

Minutes of the Public Health Committee Meeting

March 6, 2025 @ 5:30pm

The Public Health Committee met on March 6, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the W. C. Administrative Complex. Committee members present included Ricky Jones, Chris Richards, Pete Stresser and Steve Smith. Commissioners Gregg Lawrence, Bill Petty, Barb Sturgeon and Jennifer Mason were present.

Chairman Jeff Graves was late to the meeting. Legal Counsel Sarah Bullock asked for nominations for a temporary Chairman. Commissioner Stresser moved to elect Commissioner Richards, seconded by Commissioner Smith. Commissioner Richards was elected as temporary Chairman by a vote of 4-0.

Also present were Sarah Bullock, County Attorney; Cathy Montgomery, Director of Williamson County Health Department; Dr. Ralph Alvarado, Commissioner of Tennessee Department of Health; Dr. Crystal Manners, DDS; Ondrea Johnson, Director of Williamson County Animal Center and other interested individuals.

Chairman Richards noted that there were two people that signed up to speak for Citizens Communications, Carol Monju of Franklin, TN. and Edie Johnson, Dental Hygienist, Franklin, TN.

Committee members reviewed the following resolutions and made the following recommendations:

Resolution Of The Williamson County Board Of Commissioners To Express Its Support Of Proposed State Legislation To Remove Fluoridation From Public Water Systems In Tennessee. Commissioner Richards made a motion to recommend approval, seconded by Commissioner Stresser. Cathy Montgomery, Director of the Williamson County Health Department introduced Dr. Ralph Alvarado to the Committee. Dr. Alvarado spoke of the benefits of fluoride to the general population in controlling tooth decay and improving overall oral health. He explained how poor oral health leads to other ailments such as heart disease and diabetes. He discussed how the government started putting fluoride in the public water systems and the large amount of data that has been collected to support Fluoridation, as it decreases tooth decay by 25%. Taking Fluoride out of the public water system would disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in our community, children living in poverty. Poor children cannot afford to go the dentist, afford toothpaste or fluoride rinse. Dr. Crystal Manners spoke of data that is supported by the American Dental Association regarding fluoride and the many benefits to the community. Commissioner Lawrence explained to the Committee that this resolution is to show support for the proposed State Legislation that removes fluoride from the public water system in Tennessee. He noted studies showing the negative effects of fluoride in water, what the potential harms are to the Endocrine System, and the damaging effects of Neurotoxicity in young children and adults. Commissioner Petty agreed that fluoride is a neurotoxin and could possibly cause lower I.Q. scores in children. Dental Fluorosis is another side effect of fluoride where the teeth develop streaking and discoloration in the tooth enamel. Commissioner Sturgeon stated that her son suffers from Fluorosis and that she believes that the public deserves to have a choice in whether they do not want fluoride in their water. Commissioner Richards also stated his belief in the public's right not to have fluoridated water and he didn't believe that a 25% reduction in tooth decay was not a high enough percentage to warrant keeping fluoride in the water. Commissioner Graves joined the meeting and relieved temporary Chairman Richards of the position, Chairman Graves abstained from voting for this resolution because the city he lives in, Spring Hill, TN., does not have fluoridated water. Commissioner Jones abstained from voting to further inform himself on this subject. The motion passes with a vote of 2-1-2 with Chairman Graves and Commissioner Jones abstaining.

Resolution Appropriating And Amending The 2024-25 Capital Projects Budget By \$132,010.49 – Revenues To Come From State Grant Funds. Commissioner Jones made a motion to recommend approval, seconded by Commissioner Smith. Director Montgomery reported that the grant funds from the Tennessee Department of Health's Immunization Program is to renovate the administrative area in the Franklin Clinic and the laboratory in the Fairview Clinic. Director Montgomery also noted that the grant funds received did not require matching funds. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

Resolution Appropriating And Amending The 2024-25 Animal Center Budget By \$8,000 – Revenues To Come From Donations. Commissioner Jones made a motion to recommend approval, seconded by Commissioner Smith. Animal Center Director, Ondrea Johnson explained to the Committee that this donation from Friends of Williamson County Animal Center donated \$8,000 for the purchase of kitten / puppy food. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:21pm.

DRAFT