



The meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, September 28, 2023, in-person at 1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON, with virtual participation via MS Teams commencing at 1:03 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

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

**GUESTS:**

Ms. J. Gordon	Administrative Assistant
Mr. P. Heywood	Program Director
Mr. D. McDonald	Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Ms. S. Maclsaac*	Program Director
Ms. M. Nusink*	Director, Finance
Ms. M. Cornwell*	Manager, Communications
Mr. I. Santos	Manager, Information Technology
Mr. D. Smith*	Program Director
Mr. Rob Perry*	Aylmer Express
Mr. Robert Northcott	SWPH
Ms. Heather Sheridan*	City of St. Thomas
Mr. Matthew Wilson*	CMHA Thames Valley

*\*represents virtual participation*

**REGRETS:**

Mr. J. Herbert	Board Member
----------------	--------------

## **1.1 CALL TO ORDER, RECOGNITION OF QUORUM**

The Chair recognized and welcomed Davin Shinedling, a new provincial appointee, to the Board of Health.

## **1.2 AGENDA**

C. St. John noted that under *4.0 Correspondence Received Requiring Action*, item 4.1 (Support for Bill C-252) was placed there in error and should be considered as item 3.2 under *3.0 Approval of Consent Agenda*. There were no objections to the adjustment to the agenda.

### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-1.2)**

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by D. Mayberry

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

Carried.

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

M. Ryan declared a conflict or pecuniary interest regarding Item 3.1 Expansion of Publicly Funded Vaccine in Ontario Pharmacies, noting that his wife is currently a partner in a pharmacy business.

J. Preston indicated under those conditions M. Ryan would not need to leave the room although he would not be able to participate in any discussion. M. Ryan noted that he would nevertheless leave during the discussion.

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

## **2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-2.1)**

Moved by J. Couckuyt

Seconded by M. Ryan

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for June 22, 2023 be approved.

Carried.

### **3.0 CONSENT AGENDA**

M. Ryan excused himself from the room at 1:05 pm.

M. Ryan returned to the room at 1:06 pm after the resolution was moved, seconded, and carried.

#### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-3.1)**

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by B. Wheaton

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health receive and file consent agenda items 3.1 – 3.2.

Carried.

### **4.0 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED REQUIRING ACTION**

As noted in the review of the agenda for September 28, 2023, the item originally noted as 4.1 is now listed as Consent Agenda Item 3.2.

### **5.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.DISCUSSION.DECISION**

#### **5.1 Regulated, Quasi-regulated, and Unregulated Residential Facilities Report for September 28, 2023.**

Peter Heywood presented the staff report.

P. Heywood recognized Robert Northcott as the primary author and researcher of the report and acknowledged the contributions of Heather Sheridan from the City of St. Thomas, Matthew Wilson from Canadian Mental Health Addiction Services Thames Valley (CMHA-TV), and Amy Pavletic and Susan MacIsaac from Southwestern Public Health (SWPH).

At the conclusion of the report, J. Couckuyt thanked P. Heywood for the presentation, noting it was an excellent report. J. Couckuyt indicated he thoroughly supported the report's recommendations.

J. Couckuyt inquired about the 26 people who were moved from the unregulated housing in St. Thomas due to multiple infractions and health and safety concerns and were then temporarily relocated to the Joe Thornton arena. P. Heywood noted that the residents were all successfully relocated to a variety of homes, and some returned to their families via the support of CMHA-TV and the City of St. Thomas and to the best of his knowledge they are still there.

L. Rowden commended the report as excellent. He noted that the need for regulation could identify many buildings that do not meet current health and safety standards and notes the need for further consideration of alternative housing options should such places be closed. He

noted that without thoughtful consideration, putting regulations and standards in place could result in further homeless scenarios. P. Heywood concurred, noting it is an important element to consider in advocating for regulatory standards of practice for unregulated homes.

G. Jones asked if unregulated facilities have an economic advantage over regulated homes since they do not have to adhere to specific standards of practice. P. Heywood noted he did not have information regarding profit margin percentages for these homes. P. Heywood indicated there are some excellent operators of unregulated facilities that support their residents in the community; however, the intent of the report is to identify the harms to health outcomes when such facilities are poorly maintained and operated because they are unregulated.

D. Warden asked if public health involvement would be complaint driven. P. Heywood noted SWPH is mandated to respond to and investigate complaints in the manner of assessing for health hazards (i.e., conditions of the facility, food handling, etc.). He noted as well that if public health is aware of unregulated group homes or facilities, there will be more proactive outreach in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards such as annual inspections. However, there is currently no means of maintaining a current and comprehensive list of unregulated homes and facilities.

D. Warden asked what the safeguards are in place to ensure that funding for these residents is being used appropriately. L. Rowden noted that funding to clients from agencies such as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) can not be followed up afterward as it is the decision of the client to disburse their funds.

P. Heywood noted that this is a complex matter, wherein the issue lies in the standards of practice and lack of follow-up and application of those standards. There is no agency that follows-up on standards of practice: i.e., Hamilton has by-laws, but their continued enforcement is difficult.

P. Heywood noted that current follow-up is reactive rather than proactive and hopes that through the recommended resolution to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA), this will be the first step in advocating for further action regarding this vital issue.

J. Couckuyt noted that municipalities should not be the organizations accountable or responsible for regulating these facilities and is pleased to see that the report recommends local public health units for this purpose.

P. Heywood acknowledged that public health units have developed strong local networks and partnerships that allows them to generate a strong response table that is timely, empathetic, and compassionate.

J. Preston commended the report, referencing the unregulated facility in St. Thomas cited in the report. He acknowledged the complexity of pulling together various enforcement agencies and identifying the various responsibilities and accountable bodies. J. Preston noted that he could see this advocacy move to a level of provincial standards but believes enforcement would still

occur at the municipal level. J. Preston noted he was happy to move the resolution forward. D. Warden noted that he supports this report strongly.

### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.1)**

Moved by M. Ryan

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Regulated, Quasi-regulated, and Unregulated Residential Facilities Report for September 28, 2023.

Carried.

R. Northcott, contributor to the report, left the room at 1:36pm.

## **5.2 Medical Officer of Health Report**

Dr. N. Tran reviewed his report.

Dr. Tran noted that Health Canada has just approved a second Covid-19 XBB vaccine product and hopes it will result in greater access for the public and streamline access where desired.

Dr. Tran referenced his questions at the end of his report:

- 1) How ready are our current municipalities and counties in the SWPH region to respond to these challenges of emergency planning, fall respiratory season, opioids crisis and climate change?
- 2) How can SWPH support our municipalities and counties with these challenges?

J. Couckuyt thanked Dr. Tran for the report and asked what happens with vaccine access for homebound patients, noting that paramedics are now the only option to provide the vaccine.

Dr. Tran noted that the paramedicine programs in the region have provided phenomenal support that SWPH relies upon in many situations, one of which is they currently facilitate service to homebound patients. There are other services via Homecare, but local paramedics have risen to the challenge. SWPH has yet to hear they do not have capacity to meet these challenges and would plan accordingly if that occurred.

J. Couckuyt noted anecdotally that a client had many issues with accessing service. Dr. Tran asked that board members or their constituents contact SWPH regarding issues such as access to the Covid-19 vaccine and staff will investigate further.

B. Wheaton asked about campfires and backyard fires and their effect on air quality and whether there have been studies on their impact on local air quality. Dr. Tran indicated he would take this question back to staff.

D. Shinedling asked about the general community health effects caused by wildfires in the area over the summer. Dr. Tran noted poor air quality exacerbated pre-existing conditions such as pulmonary issues, asthma, cardiovascular events. When Air Quality Health Indexes (AQHIs) are high (which are not used for wildfires per se, but smog or other pollutants), part of the outreach is to inform the public about these issues. Dr. Tran noted that at the time of wildfires, there was a rise in health complaints.

D. Mayberry noted he looks forward to the coming climate change report. He noted that what public health can do to support municipalities is position itself as a source of unbiased information and scientific data that can be used to support decision-making processes and to offset rumours and unfounded claims.

M. Ryan suggested that C. St. John meet with municipal CEOs and CAOs to ask how SWPH can support municipalities as this would be a more direct line of communication and action.

J. Preston agreed with M. Ryan's proposal.

#### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.2)**

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by B. Wheaton

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Medical Officer of Health Report for September 28, 2023.

Carried.

### **5.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

C. St. John reviewed her report.

C. St. John noted the alPHa Fall Symposium (November 24, 2023) is open for all board members to join. Of note, C. St. John will be speaking at the symposium of SWPH's merger experience in 2018. Kindly let C. St. John or W. Lee know if any board members would like to attend.

C. St. John highlighted separate meetings that occurred between the alPHa Executive Committee (of which she is a member) and Premier Ford and Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones. She noted that both meetings focused on how alPHa and its members, the 34 health units, could work collaboratively with the province on mutual public health priorities to improve the health of Ontarians. C. St. John noted she and Dr. Tran sit at various tables that provide opportunities to bring forward SWPH's small urban/large rural perspective.

Regarding the province's funding announcement of public health at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference, C. St. John noted that it is uncommon for a ministry to announce a funding increase for a year that they're not in much less three years

(2024-2026). It speaks of a commitment to support local public health agencies in their post-covid work.

C. St. John noted that SWPH received its 2023 funding grant and accountability agreement wherein all of the mandatory programs are funded. Of the 6 business one-time funding requests that were submitted, 3 were approved; however, the business cases for stigma education, collaborative planning with our school boards, and a project manager for the new Woodstock building site were not approved.

M. Nusink was asked to share financial details about the Minister of Health's cost-sharing announcement at the AMO conference, with C. St. John emphasizing that the new arrangement is not a full return to the previous slate of cost-shared programs as there were many programs that were previously 100% funded by the province that were moved to cost-shared models and now remain so. As a result, the new funding formula has increased the cost-shared amount for municipalities.

J. Couckuyt asked what is the standing of the extra funds asked of the municipalities from June.

C. St. John noted that budget was passed in February and then there was the additional investment requested by the Board and presented in June. In light of the confirmed funding letter from the province, a letter to municipalities will be sent after the September Board of Health meeting to indicate what the revised levy will be. J. Preston and C. St. John noted SWPH's funding breakdown (i.e. 1% increase from Ministry of Health) is where the board anticipated it would be.

D. Mayberry asks for clarity regarding the cost of moving 100% funded programs to the cost-shared model. M. Nusink indicated that such costs had been covered under mitigation funding and equate to almost one million dollars in difference. D. Mayberry noted ministry funding over the years have not reflected inflation rates, resulting in municipalities covering more public health costs in the region.

In response to C. St. John's commendation of the finance department's work in transcribing audited statements to ministry forms, M. Ryan suggested calling on alPHA to help advocate for the reduction of red-tape processes.

C. St. John called the board's attention to SWPH's intended strategic planning for the fall, wherein the recommendation would be to delay this work in light of the significant changes coming for public health. She noted that SWPH's current strategic plan is still relevant and continues to inform program planning that is already underway for 2024. By delaying strategic planning at this time, SWPH will have updated census data and a refreshed health status report that will inform our strategic planning and priorities, as well as an opportunity to review any revisions to the Ontario Public Health Standards (which are expected to be under review soon).

D. Shinedling asked what timelines have been given regarding the changes coming to public health. C. St. John noted that announcements have indicated these changes are expected to occur during this current provincial mandate.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.3A)**

Moved by D. Mayberry  
Seconded by G. Jones

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the second quarter financial statements for the period ending June 30, 2023 for Southwestern Public Health.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.3B)**

Moved by M. Peterson  
Seconded by J. Couckuyt

That the Board of Health approve the audited financial statements for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program and the Pre and Post Natal Nurse Practitioner program for the period ending March 31, 2023 and that the Board of Health ratify the signing of the Engagement Letter.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.3C)**

Moved by B. Wheaton  
Seconded by D. Shinedling

That the Board of Health accept the Amending Agreement between the Ministry of Health and Southwestern Public Health effective January 1, 2023.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.3D)**

Moved by G. Jones  
Seconded by L. Rowden

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health ratify the Board of Health Chair and CEO's signing of the 2022 program-based grants annual reconciliation report as noted.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-5.3)**

Moved by B. Wheaton  
Seconded by J. Couckuyt



That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Chief Executive Officer's report for September 28, 2023.

Carried.

## 7.0 TO CLOSED SESSION

### Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C7)

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by B. Wheaton

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-0427-C8)

Moved by B. Wheaton

Seconded by D. Mayberry

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

### Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C3.1A)

Moved by B. Wheaton

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve a revised terms of reference and confirm M. Ryan's membership in the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C3.1)**

Moved by D. Mayberry  
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee Report for September 28, 2023.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C3.2A)**

Moved by D. Mayberry  
Seconded by D. Warden

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the updated 2023 Risk Register, as presented.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C3.2B)**

Moved by D. Warden  
Seconded by D. Mayberry

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the 2024 Risk Register, as presented.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-C3.2)**

Moved by B. Wheaton  
Seconded by M. Ryan

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Chief Executive Officer's Report for September 28, 2023.

Carried.

**10.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-0928-10)**

Moved by B. Wheaton  
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the meeting adjourns at 4:42 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: \_\_\_\_\_

