

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Date: February 4, 2026

Location: Virtual (ZOOM)

ATTENDANCE

Members in Attendance:

George Bridge (Chair), Ralph Manktelow, Guy Gardhouse, David Anderson, Duncan Bull, Anil Kaul, Robin Sedgwick, Steve Cavell, Erin Caton, Linda Busuttil, Rodrigo Goller, Campbell Cork, and Chris White.

Members with Regrets: None.

Ex-Officio Member: Dr. Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO.

Staff in Attendance:

Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Paul Medeiros, Kyle Wilson, Alexandra Fournier, Andrea Kovacs, Kiley Alderson, Brian Herman, April Pollington, Camille Loucks, Chuck Ferguson, Danielle Pelligrini, Emerson Rajaram, Gabriel Agunsoye, Dana Galedhari, Conor Barrett, Yordy Napoles, Jessica Tomasik, Karen Mulvey, Kelvin McDermott, Leslie Davies, Lisa Hebden, Lyndsey Dossett, Michael Whyte, Phil Wong, Rivalia Naidoo, Shelby Leenders, Sonja Vukovic, Taylor Besley, Alana Byron, Jacob McKinlay, Shelley Nuhn, and Laura Kelly (Recording Secretary).

Guests in Attendance (via Zoom):

Joanne Shuttleworth (Media), Adam Donaldson (Media), and Taylor Pace (Media).

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair George Bridge called the meeting to order at 2:07. Attendance was noted. Quorum requirements were met.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The WDGPH Land Acknowledgement was read in full by Dr. Nicola Mercer.

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

No disclosures were declared at this time.

4. 2026 INAUGURAL MEETING

Elect Chair

Nominations for the position of Board Chair were opened by Dr. Mercer.

- L. Busuttil nominated G. Bridge as Chair.
- G. Gardhouse seconded the nomination.
- G. Bridge accepted the nomination.

MOTION: "To close the nominations for the position of Board Chair."

Moved: R. Goller

Seconded: D. Bull

CARRIED

G. Bridge assumed the chair and continued with the election of the Vice-Chair.

Elect Vice-Chair

Nominations for the position of Vice Chair were opened by G. Bridge.

- C. White nominated L. Busuttil as Vice-Chair.
- R. Goller seconded the nomination.
- L. Busuttil accepted the nomination.

MOTION: "To close the nominations for the position of Vice-Chair."

Moved: R. Goller

Seconded: R. Sedgwick

CARRIED

Elect Secretary-Treasurer

It was noted that the Secretary-Treasurer is automatically the Chair of the Finance + Audit Committee per By-Law 1.

Nominations for the position of Secretary-Treasurer were opened by G. Bridge.

- L. Busuttil nominated C. White for the position of Secretary-Treasurer.
- G. Gardhouse seconded the nomination.
- C. White accepted the nomination.

MOTION: "To close the nominations for the position of Secretary-Treasurer."

Moved: L. Busuttil

Seconded: R. Sedgwick

CARRIED

Establish Membership for Standing Committees

The 2026 Board of Health Chair, George Bridge, is eligible to be a member of all Standing Committees and indicated his intention to do so.

MOTION: "That the Board of Health Chair is a member of each of the Board of Health Standing Committees and Chair of the Executive Committee."

Moved: D. Bull

Seconded: S. Cavell

CARRIED

Establish Membership for Standing Committees

As previously noted, the Secretary-Treasurer is automatically the Chair of the Finance + Audit Committee. Therefore, C. White is the Finance + Audit Committee Chair.

Finance + Audit Committee membership for 2026 was confirmed as follows:

Finance & Audit Committee:	2026
Representing Wellington	Chris White (<i>Chair</i>)
Representing Wellington	George Bridge (<i>Board Chair</i>)
Representing Wellington	Steve Cavell
Representing Dufferin	Ralph Manktelow
Representing City of Guelph	Linda Busuttil (<i>Vice Chair</i>)
Representing City of Guelph	Rodrigo Goller
Representing City of Guelph	Anil Kaul

Human Resources Committee membership for 2026 was confirmed as follows:

Human Resources Committee:	2026
Representing Dufferin	Guy Gardhouse
Representing Wellington	George Bridge (<i>Board Chair</i>)
Representing Dufferin	Duncan Bull
Representing Dufferin	Robin Sedgwick
Representing Wellington	David Anderson
Representing Wellington	Campbell Cork
Representing City of Guelph	Erin Caton

Elect Human Resources Chair

Nominations for the position of Human Resources Committee Chair were opened by G. Bridge.

- C. White nominated G. Gardhouse for the position of HR Committee Chair.
- D. Anderson seconded the nomination.
- G. Gardhouse accepted the nomination.

MOTION: "To close the nominations for the position of HR Committee Chair."

Moved: L. Busuttil

Seconded: C. White

CARRIED

Executive Committee Composition

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Finance & Audit Committee Chair/Secretary Treasurer, and the Human Resources Chair.

MOTION: "To accept the 2026 membership of the Finance & Audit Committee, the Human Resources Committee, and the Executive Committee as read."

Moved: E. Caton

Seconded: C. Cork

CARRIED

The Board has agreed to meet at 2:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, with the exception of January, July, August, and October, when the Board is not scheduled to meet. Board members were reminded that the September 2 date falls prior to the Labour Day weekend. The Board dates for 2026 are as follows:

February 4, 2026
March 4, 2026
April 1, 2026
May 7, 2026
June 3, 2026
September 2, 2026
November 4, 2026
December 2, 2026

MOTION: "To accept the 2026 Board of Health meeting dates, as read."

Moved: S. Cavell

Seconded: D. Bull

CARRIED

Board Remuneration

Board remuneration, set out under Section 4 of By Law No. 1 of the Board of Health of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit, and more particularly the Board of Health policy CA.42.01.100, will continue. WDGPH will proceed with what is currently on file which was provided by the 3 Municipalities.

Appoint Auditors

In accordance with the Municipal Act, Public Health is required to use the auditor of the largest municipal funder, which in this case is the City of Guelph. Therefore, WDGPH's auditor for 2026 is KPMG.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2025.

MOTION: "To approve the Minutes of December 3, 2025 as presented."

Moved: E. Caton

Seconded: A. Kaul

CARRIED

6. MOH/CEO VERBAL REPORT

Dr. Mercer provided a verbal update including the following highlights:

- Over the past year, a comprehensive review of the Health Unit website was undertaken to improve accessibility and enhance the user experience for the community. While the content remains unchanged, the visual design has been updated. The revised website is expected to launch in the coming weeks.
- A recent increase in COVID-19 activity was noted. Following a rapid rise in influenza B cases, activity has since declined; however, 24 COVID-19 cases were reported during the week of January 24. Reported figures are known to significantly underestimate true community transmission. Individuals who are ill are encouraged to take precautions to protect vulnerable populations.
- In response to a question from board member E. Caton regarding spring COVID-19 boosters for high-risk individuals, it was noted that the Health Unit is strongly encouraging an approach similar to the influenza model for the general population. Booster doses will be available this spring for high-risk individuals, with formulations updated annually to align with circulating strains.
- Eligibility criteria for the spring booster are expected to remain consistent with previous guidance.

7. PRESENTATION(S)

- M. Whyte presented in conjunction with Board of Health report BH.01.FEB0426.R01 - (see 8.0 BOH Report(s) for summary).
- L. Dossett presented in conjunction with Board of Health report BH.01.FEB0426.R03 - (see 8.0 BOH Report(s) for summary).

8. BUSINESS ARISING

- NONE

9. CONSENT AGENDA(S)

- [BH.01.FEB0426.C01](#) – Health Protection 2025 Final Audit of Performance
- [BH.01.FEB0426.C02](#) – Oral Health Services
- [BH.01.FEB0426.C03](#) – Clinical Services Annual Review

MOTION: "To receive the Consent Agenda item(s) which have been given due consideration, for information."

Moved: C. White

Seconded: E. Caton

CARRIED

10. BOH REPORT(S)

[BH.01.FEB0426.R01](#) – Introducing a Poverty Report Series in WDG

- WDGPH is launching a multi-chapter poverty report series to build a shared understanding of poverty as a key determinant of health and to support evidence-informed, equity-focused action across the region, beginning with a foundational Chapter 1.
- Future chapters in 2026 will examine local data, populations at risk, cost-of-living pressures, and community initiatives, developed collaboratively with regional partners and aligned with OPHS and WDGPH strategic priorities.
- Board member L. Busutil thanked staff for the report and noted its importance in informing policy development, particularly its value in localizing the available data.

MOTION: "To receive Board of Health report BH.01.FEB0426.R01 – Introducing a Poverty Report Series in WDG, as presented, for information."

Moved: L. Busutil

Seconded: G. Gardhouse

CARRIED

BH.01.FEB0426.R02 – Trends in Key Infectious Diseases

- Infectious disease trends in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph from 2015–2025 show shifting patterns driven by global, post-pandemic, ecological, and testing factors, underscoring the need for continued surveillance, partnerships, and adaptive public health responses.
- In response to a question from board member E. Caton regarding immune systems and future infection risk, it was noted that emerging evidence shows viruses can trigger a wider range of subsequent health effects than previously understood. However, susceptibility pathways are generally independent and unlikely to directly interact. It is true however that having concurrent or sequential infections can cause increased severity especially if they infect the same system in the body (eg. Respiratory infections).
- It was noted that there is growing evidence suggesting certain vaccines may offer protective benefits beyond their primary indication, such as potential associations between shingles vaccination and reduced dementia risk.
- In response to board member C. Cork's question regarding rates below the provincial average, A. Pollington explained that reported figures reflect a multifactorial context, including how sexually transmitted and infectious diseases are categorized and monitored, some of which are vaccine preventable. Evidence-based vaccination programs remain critical, as demonstrated by the resurgence of measles associated with lower vaccination coverage.
- Board member R. Manktelow commended the report and asked about distinctions between severe and non-severe infections. It was noted that increases in invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) document severe infection, including septic shock or necrotizing fasciitis, and not all cases of Group A Strep infection.
- Regarding strategies to improve vaccination coverage, Dr. Mercer noted that while not all infections are vaccine-preventable, multiple immunization campaigns and outreach initiatives are in place for those that are. Early diagnosis and timely medical care were emphasized as treatment approaches to a disease where vaccines are examples of disease prevention.

MOTION: "To receive Board of Health report BH.01.FEB0426.R02 – Trends in Key Infectious Diseases, as presented, for information."

Moved: C. Cork

Seconded: E. Caton

CARRIED

BH.01.FEB0426.R03 – Guelph-Wellington Ontario Health Team Physician Recruitment Strategy Collaboration

- In 2025, WDG Public Health supported the Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team Physician Recruitment Task Force to develop a coordinated, evidence-informed Physician Recruitment Strategy aimed at strengthening access to care amid growing demand, physician retirements, and population growth.
- Developed collaboratively with regional partners, the strategy outlines clear goals, governance, and next steps—including hiring a local recruiter and expanding to additional specialists—and is aligned with public health priorities for equitable access and sustainable health systems.

MOTION: "To receive Board of Health report BH.01.FEB0426.R03 – Guelph-Wellington Ontario Health Team Physician Recruitment Strategy Collaboration as presented, for information."

Moved: C. Cork

Seconded: D. Bull

CARRIED

11. COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

- NONE

12. CORRESPONDENCE

- NONE.

13. CLOSED SESSION

- ▶ To receive Insurance Update from MOH/CEO [the security of the property of the BOH].

MOTION: "To move into Closed Session to receive Insurance Update from MOH/CEO [the security of the property of the BOH]."

Moved: C. White

Seconded: E. Caton

CARRIED

This Board of Health meeting contains a “Closed Session” section which falls under the exemptions pursuant to Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*. Please note that this session is **not** open to members of the public or the press.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

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Location: Virtual (ZOOM)

CLOSED SESSION

ATTENDANCE

Members in Attendance:

George Bridge (Chair), Ralph Manktelow, Robin Sedgwick, Anil Kaul, Linda Busuttill, Erin Caton, Rodrigo Goller, Guy Gardhouse, David Anderson, Campbell Cork, Duncan Bull, Steve Cavell, and Chris White.

Members with Regrets: None.

Ex-Officio Member: Dr. Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO.

Staff in Attendance:

Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, David Kingma, Kyle Wilson, Paul Medeiros, and Brian Herman.

Guests in Attendance (via Zoom): None.

CLOSED SESSION MINUTES TO BE PROVIDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER.

(3:31) Returned to open session.

MOTION: "To ratify the Closed Session decisions of the February 4, 2026 Board of Health meeting."

Moved: S. Cavell

Seconded: E. Caton

CARRIED

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: "To adjourn the meeting."

Moved: C. White

Seconded: G. Gardhouse

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at **3:32** pm.

APPROVED this 4th day of March, 2026.

Board of Health Chair

Medical Officer of Health, CEO