

**LEWIS AND CLARK CITY-COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF HEALTH – MINUTES REVISED**  
**316 N. PARK AVENUE, HELENA, MONTANA 59601**  
**Room 330**  
**September 28, 2017**

Members Present

James Benish, chair  
Anne Weber  
Jack Copps  
Kammy Johnson  
Scott St. Clair  
Jenny Eck  
Dr. Adron Medley

Staff Present

Melanie Reynolds  
Jolene Helgerson  
Kathy Moore  
Drenda Niemann  
Debb Tillo  
Beth Norberg

Members Absent

Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, vice chair  
Mayor Jim Smith

Guests Present

Betsy Burns, EPA

Jim Benish, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. A quorum was established.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Melanie Reynolds announced that agenda item 5, Progress Report on the 2016 Community Health Improvement Plan, will be moved to the October agenda.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Benish asked if there were any corrections or additions to the July 27, 2017, minutes. The Board approved the minutes as written.

**ACTION**

Hearing Officer Recommendation, Mr. and Mrs. Edward and Sarah Biggs:

Ms. Weber, Acting Hearing Officer, and Beth Norberg, Sanitarian, gave a brief account of the Biggs variance hearing held on September 26, 2017. They recommended ratification of the variance. Ms. Weber stated that the request met all of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality criteria for granting a variance. Kammy Johnson moved to ratify the hearing officer recommendation for approval. Jenny Eck seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

**PRESENTATION**

Kathy Moore, Environmental Services Division Administrator, gave a presentation on her division (see Attachment “A”) in which she provided updates on the budgets and activities for each of its programs. In answer to a question from Dr. Adron Medley, Ms. Moore stated that the East Helena Lead Education and Assistance Program offers blood lead screening on a voluntary basis. The number of screenings in the county is also impacted by screenings required by Medicaid and those that occur as part of well child screenings. Children under the age of 2 are routinely screened for lead. In addition, providers are required to report blood lead elevations to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), and these are reported to Public Health. In answer to questions from Scott St. Clair, Ms. Moore announced that the 6 people reported with elevated blood lead levels were in Lewis and Clark

County. Ms. Moore also stated that at this time her division is working to find funding to help the public with a wood-burning stove swap-out. Currently there is no funding for a swap. Older wood-burning stoves can emit less pollution if used correctly. Betsy Burns with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gave a brief overview of the cleanup that has occurred at the Asarco Smelter site in East Helena and the yards that have been cleaned up through the Superfund. In answer to a question from Jenny Eck, Ms. Moore stated that once lead has been found in a child's bloodstream and it is below a level of 10 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dl), the lead education program works to remove lead from the child's environment. If the blood lead level is as high as 30 ug/dl, there are medical treatments that are effective. Ms. Burns said she will work with Ms. Reynolds to schedule a tour of the smelter site for board members. She said a corrective measures study will be available to the public in December. ~~In answer to a question from Dr. Medley, Ms. Burns stated that the EPA might place a cap on the remaining slag pile, but the pile is not leaking contaminants into the nearby creek or groundwater.~~ In answer to a question from Ms. Eck, Ms. Burns said that she is not stating there is no more leaching into the groundwater by the slag piles but that the EPA has minimized the mass of soils that were in direct contact with the groundwater and that they are working in partnership with Lewis and Clark County. Mr. St. Clair told the Board that annexed land around the smelter is still contaminated and must be remediated before it can be developed. Mr. St. Clair also noted his concerns for the contamination near the railroad track located on Manlove Avenue in East Helena. Ms. Burns addressed Mr. St. Clair's concerns and said the EPA's focus has been on the plant site and its groundwater contamination, but the agency is moving into redevelopment of the outlying properties. The Superfund Record of Decision states that the surrounding properties will be cleaned up by the developers to a level compatible with the zoned use. There is a Superfund cleanup contract for the Manlove right-of-way, and cleanup is slated to begin this spring. In answer to a concern from Mr. St. Clair, Ms. Burns stated that the EPA is concerned about the slag pile that has built up in the creek along Wylie Drive, and that is why they reconfigured the north end of Prickly Pear Creek the way they did. Historically, Prickly Pear Creek undercut the slag pile and carried slag farther down the creek. Currently, the slag is considered solid waste, not hazardous waste. Unless the slag becomes hazardous, the EPA has no authority for future cleanup of slag that has been carried downstream in Prickly Pear Creek. Ms. Burns noted that the EPA has stopped any further buildup of slag in the creek.

## **HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT**

The process to solicit contracting bids for remodel of the lower level of the Murray Building is under way. Construction should begin by the first of the year and be completed by May 2018.

Public Health received a grant from the Montana Health Care Foundation to work on suicide prevention. The Local Advisory Council's Suicide Prevention Workgroup will decide how the grant money will be used for suicide prevention within the community.

The county Treasurer's Office will assist the health department with its finances for six months. After that time, the department will decide whether to continue with the assistance or hire a finance coordinator.

Flu season is here sooner than expected, and the department is reminding the public to get a flu shot.

Possible budget cuts to Medicaid may affect the department's Senior Long Term Care Program, Home Visiting Program, Communicable Disease Program, and HIV Program. Ms. Eck urged citizens to contact their legislators regarding proposed cuts to general fund money for DPHHS.

There being no board member discussion or public comment, the meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

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Jim Benish, Chair

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Melanie Reynolds, Secretary

Action Items from September BOH Meeting

- The progress report on the 2016 Community Health Improvement Plan by Ms. Shirley will be heard at the October board meeting.