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Chandana Vavilala, M.D.

Health Officer

Meeting of the Lake County Board of Health

Date: September 15, 2025

Rescheduled from September 12, 2025 due to lack of quorum

Time: 7:30am – 9:30am (late start – 8:00am)

Location: Health Department Conference Room

Prior to the meeting, members and public discussed whether the meeting had been posted within the required timeframe. Attorney Sanghvi confirmed that the agenda was posted at the Health Department on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 10, which satisfies the public notice requirements. The meeting proceeded as scheduled.

Call to Order - Meeting called to order by Dr. Nchekwube.

Roll Call

Members Present:

Leona Chandler -Felton, Michael Foreit (virtual), Cynthia Hoess, Chiedu Nchekwube, Deborah McCullough, Philip Golden

Members Absent:

TJ Wigmore, Marla Hoyer-Lareau

*one vacant board position

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes 2/5/25

Dr. McCullough motion to approve, Dr. Hoess 2nd - Motion Passes

Opening Remarks

Health Officer, Dr. Vavilala apologized for the confusion regarding the meeting date and time.

New Deputy Administrator Named: Michelle Arnold. Michelle is the former Health First Indiana (HFI) Manager. The HFI position has been posted and interviews are underway.

The Lake County Health Department has had a very successful year with outreach efforts.

We hosted our first Community Health Fair with over 150 attendees, we have attended many public events and health fairs and we've been asked to present at multiple events. Our Mobile Health Clinic has seen great success providing services to the community and our nursing clinic offered extended hours in July and August on Wednesdays from 7am-7pm.



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New Fee Proposal

The Board reviewed proposed fee adjustments for the Food Safety, Nursing, Environmental, and Vital Records divisions. It was noted that Health Department fees have not been increased in over 10 years. Current fees were compared to those of neighboring counties and counties of similar size in Northern Indiana. Discussion highlighted that Vital Records fees will double and several other fees represent significant increases; however, the Board recognized that if fees had been adjusted incrementally over the years, the changes would appear less substantial. The Board also discussed the oral typhoid vaccine and recommended further exploration of offering it as an additional service option.

ROLL CALL

Board Member Philip Golden	<u>Motion</u>
Board Member Leaona Chandler-Felton	<u>Second</u>
Board Member Dr. Hoess	<u>(No)</u>
Board Member Dr. Nchekwube	<u>(Yes)</u>
Board Member Dr. Foreit	<u>(Yes)</u>
Board Member Dr. McCullough	<u>(Yes)</u>

*Need 5 votes for a quorum.

There was discussion on vacant positions the planned Maternal Child Health Clinics in North and South County. It has been determined we will not move forward with these clinics due to funding cuts. While eliminating these clinics is not ideal, and alternate resources need to be provided to pregnant mothers, Dr. Hoess stated there are many FQHC partnerships we can explore. Dr. McCullough mentioned using our Mobile Health Clinic for maternal services. There was discussion of ways to help residents find services offered in Lake County.

2026 Budget

Dr. Vavilala walked through the budget with the board members. The health department is not requesting additional funds of the county and is maintaining 2025 budget levels.

ROLL CALL

Board Member Philip Golden	<u>Motion</u>
Board Member Leaona Chandler-Felton	<u>Second</u>
Board Member Dr. Hoess	<u>(Yes)</u>
Board Member Dr. Nchekwube	<u>(Yes)</u>
Board Member Dr. Foreit	<u>(Yes)</u>
Board Member Dr. McCullough	<u>(Yes)</u>

*Need 5 votes for a quorum.

Staff Salaries

Dr. Vavilala discussed adjusting a few staff salaries from what was approved in 2024. Some staff have been asked to increase work loads due to a change in their scope of work. These salary adjustments will not cause an increase in the budget request from the county general fund. The board was provided comparison salaries, but they would like to see



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more comparable salaries. It was discussed that many health departments do not have the same positions we have and gathering comparable salaries may be difficult.

ROLL CALL

Board Member _____ None _____	Motion _____
Board Member _____	Second _____
Board Member _____	(Yes) _____
Board Member _____	(Yes) _____
Board Member _____	(Yes) _____
Board Member _____	(Yes) _____

*Need 5 votes for a quorum.

It was agreed one salary will be adjusted from the previously approved salaries. The Vector Director position was voted to be adjusted to \$65,000.

ROLL CALL

Board Member Philip Golden	Motion _____
Board Member Dr. Hoess	Second _____
Board Member Dr. Foreit	(Yes) _____
Board Member Dr. Nchekwube	(Yes) _____
Board Member Leaona Chandler-Felton	(Yes) _____
Board Member Dr. McCullough	(abstain) _____

*Need 5 votes for a quorum.

Dr. Vavilala Term Renewal

Dr. Vavilala's term is up for renewal. She has been the Health Officer for 8 years. Terms are 4 years. All members were in favor of her renewal.

ROLL CALL

Board Member Philip Golden	Motion _____
Board Member Leaona Chandler-Felton	Second _____
Board Member Dr. Hoess	(Yes) _____
Board Member Dr. Nchekwube	(Yes) _____
Board Member Dr. Foreit	(Yes) _____
Board Member Dr. McCullough	(Yes) _____

*Need 5 votes for a quorum.



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Board of Health Discussion

The Board discussed ongoing challenges with achieving a quorum. Members noted that some individuals have not been attending meetings regularly and considered the possibility of replacing those unable to fulfill their responsibilities. It was also mentioned that, in the absence of Dr. Nckekwube, the meeting could not be called to order, as Vice President TJ Wigmore has missed the last three consecutive meetings.

Open Comment

Jackie Sloan objected to the meeting. She stated the meeting notice was not time stamped to show it was posted 48 hours in advance. She believes the votes taken today should not be counted. She stated all seats should be filled.

Attorney Sanghvi noted she will discuss the matter with County Attorney Fech.

Ron Seeger expressed his support for Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy. He stated concerns over the safety of the COVID vaccine. He also state alternate treatments should be explored and asked the board to recommend stopping the use of the COVID vaccine until safety studies are complete.

Barb Koteles would like the county attorney to address the board vacancies. She would like the board members posted on the county website with contact information. She also expressed concern regarding the board member's political party affiliation and worries republicans are being shut out.

Jeff Rosignol thanked the board for what they do, but he was disappointed the meeting started late. He mentioned concerns over the safety of the yellow fever vaccine. He supports Secretary Kennedy's efforts and believes healthier eating and less medication can help those with autism. He stated he would like partnerships with places of worship to address maternal and child health education.

Frank Camilli expressed concern the board voted on a budget without first reviewing it. It was discussed all members received the budget 4 days prior to the meeting. He would like the meeting minutes posted on the website and would like all past minutes to be available at the meeting for the public to take. Mr. Camilli was informed a copy of the minutes would be provided upon request.

Ron Seeger spoke again noting his opinion that vaccine additives are added as a "work around" for manufactures to no have a sterile facility. He would like additives eliminated from vaccines.

Adjournment: Leona Chandler-Felton made a motion to adjourn and Dr. McCullough seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned with unanimous approval.

Next Meeting: November 5, 2025 at 7:30am