

**RiverStone Health**  
**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**  
**June 26, 2025**

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Jim Harris, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

**Members Present:** Jim Harris; Spencer Anderson; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis; Michael Dennis; John Dorr; Erin Lambert; Mark Morse; Lionel Tapia, Steve Wahrlich (remote); Casey Wheeler

**Members Absent:** Carol Beam; Derek Yeager

**Staff Present:** Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer; Megan Littlefield – Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen – Chief Operating Officer; Dani Ryan, MFMR resident; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer

**Guests Present:** Roger Hoogerheide, Remedial Project Manager, Montana DEQ; Stewart Kirkpatrick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Dawn Nelson, Toxicologist – Montana DPHHS; Breanna Pabst, Project Manager - Montana DEQ

**CALL TO ORDER**

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Chairperson Harris called the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairperson Harris opened the floor for public comment. Hearing none, he proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

**APPROVAL**

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**May 22, 2025 BOH Meeting Minutes:** Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the minutes (copy on file) of the April 24, 2025 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Dennis), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 22, 2025, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**June 26, 2025 Consent Agenda:** Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (copy on file) of the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting that was previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

## M O T I O N

**Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA OF THE JUNE 26, 2025,  
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

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Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “H.E.L.P” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

Before beginning his report, Jon invited Board members to join him in observing a moment of silence in memory of Yellowstone County Commissioner John Ostlund, who passed away on June 19, 2025, honoring his many years of public service and dedication to the community.

- The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) survey is now live; Board members are encouraged to participate. Carrie will email the survey link which can also be found in this week’s CEO report.
- The Yellowstone Valley Children’s Advocacy Center (YVCAC) at RiverStone Health recently earned reaccreditation by the National Children’s Alliance (NCA), the national accrediting body for Children’s Advocacy Centers. The YVCAC also underwent an audit, with no issues identified, for funding it receives through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant that is administered by the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC).
- The annual RiverStone Health Foundation Hospice Golf Tournament that was held during the first week of June hosted 43 teams and is expected to net an estimated \$100,000 after expenses.
- RiverStone Health completed a successful upgrade of its electronic health record system, eCW, to the cloud over Memorial Day weekend. The transition was well planned and executed with only minor, anticipated delays to patient care.
- RiverStone Health launched a public education campaign to raise awareness about tickborne illnesses following the confirmation of blacklegged ticks in Montana. Blacklegged ticks are known carriers of Lyme disease and other illnesses.
- Last month’s Women’s Health Fair drew about 150 attendees and generated more than 20 appointments. This year’s event represented improved attendance over last year, with strong community partner support.
- Construction of a bus barn to house RiverStone Health’s new mobile (WOW) unit is progressing despite a few weather delays. The project is slightly behind schedule but is expected to be completed by the end of July. The mobile unit is currently being stored at an off-site location until construction is completed.

- The MFMR Class of 2028 white coat ceremony welcomed nine first-year residents representing a broad geographic area, including one resident from Ukraine.
- The outgoing MFMR Class of 2025 will graduate this week, with over half of the graduates remaining in Montana, including three who have accepted positions at RiverStone Health.
- Billings School District 2 and Sodexo are hosting their annual summer lunch program, offering free meals for children under 18 and low-cost meals for adults, at various locations in Yellowstone County. RiverStone Health’s Wellness on Wheels (WOW) unit will also be on site to provide sports physicals and other health services.
- The Healthy by Design Coalition’s Gardener’s Market opened June 12 at South Park and will operate every Thursday afternoon through October 2.
- With several interviews completed, recruitment efforts are ongoing to fill the Behavioral Health Systems Improvement Specialist role. The successful candidate will guide the Behavioral Health Crisis Coalition, formerly known as Substance Abuse Connect.
- Emergency Preparedness Planning is underway for a Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise for medical countermeasures from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). We are exploring potential venues, including Metra Park, for the POD exercise.
- As of June 19, 2025, a total of 1,214 confirmed measles cases were reported across 36 states nationwide. There have been 22 confirmed cases reported in Montana, with 14 cases in Gallatin County and 4 cases in Hill County. Yellowstone County reported two cases (an adult and a child), both related to international travel, which were resolved before their return to Yellowstone County.

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### **CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT**

Jon Forte provided highlights of the Chief Medical Officer Report in Dr. Littlefield’s absence. Board members were referred to the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

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### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Finance Committee Chair Spencer Anderson provided a brief overview of the June 19, 2025 finance committee meeting, and the April 2025 financial statements, before reviewing the proposed FY26 operating and capital budgets, and the FY26 public health mill levy allocation, (copies on file).

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the June 19, 2025 finance committee meeting, and the April 2025 financial statements, before requesting a motion to approve the proposed FY26 operating budget, the proposed FY26 capital budget, and the FY26 public health mill levy allocation (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JUNE 19, 2025 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE APRIL 2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY26 OPERATING BUDGET AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY26 CAPITAL BUDGET AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE FY26 PUBLIC HEALTH MILL LEVY ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED**

**SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

Lionel Tapia, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the June 3, 2025 Safety and Quality committee meeting. Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the June 3, 2025 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

**MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Dorr), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2025 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Committee Chair, Brent Cromley provided a brief overview of the June 3, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting. Jon Forte provided an update on the proposed *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, currently under consideration in the Senate, that could significantly impact Medicaid, WIC, and SNAP programs, potentially leading to greater food insecurity, adverse effects on maternal and child health, and the loss of health care coverage for an estimated 31,000 Montana residents, if passed.

Melissa Henderson, Senior Director of Community Health and Safety - Public Health Services, provided an overview (presentation on file) of designer drugs and the growing concern around the increased availability of kava and kratom in Yellowstone County. Although both originate from natural plant sources, high-potency synthetic versions pose significant health risks such as addiction, withdrawal, and overdose - sometimes requiring Narcan intervention. While kava is recognized by the FDA as a supplement, kratom is not, and neither is approved as a food additive under the Montana Food Code, creating enforcement challenges as unregulated products are often sold at gas stations, smoke shops, and bars. Melissa noted that after on-going discussion of enforcement limitations, and public health risks associated with kratom and other designer drugs, the Committee recommends Board direction to explore options for county-level regulations focused on kratom and other unregulated high-potency designer drugs.

The Board discussed the issue and emphasized the urgency of protecting public health. Chairperson Harris requested a motion to direct staff and the Yellowstone County Health Officer to pursue broader advocacy, working with the Yellowstone County Attorney, Yellowstone County Commissioners, Billings City Council, and State officials, to explore options for regulating kratom and other unregulated high-potency designer drugs that pose a threat to public health.

### **MOTION**

**Upon a motion duly made (Dennis), seconded (Lambert), opposed (Morse), and carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO DIRECT STAFF AND THE YELLOWSTONE COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER TO PURSUE BROADER ADVOCACY, WORKING WITH LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS TO EXPLORE REGULATORY OPTIONS TO ADDRESS KRATOM, AND OTHER UNREGULATED HIGH-POTENCY DESIGNER DRUGS THAT POSE A THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH.**

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the June 3, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **MOTION**

**Upon a motion duly made (Morse), seconded (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2025 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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Chairperson requested a motion to accept the May 22, 2025 Governance Committee meeting notes (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE MAY 22, 2025 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the June 18, 2025 Executive Committee meeting notes (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **MOTION**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JUNE 18, 2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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No old business discussed

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Billings PCE Superfund Site Update:** Roger Hoogerheide, Remedial Project Manager, Montana DEQ, provided an update (information on file) of activity on the Billings PCE Superfund Site.

Roger informed the Board that the EPA site team plans to release a Proposed Plan on June 30, 2025, to address vapor intrusion - vapors detected in indoor air of homes, schools, and commercial buildings in downtown Billings at levels above those considered safe for public health. These vapors result from soil and groundwater contamination linked to historic dry-cleaning operations of a local business. The EPA will address the soil and groundwater contamination separately.

The Proposed Plan will be issued for public comment, and a community meeting is scheduled for July 23 at the Billings Public Library. The Plan summarizes the cleanup alternatives considered by the EPA, identifies the preferred alternative, explains the factors leading to its selection, and requests input from the public. A final decision on the plan will be released in the winter of 2025 with implementation beginning in the Spring of 2026

**2025 Foundational Public Health Services Assessment Report – Yellowstone County:** Eric Owen provided an overview of the 2025 Foundational Public Health Services Assessment Report

for Yellowstone County (copy on file). Eric noted that the report is a summary of the results of an extensive survey conducted in collaboration with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), aimed at enhancing local health department capacity to perform core public health functions. The report noted that, as the largest local health department in the state, the department met 100% of the criteria for all but two core functions. Efforts are ongoing to improve in those areas. Board members were invited to contact Melissa or Eric with any questions after reviewing the report.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

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The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

### **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

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The June 26, 2025 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:05 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Spencer Anderson  
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte  
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2025\minutes\06.26.25 BOH Minutes