



# City of Columbia, Missouri

## Meeting Minutes - Draft

### Board of Health



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Thursday, May 9, 2024  
5:30 PM

Regular

Department of Public  
Health and Human  
Services  
Training Room 1  
1005 W. Worley St.  
Columbia, MO 65203

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER

**Present:** 8 - Harry Feirman, Elizabeth Hussey, Mahree Skala, Michael Szewczyk, Kathleen McKinney, Rosann Geiser, R. Wade Schuette and Ella Miller

**Excused:** 1 - Sonita Simelus

**Absent:** 2 - Jonathan Heidt and Jacqueline Fernald

City Staff Present: Rebecca Roesslet, Tracey Bathe, and Peyton Oliver

a. Skala called the meeting order at 5:32 PM.

#### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

a. Hussey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Feirman. The motion passed unanimously.

#### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Draft Minutes 3-14-24

Geiser moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Feirman. The motion passed unanimously.

**Attachments:** [Draft BOH Minutes 3-14-24](#)

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

a. None

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Dr. Marc Johnson, Professor of Molecular Microbiology, and Immunology  
- COVID-19 Sewershed Monitoring

Dr. Johnson explained his background and his history with sewershed wastewater surveillance. Johnson started monitoring prisons to understand infections and outbreaks among the prisoners. The monitoring of sewersheds was amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of 2020, Johnson started monitoring the lineages of COVID-19 in Missouri. By the end of 2021, they were tracking the Delta variant of COVID-19, which began to pop up in Brookfield. In November of 2021, Johnson and his team were monitoring New York City. They were able to isolate the Omicron variant after a convention in New York in November of 2021 and were able to predict the spike in Omicron infections.

Johnson explained how he does genetic sequencing and what they take into account whenever they sequence an area. At times they get cryptic lineages in an area which they can attribute to several different factors. For example, Dr. Johnson spoke about an area in St. Louis containing a major airport and a nuclear facility. This also includes the animals that might use or live in that water. Johnson can test local ponds and rivers to determine what animal waste is in that body of water. Johnson explained that he sequenced a town that contained a meat processing plant that specifically processed pigs. They discovered swine flu in the wastewater. Johnson said that this could become a problem as pigs can catch bird flu, which can result in the swine flu virus mutating and possibly infecting humans. Johnson said that he is requesting more information to better analyze the areas with meat processing plants.

Johnson continues to monitor wastewater in Columbia. Johnson said that the testing can identify every disease that people have been infected with within the Columbia area except for blood-borne diseases. He said that he would like to be able to test for blood-borne illnesses such as hepatitis or HIV. The sequencing is still fairly accurate for the diseases people in Columbia are being infected with. Johnson said he hopes that reports will be published for areas that will help public health anticipate future disease outbreaks and treat underserved populations.

## VI. REPORTS

a. Director's Report - Stephanie Browning

Roesslet said that Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has started their Lunch in the Park program. This program allows for children 18 and under to get a free lunch at the Columbia Armory for the summer.

Roesslet said that the City's Shower to Empower program is operating for the summer at the Ashley Street Center for people experiencing homelessness. The shower is operating Mondays and Thursdays 4:30 to 5:30 throughout the summer. The program is averaging 6-10 people when they are open. Columbia Mobile Aid will also be providing medical care to people in and around Columbia.

The week of the meeting was Children's Mental Health Week. In recognition, a group of community organizations will hold an observance event at the Shelter Insurance Fountain. Mayor Barbara Buffaloe will be present to read the proclamation.

The Health on Wheels van is out in the community providing services.

## **VII. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF**

a. The Board of Health expressed interest in touring the Emergency Response Center. Roesslet explained that the state of Missouri is planning to make alterations to the food code. It is understood that the changes that are being made are not as dramatic as they have been previously, but PHHS would still ensure that the city food code matches the state's.

Roesslet suggested that the board should meet with the City of Columbia Legal Department to discuss the Sunshine Laws that apply to the Board of Health.

Skala has been in meetings with the County Commissioners and MO Department of Mental Health to discuss the Opioid Settlement Funds. Members of the Board had previously worked on a report suggesting how the funds should be spent.

## **VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE**

a. July 11, 2024

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

a. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM.

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