

Board of Health Meeting February 26, 2026



Open Session Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, commencing at 1:00 p.m.

Present:

Ms. C. Agar	Board Member
Mr. J. Herbert	Board Member
Ms. K. Hobbs	Board Member
Mr. G. Jones	Board Member
Ms. B. Martin	Board Member (Chair)
Mr. D. Mayberry	Board Member
Mr. M. Peterson	Board Member
Mr. L. Rowden	Board Member
Mr. E. Taylor	Board Member
Mr. S. Molnar	Board Member
Mr. D. Shinedling	Board Member (Vice Chair)
Dr. N. Tran	Medical Officer of Health (ex officio)
Ms. C. St. John	Chief Executive Officer (ex officio)
Ms. W. Lee	Executive Assistant

Guests:

Ms. J. Gordon	Administrative Assistant
Mr. P. Heywood	Program Director
Ms. S. MacIsaac	Program Director
Mr. D. McDonald	Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Ms. M. Nusink	Director, Finance
Ms. C. Richards	Manager, Foundational Standards
Ms. N. Rowe**	Manager, Communications
Mr. Y. Santos	Manager, IT
Ms. A. Dale	Harrison Pensa LLP
Mr. R. McLay	Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP

Note: ** indicates virtual participation

Regrets:

Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
Mr. J. Palmer	Board Member
Mr. D. Warden	Board Member
Mr. D. Smith	Program Director

1.1 Call to order, recognition of quorum

The meeting was called to order by B. Martin at 1:02 p.m.

B. Martin advised the Board that Marcus Ryan has resigned following his election as Chair of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, citing the significant time commitment associated with the role. The Board extended its appreciation to Marcus Ryan for his service and contributions.

B. Martin advised that Oxford County Council has appointed Jim Palmer, Mayor of Norwich Township, to the Board. The Board welcomed Jim Palmer to the role and he sent his regrets due to a previous commitment.

B. Martin noted her appreciation for members' flexibility in accommodating the meeting location change to St. Thomas due to current technical issues with the A/V equipment in the meeting room at the Oxford County Administration Building.

1.2 Approval of agenda

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-1.2

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for February 26, 2026, be approved as amended.

Carried.

1.3 Reminder of conflicts of interest

Reminder to disclose any pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof when the item arises, including interests related to a previous meeting the member did not attend.

1.4 Recording of minutes

Reminder that meetings are recorded for minute-taking purposes, and open session portions are publicly available for viewing for 30 days after being posted on Southwestern Public Health's website.

2.0 Approval of minutes

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-2.1

Moved by K. Hobbs

Seconded by G. Jones

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for January 22, 2025, be approved.

Carried.

3.0 Consent agenda items

No items.

4.0 Correspondence received requiring action

No items.

5.0 Agenda items for information, discussion, decision.

5.1 Medical Officer of Health's Report

Dr. N. Tran reviewed the report.

D. Shinedling inquired whether preliminary seasonal projections aligned with actual trends. Dr. Tran advised trends were generally consistent with qualitative expectations informed by Southern Hemisphere data, particularly for influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

D. Shinedling also asked about demographic data for those affected by respiratory illnesses. Dr. Tran advised that hospitalizations were primarily among the very young and those over 65, and that RSV hospitalizations were reduced due to recent vaccine programs.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-5.1

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by L. Rowden

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Medical Officer of Health's Report for February 26, 2026.

Carried.

5.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report

C. St. John reviewed the report and responded to Board questions.

E. Taylor asked whether all locations selling tobacco in the region are inspected. C. St. John clarified that not all locations are inspected. E. Taylor also commented on the expansion of "bring your own" or tailgate-style alcohol events, noting the perceived tension between public health education on alcohol harms and broader availability. C. St. John acknowledged the concern.

M. Peterson asked whether repeat offenders in secondary school tobacco enforcement could lose their licence to sell cigarettes. C. St. John explained that Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) follows a progressive enforcement approach, beginning with education and moving to enforcement where required. P. Heywood added that under the automatic probation process, if a corporation or owner is charged a second time and meets the criteria, the matter may be referred to the Ministry for consideration. If approved, an automatic probation period of six months may be imposed.

M. Peterson also asked about notification processes for communities with high sodium levels in drinking water, particularly in border communities where residents access healthcare providers outside the SWPH jurisdiction. S. Maclsaac confirmed that notices

are sent to healthcare professionals within the SWPH region so they can support patients and respond to inquiries. M. Peterson noted that some residents seek care in Kitchener and their providers may not receive SWPH communications. Dr. N. Tran acknowledged the challenge of cross-jurisdictional communication and suggested two approaches: ensuring information is easily accessible for residents to share with their providers, and exploring information-sharing mechanisms with external healthcare partners, potentially through Ontario Health tables. M. Peterson further suggested direct mail-outs to affected communities. C. St. John noted that public health has previously used utility bill inserts for notifications and agreed to take the suggestion back for consideration.

C. Agar referenced the Board of Health financial controls and, considering recent allegations of financial fraud at regional healthcare organizations, and asked what mechanisms are in place if breaches occur or staff fail to follow established controls, and when the Board would be notified of financial infractions. C. St. John confirmed that SWPH has both external auditors and significant internal controls, and she committed to providing a report outlining the notification and oversight processes.

D. Shinedling asked whether provincial guidance under the Smoke-Free Ontario framework has changed with respect to tobacco and vaping enforcement. C. St. John responded that there have been no substantial recent changes, aside from the 2021 update to the vape protocol.

D. Mayberry inquired about the 64% BORN consent rate, asking whether there is insight into why 36% of families do not consent to follow-up. C. St. John indicated that the reasons are not well understood. C. Richards added that while communication about available supports can always be strengthened, some families may choose not to engage at that time.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-5.2

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by G. Jones

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chief Executive Officer's report for February 26, 2026.

Carried.

6.0 New business

No items.

7.0 Closed session

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-C7

Moved by E. Taylor

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health move to closed session in order to consider the following, as outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act:

- (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board (re: Woodstock site); and
- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; and (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

Carried.

8.0 Rising and reporting of closed session

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-C8

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by S. Molnar

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

The Board rose from closed session and reconvened in open session at 4:07 p.m.

D. Shinedling rejoined the meeting at 4:08 p.m.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-C2.0-4.0

Moved by J. Herbert

Seconded by G. Jones

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health approve the appointment of M. Peterson to fill the vacancy on the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee.

Carried.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-C2.0

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by S. Molnar

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Special Ad Hoc Building Committee Closed Report for February 26, 2026.

Carried.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-C3.0

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chair's Verbal Report for February 26, 2026 and proceed with further direction considered.

Carried.

9.0 Future meetings and events

The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be:

- Thursday, March 26, 2026
- Orientation at 12:00 p.m. | Meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- Location: 1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON; virtual participation via MS Teams

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Resolution # 2026-BOH-0226-10.0

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by E. Taylor

That the meeting adjourn to meet again on Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: _____

