



GRAND ERIE BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 9:30 AM
Boardroom 422/Hybrid
194 Terrace Hill Street, Brantford, ON

Members Present:

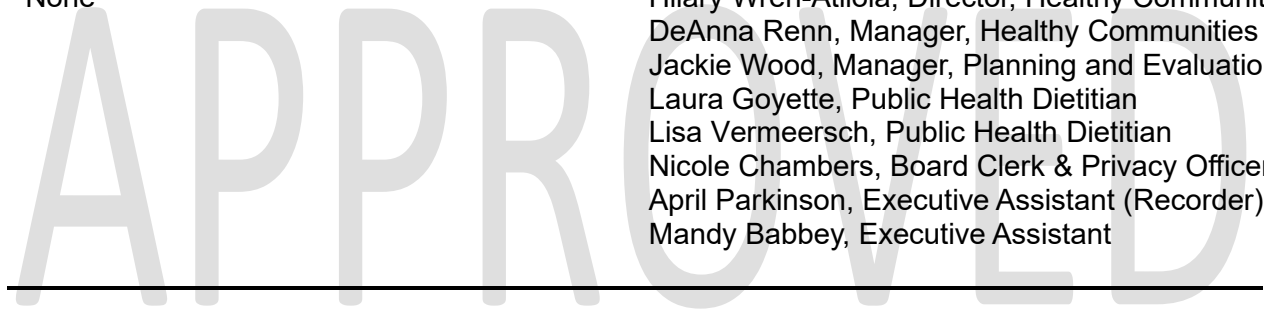
Maria Kinkel, Chair, Provincial Appointee
John Bell, Vice Chair, Brant County
Michael Bodnar, Provincial Appointee
Kim Huffman, Norfolk County
Amy Martin, Norfolk County
John Metcalfe, Haldimand County
Rose Sicoli, City of Brantford

Staff Present:

Dr. Jason Malenfant, Acting Medical Officer of Health
Sarah Page, Chief Executive Officer
Sarah Titmus, Director, Public Health
Syed Shah, Director, Public Health
Brad Stark, Director, Finance
Katie Greene, Director, Human Resources
Gary Williams, Director, Communications & Strategic Initiatives
Alexey Babayan, Director, Foundational Standards
Hilary Wren-Atilola, Director, Healthy Communities
DeAnna Renn, Manager, Healthy Communities
Jackie Wood, Manager, Planning and Evaluation
Laura Goyette, Public Health Dietitian
Lisa Vermeersch, Public Health Dietitian
Nicole Chambers, Board Clerk & Privacy Officer
April Parkinson, Executive Assistant (Recorder)
Mandy Babbey, Executive Assistant

Members Regrets:

None



1. Call to Order

Chair M. Kinkel called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She noted that Member R. Sicoli will be joining later in the meeting.

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations

Chair Kinkel reminded Members to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

3. Approval of Agenda / Urgent Business

Moved By: Member K. Huffman
Seconded by: Member J. Bell

That the February 18, 2026 Board of Health agenda be approved, as presented.

Carried.

4. Delegations

None

5. Standing Reports

5.1. Report from the Chair (Verbal Report)

Chair M. Kinkel provided a verbal update, thanking Member A. Martin for her leadership during her tenure as Board Chair. The Board received correspondence from Norfolk County regarding the appointment of a temporary Member during her leave, and from the City of Brantford confirming Mayor Davis' resignation – a replacement is expected following the February 24 City Council meeting. Chair Kinkel also advised that Dr. Malenfant has received his official provincial appointment.

Chair Kinkel summarized highlights from alPHa's winter symposium, which J. Bell also attended. Member Bell referenced comments from Dr. Kieran Moore regarding wage harmonization delays, the prioritization of the Ontario Health Data Platform, and a forthcoming review of public health governance, and expressed concerns related to funding and reinvestment.

Moved By: Member J. Metcalfe
Seconded by: Member A. Martin

That the Report from the Chair (Verbal Report), be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

6. Special Topic Report

6.1. Food Insecurity in the GEPH Region, 2025

L. Goyette and L. Vermeersch presented a report as provided in the agenda package. Chair Kinkel thanked staff, and Members noted the report was timely, data-driven, and responsive to the province's request for additional data.

Members asked questions about the proposed resolution, the use of home ownership data, the absence of Indigenous data, and how data is shared with community partners. Members recommended that future reports include MPAC-benchmarked home ownership data.

Moved By: Member A. Martin
Seconded by: Member K. Huffman

That Report 2026-007: Food Insecurity in the GEPH Region, 2025, be received for informational purposes; and

That Report 2026-007 be forwarded to The Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Ontario Boards of Health, and local community partners including food banks and housing associations; and

That the Board of Health correspond with the provincial government including local MPPs to share food affordability data that demonstrates the need to increase Ontario Works rates; and

That the Board of Health correspond with the federal government including local MPs applauding the impact of the Canada Child Benefit to households experiencing severe food insecurity, and encourage the expansion of the benefit by increasing the amount for lowest income households and equalizing the benefit for low income families with children over 6 years old; and

That both correspondence include specific notice that Six Nations Reserve and MCFN have not been accounted for in the data reported by the Canadian Income Survey; and

That the Board of Health endorse Attachment A: *A Primer for Municipalities on Food Insecurity in the Grand Erie Public Health Region* and forward the primer to the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County and Norfolk County; and

That staff be directed to connect with municipal partners for a primer presentation.

Carried.

L. Goyette and L. Vermeersch left the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

7. Program Reports & New Business

7.1. Healthy Communities (Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being) Program Report

D. Renn and J. Wood presented the report as provided in the agenda package. Members asked questions about program attendance, outreach strategies, and the use of social media and targeted advertising. Staff advised that while large turnout is not anticipated, the program is successfully reaching individuals who do not typically access other services, including populations most affected by the social determinants of health, with consistent attendance indicating positive impact.

L. Goyette and L. Vermeersch joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Moved By: Member J. Bell
Seconded by: Member M. Bodnar

That Report 2026-008: Chronic Disease Prevention: Built Environment, Healthy Eating, Injury Prevention, be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

Member A. Martin had a follow-up question regarding agenda item 6.1; she sought clarification regarding the use of a land acknowledgement in the report.

D. Renn, J. Wood, L. Goyette and L. Vermeersch left the meeting at 10:27 a.m. and did not return.

7.2. Organizational and Financial Merger Process Report

B. Stark and H. Wren-Atilola presented the report as provided in the agenda package. Members asked questions about remote and hybrid work arrangements, budget variances and projected expenditures, use of merger and capital funding, and funding allocated for governance activities.

Member R. Sicoli joined the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

Direction was provided to staff to advance advocacy through municipal channels and local MPPs, consistent with advice from Dr. Kieran Moore. Staff were further requested to bring forward, for Board consideration, an analysis of public health budget trends and to develop messaging to the province advocating for the restoration or revision of the current 75/25 funding model.

Moved By: Member J. Metcalfe
Seconded by: Member M. Bodnar

That Report 2026-009: Organizational and Financial Merger Process, be received for informational purposes; and

Carried.

7.3. GEPH Cash Position (Verbal Report)

B. Stark presented a verbal update on the organization's cash position, noting that despite approved merger and one-time funding, funds were delayed, resulting in a period of limited cash flow. He noted that all funding issues are expected to be resolved by April 1st. Staff are working on developing an investment policy, including the use of short-term GICs, while balancing cash flow needs. Direction was provided to include an update regarding the 2025 financial position to the Committee's next meeting on February 26th.

Members also inquired about credit card limits and capacities, municipal reimbursement, risks associated with delayed provincial funding in future years, and the development and approval process for corporate services and finance-related policies.

Moved By: Member K. Huffman
Seconded by: Member J. Bell

That Item 7.3, GEPH Cash Position (Verbal Report), be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

8. Committee Reports and Recommendations

None

9. Consent Agenda

9.1. Brantford Brant Norfolk Ontario Health Team - Q1 2026 Report

9.2. Middlesex-London Board of Health - Alcohol Labelling Policy Position

9.3. Board of Health - Meeting Minutes - January 26, 2026 (Special)

9.4. Board of Health - In-Camera Meeting Minutes - January 26, 2026 (Confidential)

9.5. Board of Health - Meeting Minutes - January 28, 2026

9.6. Board of Health - In-Camera Meeting Minutes - January 28, 2026 (Confidential)

9.7. Governance Committee - Meeting Minutes - November 12, 2025

9.8. Norfolk County - Alternate Board Member Representation

9.9. City of Brantford - Letter of Resignation - K. Davis

Moved By: Member J. Metcalfe
Seconded by: Member R. Sicoli

That items 9.1 and items 9.3 through 9.9 inclusive of the Consent Agenda dated February 18, 2026, be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

Moved By: Member J. Bell
Seconded by: Member M. Bodnar

That item 9.2 be received for informational purposes; and

That staff be directed to send a letter of endorsement on behalf of the Board of Health regarding Middlesex-London Health Unit's Policy Position on Alcohol Labelling (Appendix 'C') and the Statement from Provincial/Territorial Chief Medical Officers of Health on Labelling of Alcohol Products (Appendix 'D') to all members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology, copied to all Ontario boards of Health and local Members of Parliament.

Carried.

10. Notices of Motion/Motion

10.1. Governance Training and Funding Options

Moved By: Member A. Martin

Seconded by: Member R. Sicoli

That staff be directed to bring forward a report for Board consideration regarding potential funding options for governance training, including (but not limited to) available courses, consultant support and/or shadowing opportunities for the Executive Leadership Team.

Carried.

11. Upcoming Agenda Items

The following items will be considered at the Board of Health Meeting on March 25, 2026:

- New Business: Strategic Planning Workshop
- Board of Health Orientation

The Board of Health recessed at 10:55 a.m. and resumed at 11:00 a.m.

12. In Camera Session

12.1. Confidential Legal Matter (Historical Employment-Related Matter)

12.2. Confidential Employment Matter

Moved By: Member A. Martin
Seconded by: Member K. Huffman

That the Grand Erie Board of Health meeting move In Camera at 11:00 a.m. pursuant to Section 239(2)(e) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, as the matter pertains to litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board (Item 12.1); and

Pursuant to Section 239(2)(b) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, as the matter pertains to personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; and Section 239(2)(d) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, as the matter pertains to labour relations or employee negotiations. (Item 12.2).

Carried.

The Board of Health convened in Closed Session at 11:00 a.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 11:40 a.m.

Chair M. Kinkel noted that two motions resulted from Closed Session.

Moved By: Member J. Bell
Seconded by: Member A. Martin

That Report 2026-005: Confidential Legal Matters, be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

Moved By: Member M. Bodnar
Seconded by: Member J. Metcalfe

That In Camera agenda item 12.2 (Confidential Employment Matter), be received for informational purposes.

Carried.

13. Adjournment

Moved By: Member R. Sicoli
Seconded by: Member J. Metcalfe

That the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Carried.

'Original Signed By'

Chair

'Original Signed By'

Board of Health Clerk