

# Board of Health Meeting

## March 26, 2026



## Open Session Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, March 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. J. Palmer	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)
Mr. D. Warden	Board Member
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. M. Lichti	Public Health Nurse
Mr. D. McDonald	Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Ms. M. Nusink**	Director, Finance
Ms. N. Rowe**	Manager, Communications
Mr. Y. Santos	Manager, IT
Mr. D. Smith	Program Director
Ms. M. Van Wylie	Manager, Healthy Communities
Ms. A. Dale	Harrison Pensa LLP

### Media:

Mr. Shane Kettmiss	Rogers TV
--------------------	-----------

**Note: \*\* indicates virtual participation**

### Regrets:

Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
Ms. S. Maclsaac	Program Director
Ms. C. Richards	Manager, Foundational Standards

## 1.1 Call to order, recognition of quorum

The meeting was called to order by B. Martin at 1:00 p.m.

B. Martin introduced and welcomed J. Palmer to the Board of Health.

## 1.2 Approval of agenda

B. Martin noted that E. Taylor and J. Herbert needed to leave the meeting early and suggested amending the order of business to ensure as many members as possible would be present for the closed session.

### Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-1.2

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by J. Herbert

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for Thursday, March 26, 2026, be approved as amended by changing the Order of Business so that Item 7.0 Closed Session and Item 8.0 Rising and Reporting follow Item 5.1.

**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-0326-2.1

Moved by D. Warden

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for February 26, 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 SWPH Report on Age-Friendly Community Strategies for March 26, 2026

P. Heywood introduced Meagan Lichti, Public Health Nurse, who presented the report.

J. Herbert thanked staff for the presentation and noted that the St. Thomas Seniors' Centre is very active. He highlighted the importance of transportation in the community, particularly with anticipated population growth. D. Warden added that the Seniors' Centre has experienced significant growth in membership, resulting in space constraints and turning participants away. He emphasized the importance of recreational and social opportunities for seniors and noted transportation remains a municipal challenge.

S. Molnar thanked staff for the presentation and asked about the sources of demographic and fall-related data. M. Lichti advised the information was drawn from the Public Health Community Status Report and Public Health Ontario (PHO). S. Molnar also asked about population growth projections and whether transportation planning should be considered across the full Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) region rather than by municipality. M. Lichti responded that current work is being prioritized in Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas due to existing partnerships but noted that regional opportunities may emerge. She added that rural transportation, mobility limitations, and limited awareness of existing services were key challenges identified.

B. Martin noted a previous regional transportation initiative led by South Central Ontario Region Economic Development (SCOR) that connected urban and rural communities across nine counties; however, provincial funding for the pilot ended last year. She indicated she would connect staff with the initiative's leads.

G. Jones noted that regional transportation was recently discussed at a recent mayoral roundtable convened by London Mayor Josh Morgan and described the topic as a current priority among municipalities in Middlesex, Elgin-St. Thomas, and surrounding areas. He also suggested connecting with the Young at Heart Committee in Southwold for community input.

M. Peterson noted that many residents in Blandford-Blenheim access healthcare services in the Kitchener-Waterloo region and asked whether cross-county transportation partnerships had been considered. M. Lichti indicated discussions have begun regarding information sharing with transportation providers serving areas such as Stratford and Perth County, and noted that broader regional conversations may be required. M. Peterson further commented on logistical challenges rural seniors face using fixed-route transit services.

D. Shinedling asked where falls were most commonly occurring. M. Lichti advised that the majority occur in private homes, with smaller proportions occurring in community spaces and in long-term care or retirement homes. D. Shinedling also asked about collaboration with planners, to which M. Lichti confirmed partnerships with built-environment staff and working groups associated with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

C. Agar asked about the timeline for receiving updated census data and how quickly reports could be refreshed. Staff noted updates would occur as new data becomes available through ongoing updates to SWPH's health status reports. C. Agar also asked about engagement with the St. Thomas Seniors' Centre. M. Lichti explained that while the centre has been consulted through focus groups, the committee's primary focus has been seniors who are not currently connected to services or unable to access them.

K. Hobbs suggested connecting with ParaMed Home Health Care to better understand the needs of seniors receiving home care services and to share information about available supports. M. Lichti acknowledged the suggestion and noted that staff have engaged with Ontario Health at Home and community paramedicine partners.

D. Mayberry commented that the report highlights both social factors such as housing and transportation as well as physical issues such as falls, and asked how fall-prevention data could be translated into practical guidance for seniors in their homes. M. Lichti noted that evidence-based tools, including home safety checklists and risk assessments, are available and that paramedic data may help identify common causes of falls and inform targeted prevention messaging.

L. Rowden and K. Hobbs raised concerns regarding gaps between hospital discharge planning and the availability of home care supports, noting that some seniors return home without timely access to equipment or services. S. Molnar clarified that while challenges exist, many healthcare providers do implement home-based support programs and emphasized the importance of ensuring homes remain safe environments for aging residents.

#### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-C3.0**

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by D. Mayberry

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health receive the Report on Age-Friendly Community Strategies for Oxford and Elgin-St. Thomas.

**Carried.**

## **7.0 Closed session**

#### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-C7**

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by D. Warden

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

- (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-0326-C8

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

**Carried.**

The Board rose from closed session and reconvened in open session at 2:42 p.m.

D. Shinedling rejoined the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

### Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-C2.0

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by J. Herbert

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Governance Standing Committee Closed Session Report for March 26, 2026.

**Carried.**

### Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-C3.0

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by L. Rowden

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health receive the Verbal Report from the Chair regarding a Board Member Matter; and further that the Board direct the Chair to proceed with next steps outlined during the closed session discussion.

**Carried.**

J. Herbert called for a recorded vote. Following a vote by show of hands, the Chair declared the motion Carried with 10 in favor, 1 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

## 5.2 Governance Standing Committee report

G. Jones presented the report. No questions were raised.

### Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-5.2-1.0

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by D. Warden

That the Board of Health approve the Governance Standing Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

**Carried.**

The Chair declared a pecuniary interest and recused herself at 2:47 p.m.

### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-5.2-2.0**

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by D. Mayberry

That the Board of Health approve the amendments to policy BOH-FIN-020 Remuneration and Expenses as presented.

**Carried.**

The Chair returned to the room at 2:48 p.m.

### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-5.2**

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Governance Standing Committee Closed Session Report for March 26, 2026.

**Carried.**

## **5.3 Medical Officer of Health's report**

Dr. N. Tran reviewed the report.

K. Hobbs asked about the status of a centralized immunization registry for Ontario. Dr. N. Tran noted that while the need has been raised provincially, there is currently no formal program, announcement, or funding, though broader digital health initiatives and electronic health records may help in the future.

S. Molnar highlighted the importance of equitable and timely access to immunization services, including through primary care, and noted that the Ontario College of Pharmacists is considering scope-of-practice expansions for pharmacy technicians. Dr. Tran added that pharmacies are key access points for vaccines, and their role in delivery is under active discussion.

### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-5.1**

Moved by S. Molnar

Seconded by D. Mayberry

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

**Carried.**

## **5.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

C. St. John reviewed the report.

D. Mayberry asked for further information about the vision pilot project, seeking clarification on what the pilot entails and the process for identifying children, noting the importance of vision for success in school. D. Smith explained that the pilot program is a

subset of schools selected ahead of the full standards to be implemented in the fall. Schools were identified using Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) data to find areas with low uptake of vision services, then cross-referenced with feeder schools, Education Quality and Assessment Office (EQAO) results, vaccination rates, and dental screening data to determine where additional support is needed. The pilot is focused on children in junior kindergarten and, similar to the dental program, aims to identify urgent issues and provide guidance on next steps, without replacing formal eye exams.

S. Molnar asked if school participation is mandatory. C. St. John confirmed that while vision screening is part of SWPH's mandate, parents may decline participation for their children.

S. Molnar also asked if SWPH has an official position on social media harms. C. St. John noted that SWPH does not have an official position but recognizes the connection between social media, youth, and mental health, and is reviewing Planet Youth data.

C. Agar thanked staff for the report on online harms and emphasized the opportunity for public health to provide guidance to the first generation of youth growing up with phones. She advocated that SWPH support delaying phone use until grade 9, delaying social media until age 16, and restricting phone access during school hours.

C. St. John acknowledged C. Agar's comments and indicated staff would review her request and report back to the Board.

B. Martin highlighted that data in the CEO report demonstrates how compliance improves when public health intervenes. J. Palmer asked which schools are included for vision screening programs. C. St. John noted all public and Catholic schools, as well as some private schools, and that she would provide further details in a future report.

### **Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-5.2**

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by D. Warden

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

**Carried.**

## **6.0 New business**

No items.

## **9.0 Future meetings and events**

The next scheduled Board of Health meeting will be:

- Thursday, April 23, 2026
- Orientation at 12:00 p.m. | Meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- Location: Oxford County Administration Building, 21 Reeve Street, Woodstock, ON; virtual participation via MS Teams

## 10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

### Resolution # 2026-BOH-0326-10.0

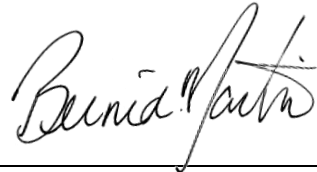
Moved by J. Palmer

Seconded by G. Jones

That the meeting adjourn to meet again on Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

**Carried.**

Confirmed: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benita Futo", written over a horizontal line.