

May 11, 2026



Bear River Board of Health Meeting

Location: Bear River Health Department, 655 E 1300 N, Logan, Utah, 84341

Board of Health Attendees: Lee Perry, Sandi Goodlander, Cheryl Atwood, Rebecca Echols, Randy Williams, Bill Cox, and Yohanna Vernon

Bear River Health Department Attendees: Jordan Mathis, Josh Greer, Spencer George, Linda Brown, Estee Hunt, Alicia Toscano, Holly Budge, Farrin Weise, Jill McArthur, and Jared Bohman

Other Attendees: Jason Sleight and Trevor Cook

Attachments 📎 Bear River Board of Health Meeting

Meeting records 🗣️ Recording

Summary

Board members reviewed mental health initiatives, approved audit reports, and finalized critical regional policy and infrastructure projects. The department secured a 5-year suicide prevention grant and received a clean financial audit opinion for the fiscal year. Financial growth is attributed to the ongoing integration of mental health and substance abuse services. The board approved a new privacy policy and finalized an agreement for automatic employee retirement contributions. Officials also discussed logistical challenges regarding the full integration of behavioral health management personnel. The board unanimously recommended the adoption of the 3-year mental health and substance abuse area plan. Concerns persist regarding the feasibility of high-density subdivisions amid ongoing sewer project funding challenges.

Call to Order & Adopt Agenda:

- Lee Perry initiated the meeting by asking for the adoption of the agenda:
 - Motion to adopt: Bill Cox
 - Second: Sandi Goodlander

Meeting Minute Approval:

- Lee Perry initiated the approval of the minutes from March 9, 2026
 - Motion for approval: Randy Williams
 - Second: Bill Cox

Public Comment:

- There was no public comment

Details

Opening Ceremony, Pledge of Allegiance, and presentation on Suicide and Mental Health

- Jill McArthur led the Pledge of Allegiance as part of the opening ceremony. Following the pledge, Jill presented on mental health and suicide prevention, noting that May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Bear River Health Department's suicide prevention efforts are reflected in a lifespan approach addressing needs across all stages of life, focusing on high-risk adult males while expanding services for women and youth experiencing rising ideation and self-harm. The department was awarded a five-year comprehensive suicide prevention grant from the Utah Department of Health and Human Services to help with these efforts.

Suicide Fatality Review and Strategic Planning:

- Community partners were convened to develop a five-year strategic plan to coordinate efforts in prevention, intervention, postvention, and treatment. Furthermore, the department established a Suicide Fatality Review, as requested by a former board member, David Zook, to identify system service gaps and promote prevention opportunities. The review team meets monthly, and their findings are shared with the postvention group to guide improvement efforts.

Lethal Means Safety and Training:

- Means safety has been an ongoing component of suicide prevention strategies for the last four years, emphasizing the reduction of access to lethal means in the community, worksite, and healthcare settings. Over 2,900 people have been trained in evidence-based methods like Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), a

means of safety module, and sometimes Naloxone administration. The department distributes gun locks, gun safes, ammo boxes, and medication lock boxes, all accompanied by education, to reduce the time and distance between a person in crisis and lethal means.

Success Stories and Outreach:

- Several success stories were shared, illustrating the positive impact of providing means, safety materials, and safety planning, such as families receiving medication lock boxes or gun safes for household safety. Outreach and engagement efforts include providing an English- and Spanish-language mental health resource directory and using 988 and MCOT dashboards to track the hopeful number of people reaching out for help.

2025 Audit Report:

- Jason Sleight, an audit partner with Jones Simpkins, presented the audit report, which is required due to the receipt of significant federal and state funds. The primary objective was to issue an opinion on whether the financial statements are presented in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and the opinion was that they are presented correctly. The report also covered internal controls and compliance, noting no findings of deficiencies, resulting in a clean audit.

Audit Highlights and Comparison:

- The current year's financials showed significant increases in assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures, with each being up by several million dollars, which is attributed to the new integration of mental health services. The report noted that next year's financial data will likely be more comparable, as the current numbers are skewed by the unique integration situation.
- Lee Perry initiated the approval of the Audit Report
 - Motion for approval: Bill Cox
 - Second: Randy Williams

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Area Plan:

- The area plan is a three-year document rolled out by the Office of Substance Use Mental Health (OSUMH) within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which requires approval from both the department and the counties as the local mental health authority. The 84-page plan outlines mandated mental

health and substance use services, including services in jails and for unfunded or underfunded individuals, as well as those on Medicaid.

Area Plan Process and Integration:

- The area plan process involves submitting the document to the state and counties by May 15th, after which the state may request edits, even following county approval. This year's plan covers the integration of mental health and substance use services, and it is anticipated that the full integration by July 1 will result in better continuity of care and a large spike in reported substance use individuals receiving services.

Public Input and Prevention Framework:

- While public input is encouraged, the guidelines set by OSUMH dictate what can be included in the plan, meaning input may not always translate directly into content. The prevention side of the plan, which is similar to the last two years, follows a framework of risk and protective factor models to reduce the likelihood of substance misuse.

Health Department Policy Approval:

- Josh Greer presented the final privacy program policy, which had been reviewed by legal and is in compliance with state mandates. The policy provides broad guidance for the department.
- Lee Perry initiated the approval of the Bear River Health Department Privacy Policy Program.
 - Motion for approval: Sandi Goodlander
 - Second: Cheryl Atwood

New Employee URS Enrollment:

- Spencer George provided an update that the health department has signed a new agreement with the Utah Retirement Systems (URS) to automatically enroll new employees with a 6% employee contribution to their 401k. This automatic enrollment requires new employees to opt out if they do not wish to contribute, which is a measure intended to increase participation rates.

Behavioral Health Integration Update:

- The integration of the Bear River Health Department and behavioral health is nearing the execution of the final contract. The process involves moving 22 individuals and addressing integration logistics, including the relocation of management personnel to a single location for more streamlined operations.

- **Capitation Benefits and Service Expansion:** The shift to capitation means clients will be required to seek services through Bear River Behavioral Health, a change expected to be unpopular with some but ultimately beneficial for the system. Capitation generally results in serving more people and significant cost savings, as seen in other districts.

Health Officer Report:

Bear Lake Sewer Project Concern:

- The department expressed concern over a new application for a 50-lot subdivision on the east side of Bear Lake due to the density of onsite wastewater systems, particularly as a sewer project is currently being worked on with county and legislative partners. An appropriation for the sewer system was pursued through both Representative and Senator Curtis's offices.

Sewer District Project and Funding Status:

- The sewer district project is facing increased costs, with an 8.7 increase since 2020, yet an application was submitted for \$12 million from the federal government, and they are hopeful for that funding. A separate application for a low-interest state loan has been made through the sewer district and the division of water quality, as part of a larger project, which will still leave some current residents needing to pay for their existing systems. Furthermore, the sewer district needs to annex into the current district through the annexation process.

Feasibility of New Subdivision and Traffic Concerns:

- The subdivision project cannot currently be rejected based on existing standards and regulations for onsite wastewater, and local officials are being asked if the project is even feasible. There are concerns about the project's impact, as the area could potentially support as many as 200 more lots.

Scheduling and Retreat Details:

- A calendar invite for a retreat was sent out based on feedback for September 28th. This will be held at Randy Williams' cabin in Logan Canyon.

Public Hearing on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Area Plan:

- The public hearing was opened, but there was no one from the public present to offer comments.
- Lee Perry initiated the approval of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse area plan
 - Motion to approve: Sandi Goodlander
 - Second: Bill Cox

Open & Public Meeting Training:

- Jordan Mathis played a video for the group for the yearly training.

Motion to Close Session:

- Lee Perry initiated a motion to close the meeting
 - Motion to close: Bill Cox
 - Second: Sandi Goodlander