

APPROVED MINUTES
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Board of Directors Meeting
September 20, 2022
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Greg Pils, Vice Chair Dr. Robert Corliss, Secretary Dr. James Schauer, Dr. Richard Moss, Dr. Jonathan Meiman, Dr. Christopher Strang, Dr. Jon Audhya, Mr. Gil Kelley, Mr. Jeffery Kindrai,

WSLH STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Errin Rider, Mr. Dave Webb, Ms. Kris Hansbery, Ms. Jan Klawitter, Mr. Kevin Karbowski, Mr. Mark Conklin, Ms. Tip Vandall, Mr. Jim Sterk, Mr. Steve Strebel, Ms. Amy Miles, Ms. Camille Danielson; Mr. Jim Hermanson

DNR STAFF PRESENT: Zana Sijan, Steve Geis

GUESTS PRESENT: Mimi Johnson, Presenter
Keith Poulsen, WVDL

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 1. ROLL CALL

Chairman Pils called the meeting to order.

Chairman Pils initiated and conducted the roll call of the Board members. All Board member seats or their designated representatives were present except for excused member Ms. Jessica Blahnick, Ms. Gina Green-Harris and excused alternates Ms. Paula Tran and Ms. Anna Benton.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kindrai made the motion to approve the June 21, 2022 minutes as submitted. Dr. Meiman seconded the motion. The voice vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 3. REORGANIZATION OF AGENDA

There was no request to reorganize the agenda.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 4. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None

BUSINESS ITEMS

Item 5. BOARD MEMBERS' MATTERS

Chairman Pils announced the pending departure of Dr. Richard Moss, who is retiring, and thanked him for his many years of public service. Dr. Moss responded with his thanks for his time with the WSLH Board, stating that the mission is compelling and that the diversity provided a tremendous, extraordinary learning experience. With the leadership transitions that have occurred with WSLH, Dr. Moss congratulated Dr. Schauer for his efforts. He also advised that the WSLH response during the pandemic was the Lab's finest hour, but it was unfortunate that the pandemic had interfered with plans to bring the University and the Lab closer. He is pleased with the great opportunities for continued evolution and assures everyone that he plans to pop in from time to time and would be happy to consult. Dr. Schauer also thanked Dr. Moss for his leadership and service during his time on the Board, and also for assisting Dr. Schauer, personally, with his support and counsel.

Dr. Jon Audhya was welcomed to the Board by Chairman Pils, as he will take the position vacated by Dr. Moss. He thanked the Board and advised he sees great opportunities for UW and WSLH collaboration and he is looking forward to those efforts in the future. Dr. Schauer stated he was excited to be working with Dr. Audhya.

Chairman Pils acknowledged the pending retirement of longtime EHD Director David Webb. Chairman Pils advised that he and Mr. Webb go back many years, to when Mr. Webb was his supervisor, and he has known him as a boss, mentor and colleague and it was a pleasure to have worked with him. Dr. Schauer also thanked him for his service as a longtime state employee. Dr. Schauer advised that Mr. Webb would be around in limited capacity until April or May of 2023, stepping back from roles and handing projects over. On the non-clinical side there will be some reformatting, with Steve Strelbel as Interim Associate Director with 4 program directors: Amy Miles, Amy Mager, Jocelyn Hemming and Camille Danielson.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Item 6. PFAS – REGULATIONS, DNR & EPA STANDARDS

Ms. Mimi Johnson from the Department of Natural Resources presented PFAS updates.

The DNR's strategic roadmap (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/ActionPlan.html>) was created and in December 2020 the PFAS Action Plan was provided to the Governor's Office. Ms. Johnson advised the Natural Resources Board passed two packages amending drinking water standards from 20 parts per trillion (ppt) to the recommended 70 ppt; however they did not advance this change to groundwater standards.

As of August 1, 2022, all standards are now required regarding drinking water and surface water as well as regarding firefighting foam, containing PFAS.

Wisconsin's Department of Justice has taken legal action, filing lawsuits against companies who caused PFAS contamination, trying to hold them financially responsible for the clean-up costs.

DNR is examining the funding, along with EPA guidance, for the hundreds of millions, especially for smaller, disadvantage communities, who shouldn't be hindered by lack of supplies. The goal is to have a single point of entry to apply for multiple resources with one application and get in the door for funding. We will need to invest in public infrastructures now and down the road.

The DNR action plan will be spending \$20 million over 2 years, in addition to some assistance from the Governor's budget. DNR worked with DATCP, in accepting bids from companies to help them handle the firefighter foam waste collection. North Shore submitted the winning bid to help collect and dispose of 25,000 gallons of foam waste.

Ms. Johnson also advised we would need to buildout PFAS Charters with water treatment; with opportunities in help/support and getting education/certification. We need to move toward the prevention as far as PFAS, in addition to PFAS disposal and destruction. There is a plethora of destructions, but there are questions and requests for technologies, which are untested and cost-prohibitive at this point. One of the best abilities is the avoidance of PFAS, altogether, where any reduction in its use is good. The FDA recently underwent some pressure from Congress, regarding food packaging, specifically canned clams, which resulted in more attention and bills for statewide bans in Colorado and other states.

Dr. Schauer advised that there is a lot of work in PFAS, with two labs within the WSLH: PFAS research exploratory work, and testing. We're looking at PFAS and the rain. There is a Chicken-or-the-Egg dilemma, in that, although they are called "Forever Chemicals," the chemicals undergo a multitude of transformations in the environment. Goals include the need to elucidate how bad it is, and what to do about it. As far as finding PFAS in blood, we have to determine if there is a "fix"; in the same way as Newborn Screening, we don't want to test for a problem if there is nothing we can do toward alleviating the problem.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Item 7. WSLH FACILITIES UPDATE

Mr. Dave Webb provided an overall update to the Board. Mr. Webb advised that we are looking at possibilities mean to provide us with more space as WSLH continues to expand, some temporary, some permanent.

There is a medium amount of space with Hill Farms, which is where the Soils Lab recently moved. There is still old DATCP lab space where work would be able to be done.

Mr. Webb showed the first floor of the DATCP office building, located near the Ag Drive building. The first floor is vacant and underused, as DATCP continues to consolidate their people on the upper floors. DOA helps maintain and manage building needs. Mr. Webb advised DOA is extremely responsive to building issues.

Walton Commons is currently rented space, via private lease. The landlord is disinterested and has no sense of urgency when it comes to building needs. Walton Commons houses OIS (under Mr. Al Benson) along with two other units (under Mr. Steve Strebel), so Mr. Webb, Mr. Benson and Mr. Strebel have been talking about DATCP as an option. The lease is up at the end of 2023 and we could potentially move them to the 1st floor of the DATCP building. It's approximately 65 offices, which Mr. Webb describes as nice cube farm/office space. It is financially similar to the current situation, with DOA to look after things. There is a loading dock available, as well as a ground floor with a mailroom that could be made useful to WSLH. In response to a question, Mr. Webb advised that there is no active lab space available at DATCP. Mr. Webb advises he is excited to make use of the space and because he know that DOA is quick to respond to situations.

Dr. Schauer advised we're looking at a 3-pronged approach: We need additional space overall; we need to replace Stovall building; we need things to be better financially.

After today's meeting a tour of Stovall will take place. Stovall was built in the 1950's and is not ideal for modern lab space. We are looking at a strategy for a new building. Long-term campus plans do not include this building and they have plans to completely replace it.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Item 8. FINANCIAL REPORT

Kevin Karbowski, WSLH Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the Financial Report to the Board.

Mr. Karbowski advised WSLH had expected to lose \$624,000; WSLH lost \$1.4 million because of inflation.

We are under budget on clinical revenue. We anticipate when grants are spent, and revenue is down; the work will be done, just not in this fiscal year. Inflation hit supplies hard and we are paying more, particularly in the area of Freight.

In environmental testing, we did more work on contracts than anticipated. As for the NADP variance, we lost some work but expect it will return in the future. It's due to timing with outstanding items, but not an area of concern.

Occupational Health has gone down with COVID. We projected for it to come back faster, next year. We lost \$2.2 million last year on Newborn Screening.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Item 9. CONTRACTS REPORT

Tip Vandall, WSLH Revenue Manager, provided a brief update on Contracts to the Board.

Ms. Vandall presented the current contracts, \$2.9 million in total, and advised of 6 more contracts pending. Other contracts are being worked on at this time and there will be more to announce, next meeting.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Item 10 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr James Schauer, Director, WSLH

WSLH Biennial Budget Requests

Kevin Karbowski

Mr. Karbowski advised there were 4 projects, as listed:

- **\$2,200,000 annually for Newborn Screen Laboratory Operations**
 - In Wisconsin, WSLH is required by law to perform newborn screening testing on samples from Wisconsin babies and WDHS is required to fund these activities. Current statute requires WDHS to set a "card price" through Administrative Rule that covers the costs. The card price has not increased since 2010. WDHS is in the process of working on the funding but the process takes several years. This request will allow WSLH to provide services until WDHS increases the card price.
- **\$2,000,000 annually for Forensic Toxicology (OWI, Coroners & Medical Examiners) Testing**
 - WSLH receives an annual allocation from the Driver Improvement Surcharge. The allocation has not increased since 2010 while OWI cases have increased 260% since 2014 and coroners and medical examiners cases have increased 340%. This request will allow WSLH to continue to provide these services including reduced turnaround times.
- **\$130,000 to Hire a Soil Health Faculty**
 - This request will allow WSLH and the Department of Soil Science in the College of Agricultural and Life Science to recruit a new jointly appointed faculty member. This faculty member will focus on the state's interests in protecting soil health.
- **\$200,000 to Maintain support for WSLH Rent Costs**
 - This is a recurring and regular request for the State to cover 50% of the rent costs of the Department of Administrative Affairs space utilized by WSLH.

Dr. Schauer answered a question about the first two items, explaining that we don't control funding and revenues. DHS controls the newborn screening blood spot card prices. The OWI surcharge funding that comes through to Forensic Toxicology is with the State of Wisconsin and revenue is shared. WSLH are trying to work through it, engaging via campus liaisons and SMPH.

Communications Director Jan Klawitter also advised that the hospitals and midwives have to purchase the newborn screening blood spot cards in advance. She also explained that when someone is pulled over for OWI and has to pay the various fines and fees, we are just one of a variety of different entities who share in the distribution of that revenue.

Dr Schauer advised that there are complex parts and guidance is critically important, as WSLH is teeing up to make progress. We may be looking at cutting Newborn Screening and Forensic Toxicology items, if funding isn't increased. Post-election, we will take a temperature and start to figure out the next steps.

Update on Strategic Plan

- **Ecommerce and Testing Web Portal** – Use to make payment or obtain test results - OIS ground work
- **Scientific Investment** – Leverage outside funding sources - Science experimentation - Connections with the UW units. The Staff Idea Awards actually saved us money through implementation of the efficiency ideas they came up with.
- **Sensors – Point-of-Care Testing** - Too soon to tell
- **Advance the Public Health Mission** – Excellent, with new courses in Cytology – Structure is being analyzed – Provided Guest Lectures, with other UW units
- **Bioinformatics** – Amazon Web Services, APHL – Staffing
- **Outreach** – New video Cytology, for fellow, new students – Sample collection. CDD, future – Gap analysis, future website redesign
- **Clinical Biomonitoring** – APHL biomonitoring network - CDC
- **Cytogenetic Business Plan** – Wiped out its loss
- **Investigate Need for Master's Degree in Cytotechnology** - Monitoring
- **Laboratory Management Systems Enhancements** – OnBase to organize – 3rd-party facility / Team Dynamix
- **Space** – Dave updated on this portion, earlier

Water Boil Notice Report

Dave Webb – There was no activity to report.

Public Relations Report

- Jan Klawitter
 - Ms. Klawitter updated Board Members on some of the highlights and referred them to the packet which provides details and further information about WSLH employee activities and accomplishments.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Kindrai moved to adjourn. Dr. Corliss seconded and the meeting was concluded.