



The meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Wednesday, November 22, 2023, in-person at 1230 St. Thomas, ON, with virtual participation via MS Teams, commencing at 5:03 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
Mr. J. Herbert	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
Mr. D. Shinedling	Board Member
Mr. D. Warden	Board Member
Ms. C. St. John	Chief Executive Officer
Dr. N. Tran	Medical Officer of Health
Ms. W. Lee	Executive Assistant

**GUESTS:**

Ms. K. Bastian	Epidemiologist, Foundational Standards
Ms. M. Cornwell*	Manager, Communications
Ms. S. Croteau	Epidemiologist, Foundational Standards
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. C. Richards	Program Manager, Foundational Standards & Sexual Health
Ms. J. Santos	Epidemiologist, Foundational Standards Team
Mr. I. Santos	Manager, Information Technology
Mr. D. Smith	Program Director
Mr. Rob Perry*	Aylmer Express

*\*represents virtual participation*

**REGRETS:**

Mr. G. Jones	Board Member
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## **1.1 CALL TO ORDER, RECOGNITION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order at 5:03pm.

## **1.2 AGENDA**

### **Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-1.2)**

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by M. Ryan

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for November 22, 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-1122-2.1)**

Moved by J. Herbert

Seconded by D. Warden

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for October 26, 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 Community Profile Report for November 22, 2023**

Kerry Bastian, Sarah Croteau, and Jenny Santos presented the report.

S. Croteau reviewed the demographic profile of Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas.

K. Bastian reviewed characteristics of the demographic profile in the Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) region (i.e., housing types, education, employment, household income, etc.).

K. Bastian noted that the data they have on hand is from 2020 and the team looks forward to the post-pandemic data derived from the next census in 2025 to verify if new trends that have been identified during this unique time period will continue on.

M. Ryan asked for clarification regarding the data source, noting that the tax filer data being referenced only captures those who have completed and submitted an income tax return, and would be unable to identify those who are homeless or do not file tax returns. K. Bastian noted that where data gaps have been identified, they try to access other data sources to accommodate such absences.

J. Herbert and L. Rowden noted that the low-income measure that identifies the proportion of the population that are struggling to make ends meet is concerning.

D. Shinedling asked what the most common household size in the SWPH area is. S. Croteau indicated that they would review the census data and provide a response. The answer to this question will be provided in a future CEO Report.

M. Ryan agreed that more granular details such as the proportion of multi-generational households in the region would be helpful. S. Croteau noted that the 2020 census provided a new option where families could select 'multi-generational' to describe household make-up and will be an important indicator to track in the next census.

J. Santos reviewed the Ontario Marginalization index, focusing on Households, Material Resources, Age and Labour Force, and Racialized and Newcomer population.

The group concluded by noting the demographics in our region have changed. The population is growing and aging and that piece about the newcomers and immigration being increasing really increases the need for us to be more culturally aware in our planning for our local public health services.

J. Herbert asked if there would be a follow-up to this data. C. Richards explained that this data will be used in the organization's program planning (which starts in the spring) to see if anything needs to be adjusted and progress will be tracked every quarter.

D. Shinedling sought clarity regarding SWPH's engagement with regional indigenous populations and how is SWPH bridging a lack of data for this group. J. Preston noted that while SWPH crosses over regarding populations, the indigenous regions are located in the MLHU region. C. St. John indicated she would bring forward information about SWPH's programs that connect with indigenous individuals living in the region at a future time.

J. Preston noted that this report will help municipalities develop more locally directed and mindful planning.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.1)**

Moved by B. Martin

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Community Profile Report for November 22, 2023.

Carried.

K. Bastian, S. Croteau, and J. Santos, presenters of the report, left the meeting at 5:45pm.

**5.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

C. St. John reviewed her report.

She highlighted the updated Strengthening Public Health slide deck released by the Ministry of Health at the end of October. The provincial strategy has clearly identified the ideal population size of 500,00 for merged health units (although this guideline may not be applicable to more remote health units with large geographical areas). Of interest is the point that future funding for local public health units will take effect in January of 2026. C. St. John indicated that she would keep the board apprised as more information is provided.

C. St. John noted the third quarter financial statements indicate our surplus is higher than expected, explaining that Covid-19 expenditures have been less than what we planned due to lower than expected vaccination uptake. Dr. Tran added that SWPH is providing Covid-19 services proportionately in response to what is needed; SWPH continues to monitor the available data closely and are prepared to take action if and when needed.

B. Martin asked if the fact that SWPH is no longer managing vaccine bookings internally (provincial booking system has taken over) is a roadblock to uptake. C. St. John noted that healthcare providers and pharmacies are expected to and have taken on a more prominent role in vaccine provision. S. MacIsaac noted that many who were not eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine at the time were blocked by the provincial system.

D. Shinedling asked about expenses in the financial statement such as overruns related to climate change and surplus related to the Health Growth and Development (HGD) program. C. St. John responded that the climate change piece is in relation to the Board's direction to invest in improving health outcomes, while the HGD surplus is related to timing which will be rectified in the next quarter.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2-3.1)**

Moved by D. Warden  
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Terms of Reference for the Special Ad Hoc Committee: Strengthening Public Health Provincial Strategy for November 22, 2023.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2-4.1)**

Moved by J. Herbert  
Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health to approve the third quarter financial statements for Southwestern Public Health as presented.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2-4.2)**

Moved by B. Martin  
Seconded by M. Ryan

That the Board of Health approve the third quarter financial statements for Southwestern Public Health as presented.

Carried.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2-4.3)**

Moved by L. Rowden  
Seconded by D. Warden

That the Board of Health to approve the third quarter financial statements for Southwestern Public Health as presented.

Carried.

C. St. John reviewed the 2024 SWPH budget, noting staff were cognizant of financial pressures at various levels, including municipalities, province, households, and clients. She highlighted the Ministry of Health commitment of a 1% provincial increase in each of the next 3 years. Of note, the average inflation rate of 3.6%, significant increases in employee group benefit plans, and collective bargaining challenges (the CUPE collective agreement expires this December 2023) are also significant factors. In 2023, the Board's direction was to increase public health work in specific areas that may improve health outcomes within the next 3-5 years. Given the fiscal

pressures, C. St. John noted that the draft 2024 budget for consideration was a 'status quo' budget as opposed to further investments like in 2023.

J. Preston referenced the one-time funding (OTF) requests, asking if it will affect the 1% increase the province has committed to health units. C. St. John responded that OTF requests are separate from the 1% increase to base.

B. Martin asked about the request for Strengthening Public Health Strategy work (\$50,000) and questioned if SWPH should increase its funding request. C. St. John indicated that the initial OTF request is to support SWPH directly. She also noted that OTFs are reviewed as line items.

D. Warden asked, with collective bargaining not underway yet, if SWPH has projected the correct increase in the 2024 budget. D. McDonald noted that SWPH has assessed contract standards and strives to strike a balance between what is reasonable and sustainable. C. St. John noted that the 2024 budget considers a contract settlement with CUPE.

D. Warden followed up by asking if SWPH would develop a contract that takes into account the possibility of upcoming mergers. D. McDonald noted such work would depend on the partners and the work that would come out of a review of the Ontario Public Health Standards, keeping in mind that there are too many unknown variables at this time to say more.

M. Ryan pointed out the challenges posed by a 3.6% inflation rate, ongoing negotiations, and the province's limited 1% increase. He asked that the Board consider communicating how the province has essentially directed them to find efficiencies or cut services. Regardless of the decision, he emphasized the importance of sharing that provincial funding is not reflective of actual cost increases, resulting in a high budget increase or direct cuts to staffing and services.

M. Ryan also expressed reservations about considering population growth as purely good news, noting that the communities served by the board are experiencing a 4% annual growth, and while this is beyond the board's control, there is a discrepancy in funding. The assessment growth that municipalities contribute to the budget is significantly less than the community's population growth and need for public health services. This creates a fundamental gap between provincial funding and municipal ability to fund, putting the board at a disadvantage from the beginning. M. Ryan emphasized the need to recognize this gap as a starting point when assessing the budget's challenges.

B. Martin agreed that population and diverse growth results brings great opportunities and challenges.

D. Mayberry noted that despite the significant increase from last year's budget, the 2024 budget is one that allows for only maintenance of the status quo, allowing for no advancement.

M. Ryan amended his point, noting the Board's commitment in June to allocate additional funds to improve health outcomes is still present in the 2024 budget.

D. Warden asked for a recorded vote. Of note, Grant Jones was absent during the recorded vote (he had expressed his regrets for this rescheduled Board meeting).

There were no opposing votes or abstentions among the members present.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2-4.4)**

Moved by B. Martin

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health approve the 2024 Budgets for General Cost-Shared program, for 100% Provincially funded ongoing initiatives, and for 100% Provincially funded one-time initiatives.

Carried.

Couckuyt, Jack	Yea
Herbert, Jim	Yea
Jones, Grant	Absent
Martin, Bernia	Yea
Mayberry, David	Yea
Peterson, Mark	Yea
Preston, Joe	Yea
Rowden, Lee	Yea
Ryan, Marcus	Yea
Shinedling, Davin	Yea
Warden, David	Yea

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-5.2)**

Moved by J. Couckuyt

Seconded by M. Peterson

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Chief Executive Officer's report for November 22, 2023.

Carried.

**7.0 TO CLOSED SESSION**

J. Herbert left at 6:54pm.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-C7)**

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by M. Peterson

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-1122-C8)

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by B. Martin

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

### Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-C3.1)

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee Report for November 22, 2023.

Carried.

### Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-C3.2)

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by D. Shinedling

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the Chief Executive Officer's Report as amended for November 22, 2023.

Carried.

## 9.0 FUTURE MEETING & EVENTS

## 10.0 ADJOURNMENT



That the meeting adjourns at 7:20 p.m. to meet again on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

**Resolution # (2023-BOH-1122-10)**

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by D. Warden

That the meeting adjourns at 7:20 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: 