

**Monroe County Board of Health (BOH) Meeting Minutes -May 4, 2026**

**111 Westfall Road, Room 964, 3:30-5pm**

**Minutes**

<b>BOH in Attendance</b>		<b>DPH Attendance</b>
Theresa Green	Rashid Muhammad	Marielena Vélez de Brown
Emma Forbes-Jones	Sarah Fletcher	Meaghan McDermott
Erin Graupman		Tarilynn Forney
Celia McIntosh -zoom	Miguel Melendez, Jr.	Mel Schwartz
Linda Clark- zoom	Albert Blankley	MCDPH: Bridget Cook
Mike Weston		Guests: Tracy Jong, Adam Cavalier

The meeting was called to order by Theresa Green at 3:34pm.

**Introductions and General Announcements**

President Green welcomed everyone to the meeting. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting was tabled until quorum was reached.

**Commissioner’s Report – Dr. Marielena Vélez de Brown**

- Dr. Vélez de Brown discussed the current situation regarding deploying the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in the Rochester City School District (RCSD). There was some concern from RCSD that an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval would be needed to participate in the survey. Dr. Velez ed Brown correctly explained that the YRBS is not a human subjects research project (often requiring IRB approval) but rather CDC driven on-going public health surveillance, that does not require IRB approval. RCSD is now asking for an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) but at this point in April that process could take two months, after which the students would be on summer break. Dr. Eric Rosser-RCSD Superintendent and Chief of Staff Jamie Wilson are involved with the dissemination of the survey. If RCSD doesn’t participate there can be no general Monroe County YRBS report since they make up 70% of the Monroe County student body. Other school districts within Monroe County decided not to deploy the survey this year including East Rochester, Honeoye Falls, East Irondequoit and Brockport. Many community entities use the YRBS for grant writing. Dr. Vélez de Brown hopes that the reason schools are reluctant to deploy the survey is NOT due to questions in the survey regarding gender identity, sexual orientation or substance abuse. Those questions have been part of the survey for years, and need to be asked because so many minoritized and marginalized communities have higher rates of suicide and substance abuse. Those are the students we want to wrap support around. The MCDPH has already received YRBS data from many districts and sent reports back to schools in order to support families and children.
- Dr. Vélez de Brown announced that an employment offer made to a Forensic Pathologist was accepted. The pathologist has completed training in Cardiac and Neuropathology.

Many cases which were previously sent to NYC can now be handled in-house. Also, we have a new fellow joining us in July, Dr. Olivia Burke.

- Dr. Vélez de Brown reported the Addiction Services (AS) Team has hired three more speakers (one speaks Arabic and two speak Spanish). In 2025 we had a total of 623 NaloxBoxes installed across Monroe County and added 49 more in 2026. In August 2025, the boxes were filled with Fentanyl and Xylazine test strips. In 2025 the AS Team gave out 17,303 Narcan test kits making new community partners and increasing tabling by 61%. The AS Team is working with 27 local middle and high school students, and now the Children's Detention Center. The response has been very popular as the AS Team shares their personal lived experiences with youth. The team is also working within homeless encampments and have been met with compassion and solutions based on real situations. NYSDOH has been supplying Narcan and hopefully that continues as a life saving measure to prevent SUD deaths.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes**

April minutes were approved without changes by a motion brought forth by Celia McIntosh and seconded by Linda Clark. Unanimous approval.

### **Clean Indoor Air Act Exemption Application to the Board of Health**

- The board heard a variance petition from Havana Joe's Cigar Lounge LLC pursuant to Monroe County Sanitary Code §569-52.5. The Applicant seeks a variance to permit indoor smoking at the cigar bar at 125 East Ave Rochester, NY 14604 following a potential change of ownership.
- **3:48 pm: Executive Session** Theresa Green suggested a discussion time for a closed Executive Session to discuss confidential legal issues with legal counsel. Emma Forbes-Jones made a motion to call an executive session for the purposes of confidential legal counsel, and it was seconded by Miguel Melendez. It was approved unanimously. All were excused except the Board members and legal counsel to the Board.
- Executive Session was closed at 4:23 pm and the public meeting resumed. The board publicly discussed the variance application.
  - Question from BOH Member- Does Environmental Health Department collect or maintain any data regarding Cigar membership clubs who can operate outside of the Clean Indoor Air Act? No, the department does not retain such data.
  - Additional discussion involved concern for public health, workers in that environment, potential financial hardship, and potential conditions for the application.

Linda Clark made a motion to deny the application, which was seconded by Celia McIntosh. Five board members voted in favor while five members voters against and the motion did not pass. Theresa Green made a motion to approve the application with conditions, which was seconded by Mike Weston. Five board members voted in favor while five members voters against and the motion did not pass.

The Board did not have all 11 members in attendance. The Board is tabling further discussion until the next June 1, 2026 BOH meeting when it hopes to have a full board present.

Then a motion was made by Linda Clark to close the meeting which was seconded by Erin Graupman and approved unanimously

Next meeting: June 1, 2026. 111 Westfall Road CR964