



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 18, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Dutchess County Board of Health was held virtually on Microsoft Teams and at the Dutchess County Department of Health (DOH), 85 Civic Center Plaza – Suite 106, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 on the above date.

PRESENT: Jeanean Aming, Psych. NP
Amy Cocina, MD
Laura Fil, MD (Virtual)
John Fallon, NP (Virtual)
Lisa Kaul, Legislative Rep.
David McNary, Vice President
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD, President

ABSENT: Alexander Cohen, MD

DOH STAFF: Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, MPH, FACEP, Commissioner (Virtual)
Anthony Ruggiero, MPA, Assistant Commissioner

GUESTS: Amanda Sammon and Yalitza Benitez

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Melissa Nelson-Perron called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM – A quorum was declared.

MINUTES: The minutes for May 21, 2026, were approved with no corrections. The motion was made by David McNary, seconded by Dr. Amy Cocina and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

DC Transit Presentation: Amanda Sammon and Yalitza Benitez provided an overview of Dutchess County Transit, the largest unit in the Department of Public Works, with 99 employees supporting four main services: fixed-route buses, ADA complementary paratransit, Dial-a-Ride microtransit, and the countywide Flex service. They noted that ADA, Dial-a-Ride, and Flex are fully accessible, require reservations, and need an application with medical verification; forms are available online or by mail. They also highlighted ongoing

community outreach at events like Think Differently and the Golden Gathering to keep residents aware of available options. Anthony Ruggiero offered to include transit information at Mobile Health Unit outreach stops.

Dr. Santiago asked about fares for Poughkeepsie City School District students, and Amanda explained that middle and high school students ride for free under a district contract. Several questions about ADA paratransit followed: it only expires if a doctor sets an end date, matches fixed-route hours and coverage, provides origin-to-destination service where vehicles can safely access, experiences demand spikes mainly at popular times, charges \$3.50 per trip, and serves riders located within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route or able to reach such a point. ADA service doesn't use hub systems because they increase wait and travel times.

Dr. Santiago also asked about transportation options in Northeast Dutchess and Amenia, where fixed-route buses do not operate. Amanda explained that while Dutchess County Transit doesn't serve that area, the Northeast Community Center offers a curb-to-curb Dial-a-Ride service. Amanda and Yalitza are participating in a Planning Department study to create a centralized, countywide "one-stop shop" for transportation information.

Further questions addressed service challenges in towns like Dover. Amanda noted that vehicle size and road limitations make it difficult to serve smaller rural roads, and few riders lived close enough to major routes to use the fixed-route system effectively.

Amanda also explained how the countywide *Dial-A-Ride* program works, noting that six municipalities—City and Town of Poughkeepsie, Hyde Park, Fishkill, East Fishkill, and Wappingers—contract with Dutchess County Transit for specific service days. Towns pay a set daily rate whether the service is used or not, and residents reserve trips in advance, typically three days ahead. Dial-A-Ride uses scheduling software that groups riders efficiently and provides automated pickup notifications. Vehicles are 30-foot cutaway vans with lifts for accessibility.

Service areas vary by municipality, allowing trips to common destinations like Stop & Shop, the Galleria Mall, Walmart, and medical appointments. Dial-A-Ride service runs from 8:15 am – 4:15 pm. Riders pay \$3.50 per trip, or \$1 for seniors. Reservations are important because popular morning times fill quickly, and the system must avoid mixing riders from different municipalities who fund separate service days. While same-day booking is technically possible, it's not offered due to fairness and scheduling constraints.

Amanda noted a shift toward younger Dial-A-Ride users, including college students and younger residents without cars. The software can support app-based booking, but most seniors prefer calling. Medical trips like dialysis are scheduled routinely, and riders are encouraged to book as soon as they know their appointment.

Lisa Kaul asked about services to the and from the local hospitals. Fixed-route buses also serve the major hospitals like Vassar, Mid-Hudson, and Northern Dutchess, though ridership there is smaller compared to major hubs like the Galleria and Walmart.

Amanda briefly described the Flex service as a countywide, on demand transit option operating roughly from 8:15 am to 4:25 pm, with all trips ending by 4:45 pm. It works much like an Uber-style ride: trips anywhere in Dutchess County cost \$6, or \$5 for travel within the same town, with no monthly trip limit as long as availability allows. Flex frequently serves areas without fixed routes and is heavily used in places like LaGrange, Beekman, Hyde Park, and Beacon. However, long-distance requests—such as riders in Northeast Dutchess wanting to go to Walmart—can tie up a bus for hours, reducing availability for others.

All trips use 14-passenger buses, since state funding rules prevent purchasing smaller vehicles. Reservations must be made ahead of time; same-day scheduling is not offered for Flex because it would conflict with other services and municipal contracts. ADA riders, however, may book by 6 p.m. for next-day service. She also described the Lifeline program, which supplies free transit tickets through partner agencies for essential trips.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT: Dr. Santiago thanked the transit team for their presentation and noted that some of their materials could be incorporated into future departmental activities. There were no new major updates for Commissioner’s report. Anthony Ruggiero added that the department is currently in the middle of the budget process, with no significant updates at this time.

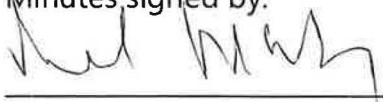
LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Lisa Kaul briefly reported ongoing concerns in Dutchess County about proposed data centers, especially in East Fishkill. Issues include heavy energy and water demands, possible health impacts, and uncertainty about future proposals. County officials are exploring options to slow or limit new data center development and are working to identify potential projects earlier.

OLD BUSINESS: No report...

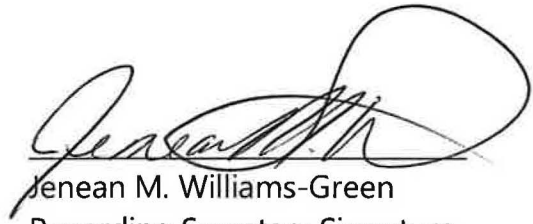
NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: Just a friendly reminder, there will be no July meeting. The next meeting will be on **Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 4:00 pm.**

A motion was made by David McNary to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Amy Cocina, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Minutes signed by:



President/Vice President Signature



Jenean M. Williams-Green

Recording Secretary Signature

2026 EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Dr. Melissa Nelson-Perron – President

David McNary – Vice President