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**MORGAN COUNTY BOARD OF
HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

At 8:03 a.m. President Elaine Flesher called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Flesher with all participating.

ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Flesher called the roll as follows:

Elaine Flesher – Here; Rhonda Smith – Here; Michael Huck – Here; Dr. Murrell – Here; Dr. Julia Clemens - Here.

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Michaels, Administrator; Lynn Mercer, Accreditation Coordinator; Peydon Kincaid, Fiscal Specialist; and Adam Esughi, Environmental Health Tech.

GUESTS:

Steve Best, Morgan County Commissioner

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 21, 2025 Regular Session were reviewed. Mrs. Smith noted that on the last page it says the next meeting will be held on September 17th. That should be September 18th. Mr. Huck made a motion to approve the August 21st minutes with that correction and Mrs. Smith seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Commissioner Best reported that he recently attended a Township Association meeting where Kyle Brooks, Director of Government Affairs with the Ohio Township Association, spoke about the movement to eliminate property taxes. Mr. Brooks stated if this is accomplished, it will eliminate townships. Commissioner Best said he believes it would negatively impact the health department since funding comes from the townships. There was a booth at the fair where they were asking people to



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sign a petition to get the elimination of property taxes on the ballot. The thing is, if that were to pass the fair would go away also.

Mr. Huck asked if the speaker said how the property tax money would be made up. Commissioner Best replied that it would be up to the House to come up with something different. Mrs. Smith asked if there was any discussion about tax reform. Commissioner Best said it certainly needs to be fixed, but going cold turkey isn't the answer. It does, however, provide a wake-up call to the State Legislature. He noted that everyone needs to educate the public on the negative impact of eliminating property taxes. Mr. Michaels commented that he and Mrs. Flesher attended the County Commissioner's meeting this week. Commissioner Best said they are always welcome.

HEALTH COMMISSIONER/MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT: (verbal)

At 8:15 a.m. Dr. Carl Ortman joined the meeting by phone. Mr. Michaels introduced the Board of Health members to him and asked Dr. Ortman to share his background. Dr. Ortman shared that he is the Medical Director/Health Commissioner for the Athens County Public Health Department, a practicing physician with a specialty in internal medicine and the Athens County Coroner. He shared information on West Nile virus and Lyme Disease. Dr. Ortman noted that a lot of Lyme Disease cases are going undiagnosed in the Southeast Ohio area. More providers need to be made aware of the symptoms of Lyme Disease and the importance of reporting cases. He feels health departments need to push information to the public on Lyme Disease. In regard to West Nile virus, Dr. Ortman feels providers in this area do not think about testing for it even though it is present in this area. Mr. Michaels commented that Dr. Ortman has been assisting with some behind the scenes things like signing transmittals to ODH for food and septic. He also talked to Director of Nursing, Jennifer Arnold, on the phone to provide advice. The Board thanked Dr. Ortman. He said his phone is always on and they should feel free to call him if needed. (Dr. Ortman left the meeting.)

BOARD ORIENTATION REVIEW AND CEUs:

Adam Esughi, Environmental Health Tech, did a presentation on the Mosquito Program. He covered different types of mosquitos and the diseases they carry, types of mosquito traps, and mosquito chemical control.

EXPENSES AND BALANCES REVIEW/APPROVAL:

Peydon Kincaid, Fiscal Specialist, said he has been working with Mr. Michaels to get things straightened out for the coming year. He asked if there were any questions on the reports submitted. Mr. Michaels reviewed the Revenue Audit Trail Report and explained each section. Mr. Kincaid noted that burial permits are increasing to \$10.00. This fee is set by the Ohio Department of Health. Mr. Michaels commented that on the report it shows revenue in the amount of \$2,150.00 for birth/death certificates, but the health department does not keep all of that. The majority of that money goes to the State. Mr. Michaels said the money collected from Plumbing fees also does not 100% belong to the health department. 60% of the money collected from plumbing permits goes to Washington County and 40% stays at the health department. Mrs. Flesher said it is confusing that the revenue report includes funds that are not truly revenue because some of it does not stay at the health department. She



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noted that you can see reflected in the reports that funding is slowing going away in some areas. Mr. Michaels stated that in the area of unemployment, he asked Clemens Nelson to appeal an unemployment claim. They did not get it submitted in a timely fashion so they reimbursed the health department for money the health department had to pay.

Dr. Clemens made a motion to approve the Expenses and Balances. Mr. Huck seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board discussed the Main Street property owned by Mr. David Becker. Dr. Murrell asked if she was correct in that Mr. Becker is prepared to repair the building. She thought it was going to be condemned. Mr. Michaels said he thought so too. Mrs. Smith said in the letter that was emailed to Board members it looked like Mr. Becker was given another 90 days. Dr. Murrell stated the standing water, live wires and other unsafe conditions were enough to say the building is not safe for human habitation. She doesn't understand how Mr. Becker is able to essentially restart this process. Mr. Michaels said he would give Mr. Rick Dostal with the SE Building Department a call. (He did so and received Mr. Dostal's voice mail.) Mr. Michaels then called the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, but was informed he was out. Mr. Michaels called Mayor Finley and was able to get him on the phone for the Board to talk to. Mrs. Flesher asked Mayor Finley if Mr. Becker was given another 90 days and has plans to repair the Main Street building. Mayor Finley said he had not heard that. He believes Mr. Dostal and Mr. Becker have an appointment at the end of September. This will give Mr. Dostal the opportunity to see how bad the building really is. Mayor Finley said it would be good to have the health department reiterate that the building is not fit for human habitation. He said Mr. Becker did find an engineer that said the building is in fair condition. Mr. Michaels has a copy of that report and will forward it to the Board of Health.

Adam Esughi and Peydon Kincaid left the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

Mrs. Mercer presented a brief overview of the Community Health Improvement Plan's priority health needs and the strategies to meet those needs. She shared the priorities selected by the agencies in the Southeastern Ohio Health Improvement Collaborative (SOHIC) and noted that many of them overlap. She specifically reviewed the priorities and strategies set by the Morgan County Health Department. Two priorities were chosen: 1. Nutrition and Physical Health and 2. Mental Health. She reviewed the four strategies selected to meet nutrition and physical health needs and the three strategies selected to meet the mental health needs of the community. Next steps were identified as 1. Meet with community partners to begin working on strategic priorities and 2. Document progress for MCHD's first annual report, which is due in February 2026. Mrs. Mercer noted that Jennifer Arnold would be leading the community partner meetings.

Dr. Murrell made a motion to approve the Community Health Improvement Plan. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.



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Commissioner Best asked the Board if Dr. Ortman is replacing Dr. Clark. Mr. Michaels explained that Dr. Clark is retiring and under Public Employees Retirement he has to quit working for three months before he can go back to work in public employment. Dr. Clark will return as the Medical Director/Health Commissioner in December.

Commissioner Best asked if the Board has discussed the freezers at the EMA Office. Mr. Michaels said they will need to be moved. The new EMA Director, Steve Redrup, took note of the wattage use of the freezers and estimates it costs EMA about \$500 per year to keep them in their building. The freezers are back-ups for the vaccines for the health department.

At 9:21 a.m. Commissioner Best left the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 9:22 a.m. Dr. Clemens made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion and/or compensation. Mr. Huck seconded the motion. Roll call vote:

Mrs. Flesher – aye; Mrs. Smith – aye; Dr. Murrell – aye; Mr. Huck – aye; Dr. Clemens – aye

The Board returned to regular session at 10:17 a.m.

Dr. Murrell moved with regret to terminate the contract with Morgan Local Schools and Jobs & Family Services for lice infestation control and medication distribution, effective immediately. Dr. Clemens seconded the motion. Board members voted in favor with the exception of Mrs. Smith who abstained. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Food License Fees First Reading – Mr. Michaels reviewed the proposed fee increases for 2026. The second reading will take place at the October Board of Health meeting with the final reading being at the November meeting.

ACCREDITATION REPORT: (handout)

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: (Handout and verbal)

Mr. Michaels noted that the MRC grant will be ending soon. The Tobacco grant was awarded in the amount of \$68,050 for the 2025-2026 grant cycle. Board of Health minutes are now available on the health department's website.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING AND EPIDEMIOLOGY REPORTS: (Handouts)

Mr. Michaels shared that Mrs. Arnold held a CPR class last night at the health department. It was not



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very well attended. People ask for classes, but don't always show up.

He also noted that Mrs. Smith met with Samantha Iacone regarding tobacco grant activities at the schools. Ms. Iacone proposed an INDEPTH program where students who are caught vaping or smoking would be required to attend four 50-minute educational classes on the dangers of vaping/smoking. Mrs. Smith said teachers are not going to give up 50 minutes of class time. She asked Ms. Iacone to revamp the program. Ms. Iacone will have to get permission from the Ohio Department of Health to modify the program and still meet the grant requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORTS: (Handouts)

PHEP AND EDUCATION REPORTS: (Handouts)

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Huck made a motion to adjourn at 10:29 a.m. The next Board meeting will be held Thursday, October 16th at 8:00 a.m.



Elaine Flesher, President



Jeff Michaels, Administrator