

# Health board prepares potential 2009 budget cuts

## *Reduction in personnel possible if levy fails*

BY MANDY HOCHSTEDLER  
Examiner Staff Writer

Two preliminary budgets were approved unanimously for 2009 at Wednesday's regular meeting of the County District Board of Health, depending on the outcome of the levy to be decided by voters next month. "It is highly unusual that we are preparing two budgets," said Dr. Boyd Hoddinott, health commissioner. "However, this will help us prepare for possible financial restraints next year and will allow the public to see how important the levy is to our operation."

The 10-year, 1-mill replacement levy goes before voters March 4, and if passed, would begin generating funds for the nursing and environmental health divisions next year.

The 2009 budget with levy funding shows expenditures of \$2.514 million and revenues of \$2.266 million. The 2009 budget without levy funding shows \$1.539 million in expenditures and \$1.349 million in revenues.

Over the past several months, the board has been looking at potential budget cuts for 2009, which are reflected in the preliminary budget without levy funds. One of the biggest cuts is reflected in personnel as employee salaries make up a large part of agency expenses, Dr. Hoddinott said.

"The (preliminary) budget (without levy funding) shows a reduction in employees from 37 to 17," he said. "Our cuts may not be that drastic depending on how

much inside millage we would receive from the townships (in the case of levy failure)."

"What's frightening about this is if we lose them (employees), we're not going to get them back," Board President Don Spath said.

"They have been hanging in there with us even though their salaries are low and I would hate to see us lose such hard-working people."

In addition to staff cuts, 28 of the agency's 48 programs are tax-supported and may be affected by the levy. Some of these programs include school health nursing, investigation and control of infectious diseases, newborn baby visits, childhood and adult immunization clinics, environmental nuisances inspections and public water supply testing.

"I don't really think the public is aware of what will happen if the levy doesn't pass," Dr. Hoddinott said.

"Unfortunately, the ones it will hit the hardest are children, the elderly and the disadvantaged."

The board has already made several cuts to this year's budget, which include a major reduction in overtime hours and a cancellation of the agency's annual mass vaccination clinic.

In other action, the board:

- accepted the resignation of Pat Lentz, emergency

preparedness coordinator, who worked for the health district for five years;

- approved annual evaluations for Kaye Cook and Tara Dennis, home health nurses, and Tim Smith, environmental health, and probationary evaluations for Larry Brunke, environmental health, and Joe Berger, emergency planning assistant;

- approved an amendment to Regulation 46: Commercial Plumbing, which will reduce plumbing permit fees, such as the plumbing permit application fee from \$200 to \$60;

- approved a contract with Mary Rutan Hospital in which home health patients will be able to utilize speech therapy services at the hospital;

- approved an Immunization Action Program grant from the Ohio Department of Health;

- approved variance requests from Steve and Audrey Moody, 2765 County Road 21, DeGraff; Jim and Patt Denlinger, 1896

Township Road 179; and Jon E. Schmucker of Xenia for property at 7864 Park Drive, Russells Point;

- ordered Pamela Jackson, 3273 Township Road 32, to remove all solid waste and debris from her property within seven days; and

- ordered Jay Monteith, 708 E. Columbus Ave., to secure his garage and remove solid waste within seven days.

The next meeting is 1 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12, at the health district.