

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 2:00 p.m.  
Leelanau County Government Center  
6527 E Government Center  
Suttons Bay MI 49682**

Chairperson Dr. Barbara Conley called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

**Members Present:**

Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
William Bunek – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Patricia Soutas-Little – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Dr. Barbara Conley – Leelanau County Member at Large  
Rhonda Nye – Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
Dr. Mark Kuiper – Benzie County Member at Large

**Members Absent:** None

**Members Excused:** None

**Staff Present:**

Dr. Joshua Meyerson – Medical Director  
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services  
Eric Johnston – Director of Environmental Health  
Michelle Klein - Director of Personal Health

**Staff Excused:** Lisa Peacock – Health Officer

**Guests Present:**

Lisa Vogler – Attorney for BLDHD  
Shelley Jablon – Benzie Leelanau District Health Department

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little to approve the July 28, 2021 BOH Meeting Minutes.

**Seconded By:** Sauer

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer-yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper -yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Approval of the Agenda:**

**Motion By:** Sauer to approve agenda with the addition of items 1-A and 1-B.

**Seconded By:** Bunek

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Bunek spoke up that he would like to add item 1-A to the agenda. This item would be to discuss what the purpose, scope and authority that the Board of Health has. Sauer added that he

would also like to add item 1-B to the agenda. This item would be a discussion about the Mask Mandate for all schools in Benzie and Leelanau Counties.

**Public Comment –**

**Ginger Noonan** - Kasson Township – Has three kids and is against the mask mandate. She was disappointed that she could not speak to Peacock. Noonan is against vaccines.

Sauer mentioned that people calling in on Zoom could not hear. Putney corrected the type of connection that was used, it was Teams.

**Eric Shaub** – Really wanted to speak with Peacock and disappointed that she was not there. He discussed how unfair it was that the Government picked and chose which businesses could be open the beginning of the pandemic. He believes that laws were broken with the mask mandate. He also believes that the mandates will increase human trafficking.

Conley informed the Public that Peacock was out on medical leave.

**William Bailey** – Cedar – Wanted to know where Peacock received her numbers that she used to base her decision on. He was disappointed that Peacock was not present. He mentioned that he had tried to reach her numerous times and had not received a response back from her. He wants to know how many people have gone to the hospital. He is waiting for more information to be released before vaccinating his child, who has asthma. She cannot wear a mask.

**Ann Schlueter, RS RDH** – Disappointed she can never get a hold of Peacock. Had sent an email to all Leelanau Commissioners about child abuse and masks. She is not behind the CDC information or Dr. Fauci. The PCR test is not reliable.

**Ty Wessell** – Northport – He is a Leelanau County Commissioner but he is speaking as a citizen of the County at this meeting. He supports the Health Department, Peacock, Meyerson and masking in schools. He regrets how the Leelanau County Commission Board has voted to have this rescinded.

**Cory Schaub** – French Road – Thanked the BLDHD for all the work that they do in the community. Her concern is the depression that can be caused in children who are required to be masked in school. She has six children and believes she should have the right to choose if they will be masked or not. Her household has experienced Covid and they all have recovered. She is concerned about child speech development when they cannot see their teachers and peers faces.

**Gwenne Allgaier** – Maple City – She is grateful for the Health Department. She is a Leelanau County Commissioner. She has received numerous correspondence from residents who do support the mask mandate. Everyone wants to keep the schools open and if this is how than it shall be. The community needs the Health Department.

**Sandra Grant** – Bingham Township – County Boards should have more rights than the Health Director on making decisions. The policies should be changed to limit how long mandates can be in place without the Board or some other entity voting on the mandate.

**Mark Grant** – Bingham Township – Disappointed that Peacock was not present. Shocked that she did not have an office phone. Believes that Peacock could be sued and he has submitted a FOIA request for the documentation that she used to base her mask mandate on. He believes that these mandates are increasing the suicide rate amount young people and impacting early childhood development.

**Rebecca Guaff** – Cedar- Is for parents choice on masking children. The Health Director's decision should be overturned. Guaff is a social worker and she always had to have documented proof to remove kids. The documentation for this mandate should be more visible. She has a preschooler and a kindergartener and found it very odd that one needs to be masked and not the other.

**John Rant** – Does the State government supersede the Health Departments? The Governor is supposed to be agreeing to no mask mandates to pass the budget.

**Joan Kelly** – Leland – Data is not for this area. Soutas-Little was supposed to get data for the questions that were presented at the County meeting. She is hoping those answers come out at this meeting. Does the Board of Health Control the budget? Take the authority back from the Health Director.

**Karen Zamadis** – Leland – Dr. Fauci was on the radio talking about how the college football games were going to be a feast for Covid. Two weeks after they started he was quiet on the matter but the Wall Street Journal did a story about how the number of cases did not explode but went down in the areas where these games were held. The mask mandate and vaccines are not about public health but about money and control.

**James Duvauan** - Traverse City – The virus is small, smaller than what the masks can stop. So it is coming in through the masks and gets stuck. This leads to a better chance on someone breathing it in. He practiced ER medicine and has worked in nursing homes through the pandemic and he has seen people recover without too many complications.

**Linda Schmick** – Leelanau County – Would like European information heard, does not believe that the Board of Health has been receiving correct information. The reports she has read from Germany state that masks create more of an issue. Her comment only deals with masks, not Covid itself.

**Tom Towsky** – Elmwood Township – Mayo clinic says that there are no mask issues. Any journal articles that disputed this have been retracted. Who is financially supporting this?

**Gary Collins** – Maple City – Money is driving this whole thing. Who is paying Dr. Fauci and the institutions that are pushing vaccines and masking? Journals are retracting articles when funding is being threatened.

**Laura Tarson** – Solem Township – The public should have been addressed before the mandate went into place. Mayo Clinic must not have children. She believes that at least the Board of Health should have been involved with this decision. Would like to know what the destination plan is for this mandate.

**Leslie Klinski** – Center Township – She took her kids out of school when the mask mandate went into place. Kids are disgusting with masks. Has anyone ever watched how kids handle masks? They are dragged over every surface, they are chewed on and everyone touches everyone else's mask. Kids are also not getting the proper speech development with the masks in place.

**John Schaffer** – Leland – On behalf of his wife who is a retired surgeon, masks do not stop viruses or bacteria from passing through.

**John Myland** – Frankfort – He is a retired pediatrician and infectious disease specialist who worked with some of the bigger hospitals on the East Coast and still consults with vaccine companies was asked by Vogler to attend. He stated that everyone is still learning about the virus. This virus has taught health care individuals plenty but there is plenty to learn. Masks do work.

**Amy Stevens** – Leland Township – She had removed her kids from school and asked if anyone on the Board of Health has children in school. Since most of them do not have kids in school, why do they really want to listen to anyone from the public. She would like a date for when this will be over.

**Beth Carlson** – Leeland Township – Has a twelve-year-old with severe ADHD and OCD. He was attending Northport Schools but having issues with anxiety dealing with masks. She transferred him to St. Mary's and everything was going so much better that she was able to take him off his medications. Since the mandate she had to have a Crisis Center get involved for her son's anxiety and start his medication again. Her six-year-old is constantly chewing on their mask and the school is constantly asking for more to be sent in. Who is paying for all of these masks? She is done. So she sends her kids to school without one and the school can provide it. The rules make no sense. Her twelve-year-old was playing baseball with thirteen and fourteen year olds last year. Every child but hers had to be tested for Covid before they could play. They sat next to each other all day long at school. How does one year in age make a difference? She is pregnant with twins and she feels the masks required by Munson put her more at risk. She cannot wear her own in there. She has to reach into a box that everybody else does. Who knows what germs those people may have transmitted into that box.

Sauers read an email comment that he had received from Shannon Gillison - Benzie County – She has two school age kids. One had been in close proximity to a child who had Covid. They were quarantined for five days.

#### **Item 1-A and 1-B – The Purpose and Scope of the Board of Health and the Masking Mandate for Schools K-12**

Meyerson began describing that the Board of Health was created by the Public Health Code. It is to ensure continual access to health care for the public. This is to cover medical and environmental items. The environmental portion would cover drinking water, sewer and restaurant health codes. The personal health covers infectious diseases, hearing, vision, immunizations, STD's, and rabies.

Bunek spoke up stating that he believed the intent of this being added to the agenda was to clarify the purpose of this current Board of Health. Meyerson responded that this was a better question for the Board itself and for their attorney. The Board of Health is in charge of hiring a Health Director and a Medical Director. Nye stated that she was not happy that Peacock had told her that there would be no masking mandates and then there was. Nye was unhappy that Peacock was not at this meeting and that Nye had not been notified about her absence prior to the meeting. Nye was curious as to why there was an attorney at the meeting and who was this attorney representing, what for the Health Department or for the Board of Health? She then mentioned that she was not sure why she should stay for this meeting. Meyerson reminded her that this was a regular scheduled Board of Health Meeting. That Michigan Law states that the Health Director is a figure that has the power to issue mandates, not the Board of Health. Vogler spoke up that all the statutes pertaining to Board of Health duties is for the Board to establish programs, services, fees, to adopt regulations, approve budgets and perform general administrative functions when asked. Also, when asked to appoint a Health Officer, this position is mandated by state statute. Sauer brought up the inner-governmental agreement between Benzie and Leelanau Counties. This document outlined policies and procedures and who has ultimate authority on decision making. Vogler was unaware of this document. Putney provided Vogler a copy of this and Vogler was going to review it. Vogler mentioned that she was aware of the agreement between BLDHD and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. This document also lined out who had authority over what tasks. She would look over the two documents and respond in writing on which one would supersede the other.

Soutas-Little stated that if passion and politics were removed from this meeting than everyone was here for the same reason, concern for the local children. Peacock has the power to make the

decisions because she is not a political figure, she is an expert. Politics need to be left out of health mandates.

### **Health Officer Update – Michelle Klein**

Conley asked Klein to provide a Covid update. Klein had brought and shared a printout from the MI Start Map of Benzie and Leelanau County. The document showed the positivity rate and cases per County from July 22, 2021 through September 19, 2021. As Klein was explaining the information a Public Member asked her if there was any way to differentiate between adults and children on the chart/case numbers. Klein responded that the numbers include the entire population, that there was no breakdown in demographics. A Public Member asked Klein why Peacock had referenced a different tracker in her mandate. Peacock had used the CDC's information. Klein responded that the site that she had used to pull information for her document has both the State of Michigan and the CDC's information listed. It is on separate tabs. A person could easily toggle between the two and see. The reason why the information looks a bit different is that the State of Michigan is tracking cases by the 1,000,000 and the CDC is looking at cases by the 100,000. The information for both reports is reported by labs that are processing the Covid tests. In August the number of tests with positivity rates were increasing dramatically. A Public Member asked if this information showed how many of these residents were hospitalized. At this point Conley interrupted to remind the Public that this was not a question-and-answer session. They would need to save their comments and questions when the Public Comment session was open.

Meyerson began discussing the reasoning behind Peacock's decision to issue the mask mandate for all K-12 schools. He mentioned that he is a Pediatrician and that Covid is a learning process. At first it was thought that children could not easily spread the virus. Now that one in five people who are sick with the virus are children. So, we now know they can spread it. This has been affecting children worse than the flu, most kids will recover but some will have some very adverse effects from this. Some children have been experiencing systems for months after the initial infection. He had been studying the trends from the Southern States, who had their schools open a few weeks before the Michigan Schools were opened. A large number of these schools were experiencing Covid outbreaks and having to shut down and go virtual. This is something that Meyerson and Peacock did not want to see in Northern Michigan. The other concern was pediatric ICU beds. Currently there are no beds available in our area, all young patients need to be transferred downstate. Meyerson and Peacock were keeping in contact with the hospitals in the lower portion of the State to stay informed on how many hospital beds that they had available in case a Benzie/Leelanau resident needed to be transferred. The number of beds available was extremely small and it looked like if someone needed to be transferred they would be sent to Ohio. The other thought on this decision was that all of last year all of the schools were masked and for the most part it worked out. There has been plenty of studies done supporting the masking of children in school settings. The concerns of mental health was taken into consideration. It has been shown in the past year that not having kids in school has caused more depression issues than having them masked. Meyerson advises three different districts. Two of the districts have a mask mandate and the third does not. The third one has already had to close schools because of staff shortages. They had numerous staff members out with Covid and no one to cover. Some of the school districts within this area have decided to take it upon themselves to adopt their own mask mandates in order to keep their schools open. Peacock and Meyerson were also concerned about keeping the Hospitals in a decent capacity level so elective surgeries would not need to be cancelled. The cancelations of these surgeries put the general population into another risk category. As rates of positivity and the need for hospital beds drop than the mandate will be lifted. This mandate to have school children masked was never intended to be a permanent thing. It is temporary until the balance of a lot of different factors are met. A member of the public asked if there was a hard number for any or all of these different factors to reach to have the mandate lifted. Meyerson responded, no, there is not. A Public Member asked about which staff members were assigned to monitor all of the factors. Meyers mentioned that there is limited staff at the BLDHD and one of the factors that is a part of the decision factor is can the BLDHD perform their normal services.

When it was the Board of Health's turn to ask questions, Bunek stated that he did feel empathy that Peacock was ill but her absence at this meeting was undermining public trust. Sauer commented that he personally knows that Peacock and Meyerson are good people. This topic should have been presented before it became a mandate. There should have been a special meeting. This would have helped soften the impact that was felt by the public by this mandate. Dr Kuiper stated that Meyerson gave a good explanation on how Peacock and himself had come to the decision to issue the mask mandate. Both individuals have been very transparent as to the reasoning behind decisions and Dr. Kuiper would like to thank both of them. He explained that they are hired experts not politicians. They make decisions based on findings not on what the general public is pushing for. Nye asked if Peacock is unavailable is Meyerson the next person to make decisions. Meyerson responded that, no he does not have the final decision-making power. He had signed this mandate to show how strongly he supported it. His role is advisory only. Klein responded that if Peacock is not available than the Health Department of Northwest Michigan will cover this position. This is why BLDHD has contracted with them. Their Deputy Health Officer Natalie Kasiborski will step in and cover when there are unexpected absences. A Public Member asked if Peacock being absent was normal as they have yet to see her at a Leelanau County meeting. Klein and Meyerson both confirmed that this is not normal, it was completely unexpected that Peacock had fallen ill. Kuiper asked if the School Superintendents were notified that this mandate was coming before it was issued. Meyerson responded that they had been warned prior to the issuance that it more than likely would happen. Soutas-Little stated that Meyerson had presented exactly what information was requested.

#### **Accounts Payable**

**Motion By:** Kuiper to approve accounts payable and pay the bills.

**Seconded By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Bunek asked what the check to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library was for. Klein responded that it is part of the Leelanau Early Childhood program. It is books for children in the community. Bunek asked how are expenses coded. Putney explained that a person needs to create a Requisition that a Supervisor would sign. This then would generate a Purchase Order that leads to the ability of the invoice to be processed through accounts payable. Bunek was wondering if a report could be included to show which funds are paying for the invoices. Jablon responded that she would look into adding this to the check register. If this was not a possibility than a second report could be added to the check register showing which general ledger account and cost center was used to pay for each expense.

#### **August 2021 Financial Statements**

**Motion By:** Sauer to accept the financial statements as presented.

**Seconded By:** Kuiper

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nays 0 excused Motion carried**

#### **Amended FY 2021 Budget**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little

**Second By:** Conley

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- nay, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**5 yeas 1 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Nye asked if there was a better way to see what was spent. She would like to have a budgeting meeting prior to the budget being presented. She would also like to be able to see what

portion of each Counties appropriations where spent. Sauer clarified that he would like to see what percentage of the budget was spent. Putney stated that she could provide this. She already created this for the various Directors at the Health Department to review. Klein responded that they do look through this regularly. Nye asked if BLDHD could provide a cash flow statement. Putney will include an Asset and Liability report with the financial reports.

### **Proposed FY2022 Budget**

**Motion By:** Soutas-Little

**Second By:** Kuiper

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- nay, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**5 yeas 1 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Sauer asked about the raised rates for Environmental Health. Johnston responded that BLDHD is just passing through an increase in cost for the water tests that are performed. Nye stated that she had the same concerns as the ones she had mentioned on the Amended FY 2021 budget.

### **Payout of Employee Comp Time**

**Motion By:** Kuiper to approve the payout of the earned comp time with Covid vaccination reimbursement funds.

**Second By:** Soutas-Little

**Voice Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- nay, Conley- yea, Bunek- nay, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**4 yeas 2 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Putney explained that with the adoption of the new Personnel Policy many employees will be moved to salary. They will not be earning any over-time/comp time. All hourly employees will not be eligible to earn comp-time. They will be paid over-time for the pay period that the extra hours were earned. With this adjustment it leaves a liability on the books. Once it is paid out the BLDHD will not have that. Conley asked what source fee would be used to pay for this. Putney answered that the money earned from administrating Covid vaccines would be used for this. Due to the pandemic many employees were unable to take time off and had to work many additional hours to try to keep up with the demand for services within the community, so it made sense to use this funding which is not tied to any specific grant. Bunek asked about how much this payout be. Putney responded that wages alone would be approximately \$80,000. When retirement and taxes were included it would be approximately \$103,000. Soutas-Little added that getting this kind of liability off the books with a very legitimate funding source is a good idea.

### **Personnel Policy Adoption**

**Motion By:** Conley to approve the Personnel Policy as is with the recommendation that the Board of Health will have input on the Administrative Policies that are created outside of this document.

**Second By:** Soutas-Little

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Sauer mentioned that he would like to see the Board of Health involved with the Administrative Policies. He is a part of the Finance and Personnel Committee and he thinks that this should be addressed there. The items that are not included in the Personnel Policy that the Board will be voting on are the dress code, social media and remote work policies. He believes that the Board should be a part of that. Nye asked how does one document over rule another one. Klein answered that the two documents that are not a part of the Personnel Policy are the dress code and remote work. There is an Employee Committee that has met to discuss these policies. The policies were sent to all employees and they were allowed to share feedback. This was taken into consideration when the policies were drafted for final approval. There are other documents that

are handled the same way, such as the Covid Response Plan. The use of administrative policies that do not have Board of Health approval has been practiced since 1996. Putney added that the personnel policy has been sent to the Guardian HR firm, it is a law firm that specializes in workplace policies. It was suggested that a Board of Health Member sit on the Employee Committee so the Board is aware of what ever policies that may be going into effect.

### **Office Closure Request**

**Motion By:** Sauer to accept the closure of the BLDHD offices on December 3, 2021 for an all staff meeting.

**Second By:** Kuiper

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye- yea, Conley- yea, Bunek- yea, Soutas-Little- yea  
**6 yeas 0 nay 0 excused Motion carried**

**Discussion:** Annually there has been an all staff meeting once a year to go through new policies that are being put into place and to go over the new budget. The Board of Health is invited to join. It will be held in Benzie this year.

### **Staff Reports:**

#### **Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson**

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. The report pertained to STIs. Chlamydia and Gonorrhea were the two most prevalent STI's in the Benzie and Leelanau Counties, as for most of the State as well. The case numbers were up 75% from 2010. Conley asked if the rate listed was for both Counties combined or are they broken down. Meyerson responded that they are combined. There was a slight decline in 2020. He believes that the only reason for that was the lack of testing due to Covid. He believes that the number was more than likely higher but testing and treatment was not sought.

#### **Personal Health – Michelle Klein**

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. Klein asked if there were any questions in regard to the document that she had presented during the Health Officer Report. Sauer asked to please clarify the percentage in positivity rates. How exactly is that calculated? Klein responded that the number of people that are tested influences the percentage that is reported. The more positive tests with less tests performed, the higher the percentage. The more people testing with the same amount of positives the percentage will be lower. BLDHD has partnered with HONU. The reasoning for the partnering is the demand for testing was greater than what the BLDHD staff could handle by themselves. This testing is free and more people are now participating. Sauer asked if this would skew the numbers being reported. Conley commented that the more testing that is performed in the community the more the numbers will shift, it makes sense. Klein agreed that the numbers are shifting as the number of tests being performed are growing. Bunek asked if positivity rates are what is being used to classify an area as low risk, moderate risk, substantial risk and high risk. Meyerson responded that it will provide a rough estimate. Bunek than asked if there is a certain percentage that needs to be met to lift the mask mandate. Meyerson responded that no, there are many other factors that are reviewed.

Klein stated that when the BLDHD is contact tracing a Covid case they do look into factors that might have caused it. Such items are, was the patient at a wedding that other Covid cases are being reported from? This helps determine if it will be considered community spread or event spread. That is a big factor in determining a lot of decisions. Nye asked is the BLDHD is in regular contact with the school superintendents in the area. Meyerson responded that there is a weekly meeting with the TBAISD. There are many individuals who attend this meeting, Health Department employees, NWMHS staff, the Grand Traverse Health Department, local hospitals, and various



Dr.s. School Board Members are not present in this meeting. Conley asked if there could be a breakdown of schools in this data. That way there would be a clear showing which Districts may have more of an issue than others. Klein responded that school districts are supposed to keep this information posted on their websites. If there is an outbreak within a school the Health Department will report it. Through contact tracing last year, it was discovered most cases were caused by activities outside of school. The transmission within the school setting was exceptionally low. Nye asked if the ISD is given positivity information by district. Meyerson stated that within a general region a person can search by zip code and get a more detail report. Klein added that the BLDHD has been working directly with students, teachers and school administration so they should know. Nye asked Meyerson if he was watching Health Department District #10. They do not have a mask mandate. He responded that yes, he has been monitoring their information. They have more individuals who are out on quarantine and with Covid than our Districts that have the mask mandate. Kuiper asked if there was a difference between this year's phone calls to parents versus last year's, especially between the masked and unmasked schools. Meyerson responded that the phone calls did help last year, they were a lot of work but it helped. This area did better than other parts of the State.

Phone calls are starting to come in for scheduling booster shots for the Covid vaccine. The current policy is to only administer them to those with compromised immune systems. There will be a meeting next week and that policy will likely change to include more groups of people.

BLDHD received funding to hire three school nurses. Two have started this week and the third will start next Monday. They are to add additional support to the school systems to deal with Covid. Two Public Health Nurses have also been hired to replace two who have left. The open positions for Parenting Communities CHW was delayed until we knew the outcome of the mileage rate discussion.

Since the BLDHD has partnered with HONU there has been 172 Covid tests given, 13 of them came back positive. Thanks was given to Dr. Conley for volunteering to help administer these tests. As of September 20<sup>th</sup>, BLDHD has given 20,000 Covid vaccines. The vaccine clinics are still going on and the hours will more than likely be extended as boosters become more relevant. Klein indicated that the Health Departments are tasked with vaccinated long-term facility residents, or may partner with pharmacies to administer these vaccines. We have also been administering COVID vaccines in school clinics, along with other vaccines that children may have not received. Bunek asked if parent permission is required before these vaccines are given. Klein responded that yes, parents do need to provide permission first.

Parenting Communities sponsored the MOM Power program. It is for high-risk families to help reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by increasing of a child's cues and how to respond. 9 mothers and 14 children are participating and there is also a waiting list. A community event was held at Herman Park on September 1, with approximately 80 people attending.

#### **Environmental Health – Eric Johnston**

Beach monitoring for the season has ended. It was 13 weeks long and eight beaches were monitored. Only two were issued advisories. Northport had received one Level 3 advisory. Beulah Beach received two separate advisories. One for Level 2 and one for Level 3. The reason why they had two advisories was because there were more geese than normal at the beach. Beulah was the only inland beach that was monitored. The Village of Beulah paid for this. The rest of the beaches were along Lake Michigan and in the Bay. Beulah has been looking into grant funding to help eliminate some of the issues that cause the advisories. Nye stated that they have received some of the funding.

Senate bills 353 and 354, which pertained to food facility license fees being refunded is still in the process of being decided. It has been on hold since May 5, 2021. Bills 5128 and 5129, which

pertain to smoking and growing marijuana in a food facility is also still waiting to be decided. It has been on hold since June 24, 2021.

As the fiscal year is drawing to a close it has been noted that the land use permits are way up from last year. There were 481 more permits than last year. Johnston thanked the Board for allowing him to hire a fifth Sanitarian last December. He stated without the fifth Sanitarian this year would have been extremely stressful and backed up. The Department also received very few complaints. He had thought with Covid the amount of permits being requested would have dropped but instead they increased dramatically as people have decided to relocate to this area. Sauer asked if the growth was correlated with the census. Johnston responded not really; the permits are being requested for the least populated areas. Soutas-Little asked if it looked like the requests for permits was going to slow down. Johnston said that they probably will as soon as hunting season begins. That is when they generally slow down except for last year, so who knows. Conley asked if another Sanitarian was needed to keep up with demand. Johnston answered that he would rather wait and see. He does not like to bring on additional staff with speculation of what demand might look like. He will keep an eye on the situation and when it looks like another staff member is needed, he will ask.

#### **Administrative – Dodie Putney**

Written report distributed prior to the meeting for review. Putney asked if there were any questions regarding the report she had submitted and there were none. She reminded everyone that they are welcome to call or stop in to see her about any matters that they would like to discuss.

#### **Public Comment –**

**Cory Schaub** – The County is 80% vaccinated, why are we masked? Are we trying to depress people? Parents should have choices.

**Joan Cowley-Ursa** – Glad that Sauer and Bunek asked about what authority does the Board of Health have. Stated that the four key areas are adopting policies, budgets, general administration, and appointing a Health Director. The question is can you replace the Health Director? Also, glad that they are reviewing the inner-government agreements and other contracts. Would like the attorney to address some of these concerns. Also, she would like more pediatric hospital information as it does not appear kids are really spreading the virus.

**James Duvauan** - He addressed Meyerson about the integrity of the person who created the PCR test. It should not be used in clinics and the tests are being over performed. When he was practicing in Oregon last year the number of positive cases of Covid was inflated with suspected cases. If it was determined that if you had gone grocery shopping during your contact tracing period, they would add 300 suspected people to the positive list, even though they never talked to any of them. This all trails back to money.

**Mark Grant** – He would really like to see the Board of Health look into unappointing Peacock as the Health Officer. He was wondering how much power that the County Commissioners have with the Board of Health. What has concerned him about the information that has been provided was that there were no names or dates attached to numbers that were presented.

**Ann Schlueter** – Johnston had the best presentation for the whole Board. He was able to identify all of his numbers and they were broken down per Township. Meyerson was left on his own to defend someone else's position. Thanked Klein for providing her chart that was presented today and the in-depth description on how and where the information comes from. Schlueter works for the University of Michigan and sees research all the time. The reason why the CDC said no to mask mandates was because of the teacher unions pressuring them. Everything is controlled by

political power and money. The Board of Health should investigate the accuracy of the tests that are being administered.

**Laura Tursa** – Peacock made a decision and then left the BOH to fend for themselves. She would like to see more clarification on the BOH’s authority to hire and fire the Health Officer. If the BOH has a hands-off approach to this, it leaves too much room for decisions to be made that may not be wanted. So far she has not seen very much transparency. She asked again about where the information for the MI Start Map is coming from. Klein responded that it is from the labs that are performing the tests.

**William Bailey** – He would like to see mandates be placed per County level. This mask mandates reminds him of how Governor Whitmer had handled the pandemic. Making broad mandates that do not necessarily make sense for certain areas. This mandate covers a large area. Yes, it makes sense for some areas but not so much for different areas. Leelanau should not be treated the same as Alpena if they are not seeing the same issues. The information that is released per County should be more in depth, such as the number of children sick versus adults. How many patients are hospitalized and how many are at home recovering. He no longer trusts the Government due to broad mandates and now he is starting not to trust the local Health Department.

**Rebecca Guff** – Cedar – Meyerson provided a large amount of information but nothing specific for Leelanau County. She really does not trust the tests as she has a friend who had registered to take a test but ended up not going. A day later she received a call that her test she never took was positive. She would like to know who Peacock had been speaking directly to about the various health concerns in the area and what exactly those concerns were. The tourists have pretty much left for the season so Covid infections should be going down.

**Amy Stevens** – Suggested that a Natural Health Doctor be placed on the Board of Health.

**James Duvauan** - He had contracted Covid when he went to Florida on a trip. He felt horrible for about 5 days. He then took a bunch of different vitamins and supplements and felt immediately better. He believes that this should be looked into more for treatment than conventional medicine.

**Laura Tursa** – Thanked the Board for showing that they do care. They showed this by listening to everyone who wanted to speak.

**Karen Zemaitis** – Thanked the Health Department for all of the services that they do provide to the public. She believes that there needs to be better prepared information from the Health Department to provide the Board of Health and that there needs to be better communication between the two groups.

#### **Board Comments –**

Sauer stated that he had been reading through the agreement that the BLDHD has with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan for hiring a Health Officer and a Medical Director. BLDHD would have to give a six month notice of terminating the agreement. It was written as such to provide time for BLDHD to find a replacement Health Officer and Medical Director. These positions are required by law to have a health department. He would like to see a special meeting held next week to discuss the contract with the HDNWM. He addressed the public comment about the Board not receiving information in a timely manner. He stated that they do receive the packets ahead of time, it is up to the Members to read the information and ask questions before the meetings. They just never have done that before. He thanked the public for coming and sharing their concerns. Nye stated that the Health Department did the hiring of the Health Officer and Medical Director. Nye would like to know how the different contracts between the Counties, the BLDHD and the Health Department of Northwest legally interact with one another. Kuiper stated

that he does have three kids who do attend a school district that is a part of the Health Department's district. This school system had elected to have a mask mandated before the Health Department had announced theirs. As a father he is happy to see this as he does not want to see any sick children. The goal is to keep school open and children healthy. What is worse than wearing a mask is disrespect. Soutas-Little spoke that she agreed with Kuiper. She is listening. The reason why the vaccination rate for Leelanau County is so great is because of the work of the Health Department. She thanked everyone for attending. Conley also thanked the public for attending. The concerns of the community will be considered. The big concern is keeping children healthy and in school.

**Adjourn:**

**Motion By:** Sauer to adjourn the BOH meeting at 6:18 p.m.

**Second By:** Nye

**Roll Call Vote:** Sauer- yea, Nye - yea, Conley- yea, Bunek-yea, Soutas-Little- yea, Kuiper - yea

**6 yeas    nay    0 excused    Motion carried**

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Dr. Barbara Conley, Chair

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Shelley Jablon, Recording Secretary