

**Board of Health
Tuesday, October 7, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Penn Room**

Members Attending: J. Dethoff, J. Schwartz, B. Hospidor, K. Wang - virtually

Others Attending: S. Smith – in person; M. Sninsky, J. Melendez - virtually

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Hospidor, seconded by Dr. Schwartz, to approve the August 5, 2025 meeting summary as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

- Health Inspections

No report

- Lead Abatement Program

Mr. Melendez reported that 57 units have been completed. He stated that two assessments are scheduled this week and one assessment is scheduled for next week.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if additional contractors had been located. Mr. Melendez stated that another RFP was issued and five additional contractors were located.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if local contractors are involved. Mr. Melendez stated that most contractors are not local. He stated that this was an open opportunity. He stated that the contractors and their employees must have State certification to remove lead.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there were more properties that need to be remediated than there is funding. Mr. Melendez stated that he could address additional properties with additional funding. He stated that there is currently no waiting list and stated that remediation takes approximately three months from inspection to completion.

Mr. Melendez disconnected from the meeting at this time.

- EMS

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the number of respiratory illnesses is much lower so far this season. He stated that there are challenges staying current with new federal guidelines. He stated that the first month of paramedic training is complete and that the Department has sufficient PPE.

Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that the Department has been coordinating ride-alongs for Reading Hospital physicians to increase their understanding of emergency medicine. He stated that this is resulting in great relationship building and that he is working toward a similar program with Penn State St. Joseph. He noted his hope that Board members would also participate in ride-alongs this spring.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the length of time of the paramedic training. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that there are four participants who will attend training for eleven months. He stated that there are now additional clinical hours required as part of the program than there were in the past. He stated that once formal training is completed, the students will learn City operations. He expressed the belief that this is a worthwhile program and noted his hope that another class will begin in 2026.

Dr. Dethoff questioned whether the Department continues recruitment efforts. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that recruitment and training attendance will depend on the 2026 budget. He noted his hope to find the best candidates. He reminded all that there were 15 candidates at the beginning of this process and only four are participating. He stated that there are many vacancies but that the Department is currently able to maintain a high level of service.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there were commonalities in the backgrounds of the four participants. Deputy Chief Sninsky stated that Reading paramedics must first be EMTs. He stated that many of the participants are local. He noted the high rate of burnout and turnover in this field.

Deputy Chief Sninsky disconnected from the meeting at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

- Measles / COVID Outbreaks

Dr. Dethoff questioned if there are local concerns. Dr. Schwartz stated that there was a surge in COVID but that the level has declined. She stated that she continues to encourage vaccines.

Dr. Dethoff questioned the current COVID vaccine advice. Dr. Wang stated that the PA Governor has ensured that PA residents' COVID vaccines are at no cost to the individual. She stated that payment is critical to her patients and she continues to encourage everyone to get vaccinated. Dr. Schwartz agreed and stated that a prescription is not needed to get a COVID vaccine and that there are many qualifying conditions.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2026 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Smith questioned if the Board would like to continue with its current meeting schedule in 2026. Members present agreed.

PENDING MATTERS

- County Health Department

Dr. Wang stated that there is no new information. She stated that the cost is prohibitive.

- Fluoride in Drinking Water

Dr. Dethoff stated that fluoride has long been considered safe at proper levels. He stated that there have been recent challenges to adding fluoride to drinking water. There are arguments that studies have shown that fluoride in drinking water causes lower intelligence and health problems and other arguments that these studies are flawed and that intelligence was tested at a very young age. He noted Dr. Kimball's expertise in this field and stated that she is ready to assist when the issue comes forward again. He stated that he has recently learned that Buffalo, NY citizens are suing their local water provider to add fluoride to the water system.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 4 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room.

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk