

Chautauqua County Board of Health
MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: Monday, November 28, 2022 6:00 p.m.
Location: GOB, Room 331, 3 North Erie Street, Mayville, NY 14757
Scribe: Sherri Rater

ATTENDANCE:

BOH Members	P/A	BOH Members	P/A	Others Present	Title
Dr. Erlandson	P	Dr. Ney	P	Christine Schuyler	Public Health Director; Board of Health Secretary
Dr. Khan	E	Elisabeth Rankin	E	Dr. Berke	County Physician, HHS
Dr. Kidder	P	Mark Tarbrake	P	Jessica Wuerstle	Director of Environmental Health
Dr. McConnon	E	Nancy Rosario	A	Sherri Rater	Scribe
				Gregory Bacon	Jamestown Post Journal
				Todd Crandall	Silver Creek Central School Superintendent
				John O'Connor	Forestville Central School Superintendent
				James Pawlack	Medical Student

Call to order	The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by President Lillian Ney.
Privilege of the Floor	<p><u>Todd Crandall</u> , Superintendent of Silver Creek Central School and the President of the Far West Council of Superintendent that meets monthly to discuss issues, current trends in education and really to give one voice for Chautauqua County through Albany and the rest of New York. I brought with me John O'Connor.</p> <p><u>John O'Connor</u>, Superintendent of Forestville Central School and prior Assistant Superintendent for Management Services at BOCES and as part of our role at BOCES, especially during the pandemic was to try to make sense of the things coming down the pipe and so I worked very closely with Christine doing that.</p> <p><u>Crandall:</u> During the pandemic the partnership with the CCDOH under the guidance a Christine and the leadership of Christine was invaluable for schools to be educated to stay open. As the guidance and the regulations from the NYSDOH changed frequently and at a moment's notice we came to learn that quite frequently that was Fridays and it would lead over into our weekend so that we could be open Monday and Tuesday. I am certain Christine remembers all of these stories and phone calls. Christine and her team truly were always there to help us interpret and assist with implementations of new practices. It's not an exaggeration to talk about texting, talking via cell phone, frequent emails and quite frequently they ended in Zoom calls not only with a couple of us Superintendents but at times with all of the Superintendents in Chautauqua County. There</p>

<p>Privilege of the Floor cont.</p>	<p>weren't always clear answers, but we worked and we haggled and sometimes disagreed and a few times arm wrestled via Zoom and that's complicated to do as you all know but, I'm having a little bit of fun, we really worked together and there's times that we would talk again the next day to rethink our decision. We know the information from the NYSDOH and I'm not casting stones – we were all in uncharted territory-but there was a lot of ambiguous information and a lot of room for interpretation, things like social distancing, quarantining, masking, dashboards and what does all this mean. Christine and her team were able to provide common sense solutions at a time when we were working to follow regulations and truly allowed us to keep our schools open at the local level.</p> <p><u>O'Connor</u>: Todd and I were going through this we were thinking we could come up with a million examples but just a couple of quick ones that really had a large impact on our communities. One was the test to stay legislation that was for individuals who did not submit proof of vaccination were required to test weekly and Christine did most of the work setting this up for our schools so it allowed our employees to be able to test onsite. We were very concerned if we didn't have these kinds of things that we wouldn't be able to open schools and have our kids there. Christine was just as focused on having our kids in person as we were so that was helpful. Also with athletics, which I wasn't involved with at the time because I was at BOCES, there was a test to play option and one of the things we know that gets kids into school is band and sports and those things and she helped us with an avenue to be able to get kids tested so they could participate in sports much sooner than a lot of schools did in other counties quite frankly. As part of BOCES I had to work with the Erie County people and the Chautauqua County people and the solution focus that Christine had were just top so. Not only solution focused but collaborative, knowledgeable in all issues regarding everything not just the pandemic but we worked together for many many years. On behalf of the superintendents of Chautauqua County we want to thank you Christine and on behalf of our children our faculty and staff and community we certainly wish you the best of luck and do not be a stranger. We couldn't have done it without you and your team.</p>
<p>Commendations for Christine Schuyler</p>	<p><u>Dr. Ney</u>: This past thanksgiving, just a few days ago, many of us took time to reflect on what we are thankful for. Those of us on the Board of Health can definitely say that we are grateful for the outstanding work of our Director, Christine Schuyler. Many individuals and organizations in Chautauqua County have relied on Christine's professionalism and support during her 14 years as Director of Health and Human Services. In particular, many have said she was an invaluable and amazing help during the pandemic crisis. Many were surprised and saddened by the news of her departure. It is sad for all of us. We will miss her leadership and her strategic understanding of the relationship between health and its social determinants. That is why combining the departments of public health and social services, which she worked very hard to successfully lead, and which specifically targets the social determinants of health, was a needed and important component of her work. There are many aspects of Christine's and the department's work that are ongoing today that many may not be aware of nor are they aware of their importance. We hope these initiatives will continue. Christine will definitely be missed. However, she will no doubt find a way to continue to help in the many ways that we know she has the capacity, talent and experience for. We thank her for her total commitment to her work, to her Department and to the people of Chautauqua County. We sincerely thank her for the many accomplishments she achieved during the years in her appointed county position. She can be very proud of her work as the Director of Health and Human Services. Wherever she goes, and whatever she does, she will carry on beautifully. We wish her every happiness, health and success. We and many others will miss her.</p>

Commendations for
Christine Schuyler
cont'd

Comments from Dr. Khan read by Dr. Ney: I would like to express my gratitude for Christine's leadership and guidance over the years in matters related to pediatric community health. She is a true leader in the field of public health. I will miss working with her on behalf of children and families in Chautauqua County. I wish her the absolute best in her future endeavors.

Comments from Elisabeth Rankin read by Sherri Rater: Like everyone else I can't say enough to thank Christine for her hard work and leadership during COVID. Handled with grace and calm and always a smile for us. I also want to acknowledge how she didn't just want after the fact solutions but stressed prevention and education. Thanks for everything Christine.

Dr. Berke: I was sitting in that chair and Greg Edwards, at the time asked me if I had any suggestions as to who could fill this roll. I had known Christine for a very long time and I suggested her. After County Executive Edwards met with Christine, he came to me and said 'there's no question that she is the one for the job'. You've lived up to and exceeded expectations and it makes me very happy knowing that the Department I have loved for many years was in such great hands. It was wonderful watching you weave your way and make it grow. Thank you.

Mark Tarbrake: It has been an honor and privilege to be associated with Christine and I have kind of a different viewpoint as a former legislator. We worked on a lot of legislation and if it wasn't for Christine we would have never got it through. She was always organized, always had her ducks in a row and she had a phenomenal team and she always brought with her. I remember one funny story when we were working through the budget, your team came dressed up and that was kind of funny. But I can't thank you enough for the support you always gave me. I was a newbie at the chairman of human services and you helped me out so much. I will leave you with this one story: County Executive Edwards brought you to the republican caucus and there were some pretty tough guys there who said 'who's this girl'. Christine spoke very eloquently, I remember walking out of the meeting with George Borrello, and we looked at each other and said 'We've got a winner. This gal is going to lead this county and lead it in the right way'. I don't think enough people talked about her leadership with the Department of Social Services because she turned that department around. Programs like welfare to work that really helped this County. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for this County and I'm glad to have been a part of it.

Kidder: I think I have the shortest tenure on the board of those of us here tonight and I remember back to when I first started and it was back in the good old days of dealing with rats and water and other things we used to talk about and then COVID just took over and I remember thinking to myself multiple times throughout the pandemic that I think Christine has the most challenging job in the County. You really did such a nice job and we are so grateful as a Board for everything. Thank you.

Erlandson: I'm thinking of an old movie from the 50's that starred William Holden. The title of the movie is 'Love is a many splendored thing'. Public health is sort of like that – a many splendored thing. It is multifaceted. I'm not a part of the medical community but I focus on other aspects of public health. Your knowledge, leadership, expertise, and most importantly your dedication to the citizens of Chautauqua County is a model and I feel privileged to be part of this group and thank you for all that you have done.

Approval of September 15, 2022 minutes	There was not a quorum so the meeting minutes were not approved.
New Business: Agreements to Settle	Agreements to settle were reviewed. Wuerstle reports there were several single offense water violations and three different facilities with multiple water violations and they are repeat offenders. For these repeat offenders we are requiring they to come to a hearing to have some face-to-face interaction and reiterate the importance of compliance. We need to get their attention to know that we are not going to continue to allow these repeat violations.
Re-credentialing	Dr. Faulk and Dr. Walters credentials expire in January. There is not a quorum so a vote was not taken. The Board will vote on this at the January meeting. In the meantime, the re-credentialing paperwork will be forwarded to the Board for review.
Status of Brooks Hospital	<p>Ney asked Berke to provide an update on the status of Brooks Hospital as he was asked to be part of a commission consisting of four persons who have had health care experience within the County and not associated with the hospital. The group met once a week for several weeks with a goal to look at the proposal that the Hospital put together for NYSDOH and provide constructive feedback. NYSDOH would be a major provider of funds for the hospital project. The Hospital's proposal was for a 15-bed hospital that could provide emergency room and some acute care. Other subject matters like obstetrics and surgeries were also discussed. The commission did not discuss location as that is a totally separate item. The commission meetings resulted in proposed suggestions that went to Assemblyman Goodell, Senator Borrello and Hospital administration. As you know there has been a lot of talk in the community about this. Right now patients are going to Buffalo or UPMC, which is not ideal.</p> <p>The three options are (1) to redo the current hospital, which would cost a fortune and the building is too large; (2) have nothing there which really is not an option and; (3) have a modest sized hospital providing emergency care, acute care, outpatient surgeries, and primary care services to the community. Unfortunately, obstetrics will probably be left out.</p> <p>Most of our hospitals need financial help and Brooks is no exception. Kaleida Health has considered partnering. The bottom line that no matter what happens, Brooks will still function at a loss, but a much smaller loss than what they are currently experiencing. Partners, like Kaleida Health, consider the partnership because they count on the referrals to compensate for the hospital's loss.</p> <p>The Hospital's proposal is now in the hands of NYSDOH. If the proposal moves along as planned, the hospital would open in 2026 and by 2029 NYS would no longer be significantly involved and it would transition to the partner.</p>
2023 Water Sample Acceptance	<u>Wuerstle reporting:</u> Our water sample lab tests for coliform, E.coli, and non-coliform bacteria. The lab is open for public water supplies and for a variety of other things, like property transfers, beach monitoring, or if we get a call from a doctor who is worried about Giardia we will go out and test for E.coli in the water; we run test for day care centers, potential foster homes and others. We also accept water samples from the general public. The biggest change is that we will no longer accept water samples from the general public. The reason is that many of these samples are failing and the issue is usually because the sampler has contaminated the sample prior to bringing it into the lab. We then are telling people their sample is failing and we really don't know if that is because the water is contaminated or if the sample was not brought into the lab using the appropriate method. If a resident would like to hire one of our staff to come out and take a sample of their water, we will do that. There are other facilities in Erie County New York and in Dunkirk who will take their samples.

Director's Report	<p><u>Schuyler Reporting:</u> First I'd like to thank the Board for your all of your support and kind words. It has been a good run and I am very proud of all of the work that this department has done and I know that it will continue to do. There are some concerns moving forward. We are at a good position with COVID, our transmission rates are low, that doesn't mean there isn't any out there because there is, along with RSV and the flu. We did get some additional opioid funding for the OD Map program and I know we are going to us it for some more prevention efforts working with the that program. We are working towards accreditation at the Jail for the medical correctional health component. The accreditation board just came back with what we need to fix and continue to improve on. The HRC building flooded earlier this month and I am proud of how services have not been disrupted in spite of the flood. I don't know when people will be back in their offices. There are some real staffing concerns moving forward. We have had zero applicants for our nursing positions. The County's pay scale for nurses is well below the private sector. Kidder: Is that pay schedule being addressed? Schuyler: I've asked repeatedly for human resources to take that on and do a salary survey and ask for a reclassification to occur. Right now we have core public health work to do. Our epidemiologist position has not been refilled. Shelly Wells, our Public Health Planner, is now leaving the Health Department, and her last day is December 9th. Our community health assessment and community health improvement plan is due at the end of this year. Dr. Michael Faulk, our County Physician who most of you know, will come in as the Interim Public Health Director.</p>
Other	<p><u>Kidder:</u> The WHO just renamed Mokeypox to Mpox. The reason for this is that you don't see it in monkeys, that is where it was first discovered, but there was some racial and derogatory stigma associated with the work monkey that was concerning.</p>
Adjournment	<p>Meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.</p>
Future Meeting Dates	<p>1/19/23, 3/16/23, 5/18/23, 7/20/23, 9/21/23, 11/16/23</p>