Cherokee County Health Department BOH Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 9, 2026
6:30 p.m. – Health Department Conference Room

Members Present: Lynn Taylor, OD, Graham Raxter, PE, CB McKinnon, Verle Thompson DMD, Teresa Heavner, MD, Whitney Eller, PharmD

Absent: Ben Adams, Grady Hester, DVM, Leslie Harris RN, Robin Sargent, Mike Bradberry,

Public Present: None

Meeting Call to Order: Whitney Eller called the meeting to order.

Invocation: CB McKinnon gave the invocation.

Public Comments: Whitney Eller opened the floor for public comments, no public comments given.

Approval of:

a) **Approval of minutes:** Members reviewed and approved the minutes for the January 12, 2026, meeting. Theresa Heavner made the motion to approve the meeting minutes; Lynn Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried.

b) **WIC Services Continuation:** The health director presented further information concerning the department's discussions with the State on the potential for transitioning the way WIC services are delivered. Based on conversations with the State it is the States responsibility for coordinating the transition of services to a new WIC administering agency. Ideally this would be transferred to a neighboring Health Department, or it could be transitioned to a non-profit entity such as a FQHC as both models are currently being used across the State. The focus would be on maintaining access to service ideally with a physical presence here in Cherokee County but regardless the State would assure that no one loses access to benefits. Deborah Palmer, our acting WIC director, went over in detail how WIC participants gain access to benefits and the steps involved in that process. Deborah shared the declining WIC participation data based on the official quarterly reports sent down from the State and we discussed how WIC funding would continue to decline with the decline in WIC participation. We also discussed the ongoing challenges with recruitment of a Nutritionist and the fact that we are operating with 1.5 fewer FTEs than needed to operate WIC at its base level. The Board reviewed and discussed the projected savings of $73,000 annually with likely higher savings due to increased expenditures needed to staff appropriately and declining revenues. By transitioning the administration of WIC services we would be able to eliminate up to three FTEs from our current operating budget and be able to transition existing staff to vacant positions as necessary or support another agency in contracting to help maintain physical access to WIC services within the county. The Board discussed the impacts on existing staff who are carrying a higher workload and how the current staffing will impact the department's ability to maintain compliance with WIC funding mandates. The Board discussed the political implications of such a move and further discussed the desire to explore

this option under the priority of assuring limited impact on receiving WIC benefits. The Board discussed that we would maintain WIC services as long as necessary to ensure that the transfer of administrative responsibilities would be consistent with the department's needs to address staffing shortfalls and assuring access to WIC benefits. CB McKinnon made a motion to move forward in working with the State and county administration on transferring WIC administrative responsibilities. Teresa Heavner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

c) The Health Director presented the Health Departments FY 26-27 Budget Request. The request has been submitted to the County for inclusion in the FY 26-27 operating budget. The request was in line with the current year's actual revenues and expenditures with the exception of a projected reduction in clinical revenues due to loss of a full-time physician. We also requested capital funding in the amount of $12,500 for new vaccine refrigeration and freezer units, along with a new exam table. We also requested some pay class adjustments for the Director of Nursing Position, our Family Nurse Practitioner and a Licensed Soil Scientist. We discussed the ongoing need to address pay issues across the board, especially Nurses and Environmental Health Specialists for retention issues. CB McKinnon made a motion to approve the FY 26-27 Budget request as presented, Graham Raxter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

a)

Health Director Comments:

a) The departmental reports for Clinic, Lab, FLI and Environmental Health were provided to the Board for review. There was general discussion around each departmental report.

Other Comments: NONE

Next Board Meeting: The next board meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 6:30 pm at the Cherokee County Health Department Conference Room.

David Badger
Health Director, Clerk to the Board

Whitney Eller
Board Chairman