



**Watertown Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Watertown Dept of Public Health
515 S First Street/Zoom
August 11, 2026 – 3:30 PM**

Members Present: Dr. Donene Rowe, Dr. Todd Huhn, Ald. Dana Davis, Ald. Gina Nietecki

Members Via Zoom: Megan Wierschke

Others in attendance: Carol Quest, Abbigail Kuehn, Kim Hiller

1. Call to Order

Dr. Huhn called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

2. Citizens to be heard

None.

3. Review and take action: Board of Health Minutes – May 12, 2026

Minutes from the May 12, 2026 meeting were reviewed. Motion by Ald. Dana Davis to approve; second by Ald. Gina Nietecki.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. Review and take action: Finance Reports – Preliminary July 2026

The preliminary July 2026 financial report was reviewed.

Carol noted that accounts are continuing as expected for the year.

Environmental Health Revenue accounts are ahead due to license renewal fees being received in May, June & July. The new license year started July 1st.

The Health department budget accounts for electric and fuel appear to be low. Kim will follow up with City Hall to investigate and update accounts as needed.

The vaccine expense account is showing a large unspent amount of the budget. Carol explained that most of the funding is spent later in the year for influenza and other vaccines.

Motion was made by Ald. Dana Davis to approve; second by Ald. Gina Nietecki.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

5. Review & discuss: 140 Review – Thursday, November 5th, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The State requires every health department to complete a 140 Review. This review is completed every 5 years. Due to an uneven number of health departments needing review in 2027, the state requested the review be completed a year early.

The Board of Health members are invited to attend the review for the first hour which will review board of health participation and involvement with the department. Members are able to stay for more of the review if they are able. The Review will be held at the Senior & Community Center in the Terrace Room.

6. Review and discuss: Resolution to Support Sustainable State Funding for Local Public Health Departments

Public Health organizations are working with the Governor's office and other elected officials to highlight the need for funding for public health. Currently the Watertown Department of Public Health receives \$3,600 for communicable disease work. This funding lasts approximately until March.

This resolution states the City is supporting the need for more public health funding. This resolution would be approved by the Common Council and then sent to the Governor's office. Many other communities, local health departments and county boards are presenting similar resolutions of support. Wood County was the first to submit their support.

Carol noted that grant funding is shrinking yearly but the expenses continue to rise in cost.

Motion was made by Dr. Rowe to approve and forward the resolution to the Common Council, seconded by Ald. Dana Davis.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

7. Review and discussion: Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program updates

The Emergency Preparedness grant ends in June. The newest grant started July 1st.

The priorities for this grant year are; Community Preparedness, Volunteer Management, and Information Sharing

The City emergency plans are being reviewed and updated and will be forwarded on to be approved.

The Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR) database is maintained and updated by staff. It is an important tool for securing volunteers in emergencies situations. The database was crucial during the pandemic and yielded 20 – 25 volunteers for clinics that the Health Department held.

Laci is a CPR trainer and has been training departments throughout the City. A total of 39 City staff has been trained and others are scheduled. Laci works with other trainers in the Police Department to complete these training sessions.

The cooling center was opened in early July for extended hours. The shelter would be open 24 hours if there was a power loss for an extended period of time.

Dr. Huhn and Ald. Gina Nietecki have offered to review procedures as they have experience with this type of operation.

8. Review and discussion: Public Health Environmental Health Program updates

The new inspection year started July 1st.

If facilities did not pay their renewal fee by July 1st, they were assessed a late fee.

If the fees remain unpaid, the facility will be closed August 15th. A Cease & Desist order is issued to the facility for non-payment of the license, and a fine of \$500/day will be issued if the facility continues to operate. To return to operations, the facility will be considered a new business and will go through a site review, pre-inspection and final inspection to receive a license.

There are currently 15 facilities that remain unpaid in Watertown and Jefferson County as of today. The inspectors have made every effort to contact the owners to get their licenses paid. Some of the facilities may be closed due to owners not responding.

There have been some issues with new businesses opening in Watertown that weren't approved by the Health Department. Sydney has been working with other departments to develop a process that allows all departments to communicate and coordinate regarding new businesses and the requirements each department needs to be met. This will help ensure that business owners are not inadvertently given permission to open before all necessary requirements have been satisfied.

The pool policy update was successful. There is a total of 43 pools and 4 of those are on monthly tests. There were no closures. The Environmental Health staff educated pool operators and owners to foster a better understanding of pool chemistry.

The Environmental Health staff will be working on a newsletter highlighting the top violations found during inspections and provide information to avoid the violations.

Human health hazard complaints have increased. Carol handles the Watertown complaints and Holly & Tyler investigate the complaints in Jefferson County.

The water lab is accepting private well samples. A few samples have been processed.

9. Review and discuss: Public Health Community Health Program updates

Three social connection events were held this summer, in June, July and August in connection with Watertown Family Connections playgroups in the park. Prenatal and parenting families are invited to these events to encourage networking and connection with other families. Unfortunately, the events were not well attended due to weather and air quality (smoke). More dates are planned for fall at the library to introduce parents with younger children to the baby bounce sessions.

Previous social events included a visit from the police or fire department. These visits helped introduce families and the children to the department staff and equipment in the hope that it will make these departments less intimidating. Abbey will be contacting the Street Department to invite them to an event with equipment for families & children to see and experience.

The department had a nurse leave. They were with the department for 6 months. Interviews will be starting to find a replacement.

Immunization clinics are held two times a month and are usually full at the start of school. Many times, there is so much demand that additional clinics are added to accommodate the increased need. If parents are unable to receive the necessary vaccines before exclusion date, they are required to fill out a waiver or be excluded from school.

The Health Department hosted an AHEC intern. They were with the department in June and July. They created the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) document that is being reviewed by Dodge & Jefferson Counties. They also worked in the garden, created social media information on mental health for teens and parents, helped with Seal A Smile promotion, and worked on questions for the survey for the Community Health Assessment (CHA). The intern was excellent and worked efficiently and completed tasks quickly.

Drive through building update. There is a construction meeting next week. Nathan from Engineering has been a great help in the process.

Costing and Capacity Assessment. This is an assessment of all local health departments to determine the staff needed to provide foundational public health services. Once completed, a report is issued detailing the information that was collected.

In September, the department will be providing nursing services for the Watertown Unified School District. Laci has been assisting for the past few years. This includes training staff for medications, insulin dispensing, blood sugar checks and other items.

There has been notice of cases of measles in southern Wisconsin. The state will be releasing more information later.

The 2027 budget preparation has started. The guidelines have been provided and there is a 0% increase in expenses except for personnel accounts.

10. New business

None

11. Adjourn.

Motion made to adjourn by Ald. Gina Nietecki and seconded by Ald. Dana Davis. Carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next Board of Health meeting will be Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Quest".

Carol Quest
Director/Health Officer

Note: The minutes are uncorrected. Any correction made thereto will be noted in the minutes of the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.