



Benton County Board of Health Minutes

Friday, April 10th, 2026

7:00am – 8:00am

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

BOH Members Present: Tai Burkhardt, Jean Ohlen, Tracy Bruns, Lori Mott

BOS Members Present: N/A

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

Guests Present: Mary McFetridge, BCPH Student Intern & Americorps Member

Meeting called to order:

- Chair Burkhardt called the meeting to order at 07:01 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 after amending next meeting information, seconded by Bruns, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Environmental Health Report

- Staff presented their report, including activities such as private well testing, time of transfer reviews, septic system pre and post construction inspection, private well plugging, commercial pump truck inspections. Morris and Even attended continued education classes and the DNR County Sanitarian Region 1 Workshop. Morris provided a summary of the Morgan Valley Power Plant that is proposed to be located at the Benton/Linn County border. The location of the power plant meets Linn County's

setback distance from incorporated cities within Linn County but does not meet setback distances from incorporated cities in Benton County. Staff presented the PWG expense summary and informed the board that there is enough anticipated work to spend the remainder of the grant funds. There is also a waitlist for the next grant fiscal year that starts July 1st. When Benton County residents call to ask for a water test, they are given the option to be added to the wait list or to pay the fee associated with a water test.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on March 2026 Expense Report

- Motion by Bruns to approve the March 2026 Expense Report, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on March 2026 Revenue Report

- Motion by Bruns to approve the March 2026 Expense Report, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on service agreement with Schneider Geospatial LLC for geopermits

- Morris reported that the Schneider Geospatial permit was approved by the Board of Supervisors and the agreement has been signed. The agreement is unchanged from what was presented at previous meetings, aside from the addition of signatures from both parties.

Environmental Health – Discuss and/or act on hiring part-time Seasonal Environmental Health and Land Use Assistant

- Morris reported that the department recently conducted interviews for the open position, and the selected applicant is Martha Fey, who holds a bachelor's degree in Sustainability Science from the University of Iowa and has experience with GIS. Morris added that the hiring was approved by the Board of Supervisors and that the salary will be funded through savings from Fetzer's retirement.
- Motion by Mott to approve hiring Martha Fey for the position of Seasonal Environmental Health and Land Use Assistant, seconded by Bruns, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health - Public Health Report

- Staff presented the report and provided updates on recent trainings, including the Public Health Conference of Iowa. They noted an issue with the touch screen on the refrigerator used to store immunizations; although the data logger showed that temperatures remained within the safe range, staff were not comfortable leaving supplies in the unit. The backup refrigerator in EMA, located behind a locked door, was operational and allowed for a smooth transition. Schmidt had a technician assess the equipment; repair costs will be covered using grant funds.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on March 2026 Expense Report

- Motion by Mott to approve the March 2026 Expense Report, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health - Discuss and/or act on March 2026 Revenue Report

- Motion by Bruns to approve the March 2026 Expense Report, seconded by Ohlen, motion passed unanimously.

Public Health – Discuss and/or act on results of Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) virtual stakeholder meeting

- Schmidt reported on the CHN stakeholder meeting, noting strong participation and valuable feedback. A stakeholder group of approximately 10–11 individuals has been formed; next steps are to coordinate meetings with community stakeholders throughout the summer. The group includes representatives from various communities and health care backgrounds. Data collection has begun, and Schmidt is utilizing 2023–2024 data points to help guide the upcoming discussions. Schmidt is also researching survey tools to identify an option that is both user-friendly and effective for data analysis. Ohlen asked whether the current participants provide good geographic representation of the county, particularly southern and northwest Benton County. Schmidt noted that no individuals from the Belle Plaine area responded to the invitations but emphasized that the group does include people from diverse backgrounds and that meetings will be structured to allow stakeholders to participate as they are able.

Public Health – Discuss planning for leave and staffing measures

- Schmidt reported that she contacted Scott, regional epidemiologist, who indicated there should be no issue covering Benton County during the director’s absence. Scott

requested that the department reconnect mid-summer. Schmidt also consulted with Rippel, the County Auditor, who confirmed that credit card and invoicing responsibilities can be transferred to Cox during the director's leave. Rippel additionally recommended that Schmidt appear before the Board of Supervisors to provide an update on the extended absence plan.

- The Board discussed meeting frequency during the director's absence. Chair Burkhart and Public Health Director Schmidt will both be unavailable on May 8. Because the code requires a minimum of six meetings per year, Chair Burkhart suggested canceling the May meeting unless urgent topics arise. As neither Public Health nor Environmental Health currently have pressing issues, BOH members agreed to cancel the May meeting and hold the next meeting in June.

Public Comment

- No public comments

Adjournment:

- Motion by Mott to adjourn, seconded by Bruns, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 07:33

Next Meeting:

Friday, June 12th, 2026

7:00am – 8:00am

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