

**City of Cleveland Lead Safe Advisory Board
Minutes**

6/12/2025

Board Members Present:

Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer – Co-Chair

Scott Kroehle – Co-Chair

Rob Fischer

Wyonette Cheairs, LSCC

Diana Shulsky

Jen Johns

Carol Smith - *virtual*

Staff Members Present:

Sally Martin O'Toole – City of Cleveland Building Director

Karen Dettmer – City of Cleveland Building & Housing, Manager of Lead Initiatives

Dr. David Margolius – City of Cleveland Director of Public Health

Guests:

Bert Nuehring – Crowe LLP

Jonathan Dunn – Crowe LLP

Lynn Heine – Crowe LLP

John Jason – City of Cleveland Building & Housing Data Analyst

Victor Santillo – City of Cleveland Building & Housing Lead Compliance

Abigail Staudt – The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Spencer Wells – CLASH

Celia Walker – Signal Cleveland

Ramadii Panger – Lake Erie Lead Services

Martin Berry – Lake Erie Lead Services

Stephanie Manning – Cleveland Documenters – Signal Cleveland

Andrea Anderson – Cleveland resident

Elizabeth Crowe – City of Cleveland Director of Quality Control and Performance Management - *virtual*

Marie Zicklefoos – City of Cleveland Building & Housing Lead Compliance - *virtual*

Rosa Lia Spinner – *virtual*
S.M. McDonnell – *virtual*
AP – *virtual*
Tim Markeson – *virtual*
Bobbi Saltzman – *virtual*
GH – *virtual*
Simara Vines – *virtual*
Molly – *virtual*
Troy Matthews – *virtual*
JR – *virtual*

Welcome

City Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer called the meeting to order and asked to start off with any public comments. There were no public comments

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer called for approval of the minutes from the March meeting. Scott Kroehle moved and Jen Johns seconded. All members approved.

Review of Program Progress

Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer stated that as we work to stabilize the lead program, one of the main objectives was for the city to announce the lead auditor role and we are introducing Crowe LLP today as the new auditor. Councilwoman Maurer added that we have been absent a functioning auditor role for the last few quarters and had been relying on Building & Housing for data for the advisory board meetings.

Dr. Margolius opened by saying that in broadening towards a Cleveland that has less lead poisoning, he presented three metrics that we can use going forward. Dr. Margolius showed data showing reduction in poisoning of 70% over a twelve year period but since 2018 the number has been flat with 1,369 children above the recommended levels of lead. Dr. Margolius showed a heat map of neighborhoods where the poisoning is concentrated and believes that if more children were tested on the east side that the areas to the east would show more poisoning. Lastly Dr. Margolius showed photos of lead paint deterioration and asserted that is the number one cause of poisoning in Cleveland.

Update from Building & Housing

Director Sally Martin O'Toole continued by presenting data compiled from Accela in recent months by looking at two past quarters from 2024 and two past quarters from 2025 and found that there have been 10,324 certifications – a number that reflects certifications through Q1 2025 via initial compliance, renewals or renewed under a new lead safe clearance. Overall there have been 20,187 properties that have requested to come through the program. After October of 2024 lead risk assessments replaced clearance exams.

In looking at housing type it was interesting to see that there were more single family homes than previously thought struggling to achieve compliance. In the past, 2 or 3-family homes were thought to exceed the number of singles that did not have compliance. Using Accela records as of 6-10-25 the total of renewal applications was 9,457.

Scott Kroehle and Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer both said that we have been working with standardized data in the past and it is hard to compare from the data points we are looking at now. With the data presented, the total number of properties was not showing but the single family homes comprised 52% of the applications, 27% were two-family, 4% were three-family and 11.6% were four or greater unit properties. For applications with issues, there were only 695 remaining, down from 1,300. This shows that the city is communicating with the inspectors to get the applications corrected, and also now includes risk assessments with this finding.

Scott Kroehle asked what issues are being found with risk assessments? Dr. Margolius replied that it is hard to break out and Scott offered to say that it would be good to have a coding system to tackle issues from a construction perspective. Wyonette Cheairs asked about the timeframe and John Jason said that this is current data in the Accela system. Scott Kroehle noted that the map of compliance mimics the map of poisoning and that poisoning is happening where the majority of people live.

Director Martin O'Toole continued to say that 277 civil tickets have been issued. Often these are for properties that have been submitted at one time and failed, and the owner never came back. The department has started identifying these properties as the first to ticket. Of those ticketed, the city is awaiting payment for 196 tickets and other payment status numbers were shared. Councilwoman Maurer asked about the 17 that submitted lead safe clearances as a result of the civil ticket received, whether they still paid the ticket that was issued.

Director Martin O'Toole continued to say that it is not surprising that the window and porch program participation is increasing. Scott Kroehle mentioned if the city could waive the permit fee and the Director said no, that will not be done. Councilwoman Maurer verified if there is a need to pull a permit to replace wood with vinyl windows, and with 20-30 permits per quarter for replacing windows, we need to make sure that work being done without a permit is avoided. Scott added that he would ballpark that $\frac{3}{4}$ of window replacement in the city is unpermitted, even if it is still done professionally or without an RRP designation. Councilwoman Maurer said that the value for the number of permits being pulled would be good to know. Scott asked for an estimate of how many wood windows are we talking about – that number is a central data point and we need to know in order of magnitude, if we are talking about 10,000 windows or 100's of 1000's of windows. He continued that he walked with the property survey at the time and they classified properties as A-B-C-D but did not do a wood window

count. Knowing this will help build out a workforce. It will aid in knowing that Cleveland needs “x” amount of money to fix this historic wrong.

Dept. of Public Health Community Development Update

Dr. Margolius updated on the community development work through April 2025. The Ohio Dept. of Development (ODOD) had received 174 applications and 17 remediation jobs were completed. This utilized the \$3.9M Lead Safe Ohio Grant. Additionally, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) progress through June 2025 sought the extension of the HUD funds. A Healthy Homes contractor was hired for handling the subs and we can now float that money for future work.

Councilwoman Maurer asked about workflow and any future projects that can be handed-off from the Health Dept. Dr. Margolius said that they will reopen for more work in the future and are just working on current projects now. Scott Kroehle mentioned that as we produce the next version of the template for project work, that it would be good to have input in order to have balance and consistency in the projects. Councilwoman Maurer said it would be better to have a slide showing a break-out of the project work for 1-3 family properties.

Director Martin O-Toole said that we are hiring and moving operations over to Public Health. Councilwoman Maurer said that she would like to see tracking of the ARPA dollars in the CDC’s and the inputs for 1-3 family properties. Director Martin O’Toole said there are two city inspectors plus Victor Santillo plus a new hire, so there will be more data after the violation notices. She noted that the City is not doing any lead risk assessments.

Councilwoman Maurer asked how reports will be reviewed going forward. Dr. Margolius said that in transitioning to Public Health, there is Lead Program Manager Etoi Shaquila Young and environmental specialists working on updates for the templates. She continued to ask for the block grants, will there be hand-offs for projects unless there is an elevated blood level (EBL)? Councilwoman Maurer said we know ODOD will work on backlogs and new requests and we want to do wraparound work. Lead Safe Cleveland will continue to get through their backlog. The consistent message is to continue to spend dollars. Wyonette Cheairs said that LSCC is still working with anyone that applies.

Councilwoman Maurer asked are we trying to right-size our response to requests? Wyonette Cheairs said that we are reducing barriers and focusing on where poisoning occurs. Scott Kroehle said the first in – first out might be how we started when the feeling was there is a scarcity of resources, but it sounds now like the last applications in may be getting processed in a better way than some that have been waiting. Councilwoman Maurer said we have to keep two lanes moving. Dr. Margolius suggested we might be putting too much emphasis on the granular view of work progress. Scott Kroehle responded that recentering on core tangible components is key. A failed application does not poison a child but a peeling window does. If we can track what we are doing, EBL will come down.

Lead Safe Auditor Role

Councilwoman Maurer announced that as mandated by law, Crowe LLP has been named the new Lead Safe Auditor. She introduced Bert Neuhring, Jonathan Dunn and Lynn Heine with the firm. Bert Neuhring commenced by saying that they are currently determining an audit plan in the next month which will outline their approach to the work. He continued to say the work will be founded in the data. Three concerns to keep in mind for the developing the audit plan include what does the city want to see, what is possible to see, and what is the reliability of data. Bert continued to say that once data and performance metrics are known, then it can be determined which metrics are the ones to focus on.

Bert Neuhring continued to say that he sees this role as collaborative. It is helpful to be an outside party to get that vantage point. Are processes working for the transitional plan? He anticipates more input on spending and funding will come up in the next meeting.

Councilwoman Maurer emphasized that this role is key to the lead safe advisory board, and can we as a board meet with the auditor since staffing and board support are critical as we meet this moment of finding our stability. In asking if the board will be talking with the city or with the auditor directly, Bert Neuhring answered that the dialog will be with the city staff. Scott Kroehle pointed out that information requests can be administratively burdensome. Scott continued by asking how are we going to find something we don't currently have, and as auditor evaluating and continuing to seek new information, could you respond to these requests? Bert Neuhring replied that most of the data is housed at the city. We can use processes to find where data is housed and learn how to access.

Diana Shulsky said if the audit plan is expected in roughly thirty days, can it be malleable to change the plan with broader input by the end of July? Bert Neuhring said give and take with the audit plan timeframe will be helpful. Scott Kroehle said that we realize the auditor is not a data researcher and can work with the administration and a dedicated city staff to assist. Dr. Margolius said he is the accountability partner for the auditor. Councilwoman Maurer said there are already fully budgeted positions waiting to be filled. Budget is not a barrier.

Syracuse Report on Lead Initiatives

Councilwoman Maurer refreshed the board on the bustrip to Rochester. Regarding Syracuse, it is also an older city with older housing stock. They use registration of rentals to determine requirements for certification. What is different in Syracuse is that they use city inspectors instead of a private workforce. We have bigger problems on a larger scale than Syracuse.

Replacement of Board Member

Councilwoman Maurer stated that someone from Crowe LLP will have to be on the board. Rob Fischer was thanked for many years of auditor work including over a year of continued work and

attendance after the auditor role officially lapsed. Rob stated that he will be withdrawing his board position after this meeting but plans to stay involved with the coalition's efforts.

Closing Comments

Councilwoman Maurer reminded that our two remaining meetings in 2025 are September 11 and December 11. She asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott Kroehle moved and Wyonette Cheairs seconded. All members approved.

Conclusion of Minutes 6/12/2025