



The meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, October 26, 2023, in-person at the Oxford County Administrative Building, 21 Reeve Street, Woodstock, ON, with virtual participation via MS Teams commencing at 1:03 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mr. J. Herbert	Board Member
Mr. G. Jones	Board Member
Ms. B. Martin	Board Member (Vice Chair)
Mr. D. Mayberry	Board Member
Mr. M. Peterson	Board Member
Mr. J. Preston	Board Member (Chair)
Mr. L. Rowden	Board Member
Mr. M. Ryan	Board Member
Ms. C. St. John	Chief Executive Officer
Dr. N. Tran	Medical Officer of Health
Ms. W. Lee	Executive Assistant

GUESTS:

Ms. M. Alvey	Health Promoter, Environmental Health
Ms. M. Cornwell*	Manager, Communications
Ms. J. DeRoo	Public Health Nurse, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Ms. J. Gordon	Administrative Assistant
Mr. P. Heywood	Program Director
Mr. J. Landaverde	Student, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Mr. D. McDonald	Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Ms. S. MacIsaac	Program Director
Ms. M. Nusink*	Director, Finance
Ms. A. Pavletic	Manager, Environmental Health
Mr. I. Santos	Manager, Information Technology
Mr. D. Smith	Program Director
Ms. M. Van Wylie	Program Manager, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Ms. N. Abedin*	Master's Student (Climate Change), University of Waterloo
Mr. Rob Perry*	Aylmer Express

**represents virtual participation*

REGRETS:

Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
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Mr. D. Shinedling
Mr. D. Warden

Board Member
Board Member

1.1 CALL TO ORDER, RECOGNITION OF QUORUM

Ms. Bernia Wheaton shall hereby be recognized and called upon as Ms. Bernia Martin.

1.2 AGENDA

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-1.2)

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by M. Ryan

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for October 26, 2023 be approved.

Carried.

1.3 Reminder to disclose Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof when Item Arises.

1.4 Reminder that meetings are recorded for minute-taking purposes.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-2.1)

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by B. Martin

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for September 28, 2023 be approved.

Carried.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

No Items.

4.0 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED REQUIRING ACTION

No Items.

5.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.DISCUSSION.DECISION

5.1 Actions to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harms Report for October 26, 2023

Peter Heywood introduced Marcia Van Wylie, Program Manager of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP), Jose Landaverde, a student nurse currently placed with CDIP, and Jacqueline Deroo, Public Health Nurse on the CDIP team and the primary author of the report.

J. Deroo presented the report.

J. Herbert inquired how this report relates to the frequent messaging that “one glass a day is acceptable and healthy” and J. Deroo noted that this statement is a myth now that more evidenced-based research has been completed.

M. Ryan noted this report is an opportunity to greatly influence systemic and behavioural change, particularly for children and youth, citing the successes of Smoke Free Ontario campaigns despite initial public resistance.

L. Rowden sought clarity on the definition of higher raters of drinking and whether that defines the person as an alcoholic.

J. Deroo indicated that the guidance helps people assess their drinking habits and intake and to consider if they do have some issues with alcohol. If there are concerns, there is a diagnostic tool that a health care provider would use to determine if there were issues with alcohol intake. The guidance acts as a reflection and reference tool, developed out of research related to heart disease, cancer, and other alcohol-related harms.

L. Rowden followed up with commenting on how alcoholism and people with alcohol-related issues are not well-supported in the community, citing an absence of detoxification centres as an example.

J. Deroo noted that research shows that an increase in overall population alcohol consumption is associated with a higher incidence of disordered drinking among the public. Conversely, by reducing the overall drinking levels in the population, not necessarily quitting altogether but drinking less, the demand for treatment decreases. This can ease the burden on the treatment system and prevent more individuals from needing treatment in the first place, a concept supported by research. Reducing overall alcohol consumption can proactively address the issue.

B. Martin asked if there was a correlation between the pop-up of agency stores which makes alcohol more available with increased alcohol consumption. J. Deroo confirmed there is a correlation, indicating that as access points increase, so do rates of drinking and drinking harms increase.

J. Herbert supported the recommendations of the report, noting it will likely be more effective in influencing younger generations via education and preventative measures (while older generations are more likely to resist).

J. Deroo noted that there is research indicating that upstream policy decision-making is impactful at the population level, citing the move to allow alcohol in grocery stores in 2014 was paralleled by notable increases in ER visits.

D. Mayberry thanked the team for the report. He noted the potential of a younger populations' generational influence on the behaviour of older generations such as parents and grandparents. He followed up by asking how SWPH can help municipalities understand the implications of the guidance (such as the increased harms that are likely to result from having alcohol available for sale at a corner store), encouraging any recommendations go to all of the municipalities, upper and lower tiers, to inform individual councils. He also suggested that SWPH develop a generic guideline for bylaws that municipalities could adapt and use. J. Deroo responded that there is the potential for grants that would allow for public health support of municipalities regarding local alcohol policies and bylaws.

M. Ryan noted his support for a recommendation from SWPH to municipalities about specific actions that can be taken. He referenced the distance restrictions from schools and playgrounds for cannabis stores, and how similar guidance and specific recommendations would be effective tools that municipalities could reference for future planning and implementation.

B. Martin noted that the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) recently downloaded the licensing of outdoor patios to local municipalities and suggested developing recommendations to municipalities that take into account this detail.

J. Deroo responded there has been work on municipal alcohol policies in Western Canada and agrees that municipalities can determine where alcohol is provided.

P. Heywood noted that positive work on education, attitudes, and behaviour is being done in schools with the hope these children and youth will carry them on in the future.

C. St. John added that staff will take back work around supporting municipalities and will bring forward what has been shared regarding bylaw and policy development at a future meeting.

D. Mayberry commended the author for developing a well-written report that can be clearly understood by the average person.

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-5.1)

Moved by M. Ryan

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Actions to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harms Report for October 26, 2023.

Carried.

Ms. J. Deroo, Ms. M. Van Wylie, and Jose Landaverde contributors to the report, left the room at 1:35pm.

5.2 Medical Officer of Health Report

Dr. Tran acknowledged the support and expertise of Nermina Bedin in developing the Climate Science Report.

Dr. N. Tran reviewed the Climate Science Report with the Board.

D. Mayberry asked what is defined as a very wet day. It was noted that Very Wet Days (10mm) include the number of days within a specific timeframe where the total precipitation, which includes both rain and snow, exceeds or equals 10 mm.

D. Mayberry noted his appreciation for the report and the work that has been done thus far, and asked how public health will respond to this information. Additionally, he asked if there would be further consideration of not only physical human impacts, but also social impacts of climate change such as migration.

Dr. Tran responded that next steps will be to meet with climate experts at the University of Waterloo and will bring forward an array of questions related to health and vulnerability assessments.

M. Ryan commented that Oxford County's recent strategic plan includes enhancing environmental sustainability, noting the philosophical alignment in the report with their strategic plan. He supported a plan for SWPH to connect with municipalities to provide actionable opportunities and recommendations at the municipality level.

Dr. Tran agreed, noting the potential impacts of climate change affect those at the local level, and that many opportunities for action would be most effective at the municipal level. He noted the hope that this report will be the starting point for practical and collaborative discussions regarding climate change and mitigation adaptation.

Dr. Tran reviewed the second half of his report, providing an update on recent developments at the local and provincial level in relation to the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) Feasibility Study Report approved by the Board in June 2023.

Dr. Tran referenced the recent provincial announcement to pause the approval of any new CTS sites in Ontario pending a critical incident review triggered by a shooting that occurred outside the vicinity of a CTS in Toronto in August. He noted that any provincial recommendations that arise from the review will be incorporated in SWPH's CTS work.

Dr. Tran also noted the decision by Woodstock City Council on Thursday, October 21, 2023, to endorse treatment bed options while striking down further CTS exploration in the region.

Dr. Tran indicated a follow-up report could be provided to highlight other CTS options in the face of this changing landscape.

J. Preston asked if there was a timeline for the completion of the provincial review. There is currently no indication from the province in terms of a timeline.

D. Mayberry asked what next steps should be considered following the provincial pause and the lack of endorsement by the City of Woodstock, suggesting the exploration of other possible locations and other ways to proceed with supporting CTS in the SWPH region given the ongoing opioid crisis.

Dr. Tran agreed the opioid crisis continues to be a critical issue to address, noting the importance of a comprehensive solution that draws upon many means, of which CTS is regarded as a harm reduction tool. He indicated that more options will be explored and brought to the Board pending provincial recommendations out of its incident review.

M. Ryan recommended that future public health initiatives engage in a more strategic, early, and ongoing rollout of information to a community that in large part would find absorbing large reports difficult, which then hampers community understanding and uptake.

C. St. John noted that leadership will review the timing of information-sharing with and presentations to municipalities.

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-5.2)

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by J. Herbert

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Medical Officer of Health Report for October 26, 2023.

Carried.

5.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report

C. St. John reviewed her report.

M. Peterson asked for clarity regarding the effectiveness of rapid antigen testing (RAT) kits in identifying the Covid-19 virus after hearing of delayed positive tests well after the person was symptomatic.

C. St. John responded that rapid antigen tests (RATs) are not as precise as the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test kits and she asked Dr. Tran to elaborate further. Dr. Tran added that RATs were initially tailored to identify the original strain and the test's performance likely requires a higher viral load given the ongoing mutation of the Covid-19 virus. He indicated, however, that there are currently no studies tracking the test's accuracy.

C. St. John added that public health messaging continues to be that if you feel sick, stay home. This messaging remains critical particularly as we go move farther into the respiratory virus season.

L. Rowden asked if Covid-19 is more stable now as there are no longer provincial restrictions or funding provisions for those who are sick, resulting in many who do not test and go into work regardless.

C. St. John acknowledged the economic bias in place where those who are employed at organizations that provide sick leave are more likely to stay home.

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-5.3)

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by B. Martin

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chief Executive Officer's report for October 26, 2023.

Carried.

7.0 TO CLOSED SESSION

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-C7)

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by G. Jones

That the Board of Health move to closed session in order to consider one or more the following as outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act:

- (a) the security of the property of the municipality or local board;
- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;
- (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board;
- (d) labour relations or employee negotiations;
- (e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board;
- (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;
- (g) a matter in respect of which a council, board, committee or other body may hold a closed meeting under another Act;
- (h) information explicitly supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board by Canada, a province or territory or a Crown agency of any of them;
- (i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization;
- (j) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial or financial information that belongs to the municipality or local board and has monetary value or potential monetary value; or
- (k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board. 2001, c. 25, s. 239 (2); 2017, c. 10, Sched. 1, s. 26.

Other Criteria:

- (a) a request under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, if the council, board, commission or other body is the head of an institution for the purposes of that Act; or
- (b) an ongoing investigation respecting the municipality, a local board or a municipally-controlled corporation by the Ombudsman appointed under the *Ombudsman Act*, an Ombudsman referred to in subsection 223.13 (1) of this Act, or the investigator referred to in subsection 239.2 (1). 2014, c. 13, Sched. 9, s. 22.

Carried.

8.0 RISING AND REPORTING OF CLOSED SESSION

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-C8)

Moved by B. Martin
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-C3.1A)

Moved by M. Ryan
Seconded by J. Herbert

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve striking a Special Standing Ad Hoc Committee related to the Strengthening Public Health initiative issued by the Ministry of the Health and that the membership of the committee be comprised of Chair, Vice-Chair, CEO, MOH, and relevant administrative support.

Carried.

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-C3.1)

Moved by M. Ryan
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Chief Executive Officer's Report for October 26, 2023.

Carried.

9.0 FUTURE MEETING & EVENTS

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Health is November 23, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. at 1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

Resolution # (2023-BOH-1026-10)

Moved by B. Martin
Seconded by M. Ryan

That the meeting adjourns at 3:11 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: _____

