iowa Primary Care Association: Behavioral Health System and System Navigation - Sarah Berndt & Jim Stephenson

- Iowa PCA staff have been traveling throughout District 6 to share the information and presentation presented at today's meeting. Sarah Berndt serves as the District 6 District Leader; Unity Stevens is the System Navigation Standards Manager; Jim Stephenson is the Senior Lead System Navigator; and Michelle Dunn is a System Navigator. The team reiterated, as noted in the previous presentation, that this alignment was designed to ensure all Iowans can access the help they need, regardless of where they live. The Iowa Primary Care Association now serves as the statewide Administrative Service Organization (ASO), supporting Iowa HHS in its goal of reducing administrative burden for behavioral health services. System Navigators assist individuals and families in navigating a complex system and provide application assistance and warm handoffs between services; however, they do not provide treatment, medication, counseling, or crisis intervention. Iowa PCA also partners with Your Life Iowa and develops comprehensive resources and training. Jane Larkin is a Community Health Consultant with Iowa HHS and reviewed the District 6 Advisory Council.

Public Comment

- No public comments.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Mott to adjourn, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:33 AM.

Next Meeting:

Friday, February 13th, 2026

7:00am – 8:00am

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