



**Snohomish Health District
Board of Health Minutes
July 29, 2021**

The meeting was held via Zoom conference call/video.

Members Present

Scott Bader, Councilmember, Everett
Christine Frizzell, Councilmember, Lynnwood
John Joplin, Councilmember, Brier
Anji Jorstad, Councilmember, Lake Stevens
Sam Low, County Councilmember
Kyoko Matsumoto Wright, Mayor, Mountlake Terrace
Nate Nehring, County Councilmember
Dan Rankin, Mayor, Darrington
Linda Redmon, Councilmember, Snohomish
Stephanie Wright, County Councilmember – BOH Chair

Members Absent

Elisabeth Crawford, Councilmember, Mukilteo
Megan Dunn, County Councilmember
Adrienne Fraley-Monillas, Councilmember, Edmonds – BOH Vice Chair
Jared Mead, County Councilmember
Jeff Vaughan, Councilmember, Marysville

Call to Order

The special meeting of the Board of Health was called to order at 12:01 p.m. via Zoom conference call by Board Chair Stephanie Wright.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Ms. Sarah de Jong who reported there was a quorum present.

Public Comment

Public comment was accepted in writing prior to the meeting. Chair Wright reported no written comments were received.

Written Reports

Chair Wright noted that the Finance Manager's report for May 2021 can be found in the Board packet.

Consent

It was moved by Ms. Anji Jorstad and seconded by Ms. Linda Redmon to approve the following items on consent:

- a. Approve vouchers and Res. 21-15 authorizing Health District expenditures from June 1, 2021 to July 15, 2021.
- b. Approve policy POL 210.002 concerning texting.

The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Action

Authorize the Administrative Officer to execute amendment #22 to the consolidated contract with the Washington State Department of Health (SR 21-066; K. Curtis)

Most of the funding is for renewals of existing work. The \$2 million dollars for COVID coordinated response isn't new money, but moved from one bucket of funding to another.

It was moved by Ms. Jorstad and seconded by Mr. John Joplin to authorize the Administrative Officer to execute amendment #22 to the consolidated contract with the Washington State Department of Health. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Authorize the Administrative Officer to sign the Pollution Prevention Assistance Partnership IAA with the Washington State Department of Ecology (SR 21-076; R. Gray)

The Board approved applying for these funds a couple months ago. Since then, a contract has been received and staff is requesting the Board to approve executing the agreement.

It was moved by Mr. Dan Rankin and seconded by Ms. Redmon authorize the Administrative Officer to sign the Pollution Prevention Assistance Partnership IAA with the Washington State Department of Ecology. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Authorize the Administrative Officer to sign memorandums of agreement with key partners for the HHS Advancing Health Literacy grant (SR 21-075; H. Thomas, K. Curtis)

This grant was awarded to the Health District on July 1. As part of the grant, relationships must be established with other entities and so a memorandum of agreement (MOA) is needed between the Health District and each party. The attached draft has been reviewed and revised by legal counsel. The MOA has not been reviewed by the other partners, and so final revisions may be needed after such review takes place.

It was moved by Ms. Jorstad and seconded by Mr. Joplin to authorize the Administrative Officer to sign memorandums of agreement with key partners for the HHS Advancing Health Literacy grant. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Approve the 2021 budget amendment #1 (SR 21-073; T. Kellogg)

The original appropriation for 2021 was budgeted at around \$16 million and did not include any COVID funding because there wasn't enough information available at that time. This budget amendment increases the appropriation to approximately \$25 million. Staff anticipate the need for a second budget amendment later in the year, as more information is received. Ms. Tracey Kellogg went over the high points of the budget amendment, described in more detail in the staff report.

It was moved by Mr. Scott Bader and seconded by Mr. Joplin to approve the 2021 budget amendment #1. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Authorize the Administrative Officer to approve out-of-state travel to Baltimore from September 20-24, 2021, for Nicole Thomsen to attend the Public Health Law Conference (SR 21-071; H. Thomas, S. Frederick)

This conference will help to increase institutional knowledge and support of various efforts for the Health District, one of the largest being how to address issues related to the equity resolution adopted by the Board last year. It will also provide information in relation to the Health and Human Services (HHS) work moving forward.

It was moved by Mr. Scott Bader and seconded by Mr. Rankin to approve out-of-state travel to Baltimore from September 20-24, 2021, for Nicole Thomsen to attend the Public Health Law Conference. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Approve a six-month extension of six previously appointed Public Health Advisory Council members through December 2021 (SR 21-074; N. Thomsen)

The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) has a staggered three-year appointment cycle for its members. Nine sectors of the PHAC had their term expire at the end of June 2021. However, there are potential changes regarding the composition of the PHAC that may be needed due to House Bill 1152. Because of this, staff is asking for approval from the Board to extend the expired sector appointments through December to allow time to work through the potential restructuring before the new bill takes effect.

It was moved by Ms. Redmon and seconded by Ms. Jorstad to approve a six-month extension of six previously appointed Public Health Advisory Council members through December 2021. The motion passed with 10 yes votes, 0 no votes, 5 absent (Crawford, Dunn, Fraley-Monillas, Mead, Vaughan).

Administrative Officer's Report

Rucker building – All the drywall has been completed with the exception of the escape stairwell which is expected to be completed this weekend. We have also returned all record documents back to the storage rooms in the basement, freeing up the auditorium. This is important to be able to make that space ready for future in-person meetings. Another part of this work is dealing with surplus property that was impacted by the flood. The Health District has held several auctions to get rid of old cubicle systems.

Budget and audit processes – The budget and audit processes are both underway. In terms of the budget process, even though the budget ad hoc committee meeting group hasn't met yet, Mr. Shawn Frederick has submitted a request for funds to the County Executive's office, asking for a 2% increase for tuberculosis and communicable disease control work. Regarding the audit – staff have been preparing and gathering documents for the process.

COVID – Leadership roles for the incident command are being hired to ensure there is adequate capacity to plan and resource toward continued response to this fifth wave of COVID-19 in the community.

The Health District is the lead for the public health healthcare sector as part of the County's overall recovery plan, Mr. Frederick had an initial meeting with Jason Biermann, Director of Emergency Management, to discuss outreach to healthcare partners and determine what the priorities, needs, and thoughts are to inform the process before moving forward.

Lawsuit update – There was an announcement in the news this morning regarding a recent lawsuit. Mr. Grant Weed, legal counsel to the Health District, briefed the Board on the sick school case at the Sky Valley Education Center.

August meetings – Mr. Frederick proposed canceling all regular scheduled meetings in August, including Committee meetings, and holding a workshop in connection with the regular Board of Health meeting in September. The goal of the workshop would be for staff to gather and present all outstanding items to give Board members the opportunity to give staff direction on how, when, and where those bodies of work should move forward. Board members Wright, Rankin, Jorstad, Matsumoto Wright, and Redmon all commented in favor of cancelling the August meetings.

Health Officer's Report

There has been a 20-30% increase in cases for the past two weeks and the two-week rolling case rate is at 140 cases per 100,000. Hospitalizations are also up over the last several weeks in July. There has been an increase in hospitalizations, with 41 currently hospitalized with COVID countywide. Currently, there are six ICU beds, one airborne isolation unit, and five non-airborne isolation units available. This reduced number of beds available means less resources that would otherwise be available for other non-COVID-related hospitalization needs. The Disaster Medical Coordination Center ensures patients are distributed appropriately across the healthcare system within a region and has been activated several times in the past couple weeks to move patients to available spaces.

The delta strain has been expanding and is now the most dominant strain in the state, accounting for 75% of COVID-positive cases. The delta strain is much more contagious than previous strains with viral loads about 1000x higher. University of Washington and CDC modelers suspect that the delta strain currently accounts for greater than 90% of transmitted COVID.

The vaccination campaign has stalled with around a quarter million adults who are eligible but have not yet started vaccination. That, combined with about 125,000 children under the age of 12 who are not yet eligible, and a decrease in non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as mask wearing, results in a lot of people who are susceptible and the current vaccination coverage is not enough to stem the spread at the current time.

About 1.5% of the 20,000 total cases from January through June 2021 were breakthrough infections. July 1-20 shows a much higher percentage of breakthrough cases at 17% of 1,252 total cases. The large increase can most likely be attributed to the delta variant that is doing a better job of transmitting. Vaccine efficacy is still high, even with this widespread delta transmission. Unvaccinated people were 10 times more likely to become a confirmed case and/or die from COVID from July 1-20, which shows vaccines still protect well, especially against severe disease.

Over time, new entrants into the vaccination effort have declined and most vaccinations happening now are those finishing up their series. The vaccination rate has been flat in recent weeks and only about 3,000 people are currently initiating vaccination per week, compared to the peak back in April, with vaccinations per week ranging from 30,000 to 40,000. There is fairly good coverage in the 12-15 year old age group but things have slowed down, mirroring community-based poll data that reports only half of parents will have their kids get vaccinated. The goal is still to have an overall vaccination rate around 90% and it's estimated that about 10-15% of the community are still undecided. Looking at vaccine coverage by race/ethnicity shows Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders with the highest vaccination rate at 98%. Latinos and Whites have the lowest vaccination rates at 54% and 56%, respectively.

A few rare but serious adverse events have recently been associated with vaccines. CDC's advisory committee on immunization practices still finds that the benefit of being vaccinated far outweighs the risks of these events.

This past Monday, several Puget Sound Health Officers, including Dr. Spitters, issued a joint press release recommending mask use by all in indoor settings, with the specific target being retail, restaurants, and entertainment. Yesterday, the CDC came out with a similar statement that mirrors that recommendation.

Although groups, like the Health District, were previously beginning plans to return to in-person meetings, with the continued increase of cases in the current wave, caution should be taken before doing so. Unvaccinated employees and visitors to the Rucker building who don't supply proof of vaccination are required to wear a mask and this is enforced within the building. Many commercial buildings have a sign at the front door that states vaccinated individuals aren't required to wear a mask, but it's easy to observe that the percentage of unmasked people within the building is higher than what could reasonably be assumed as being all vaccinated. Groups that are considering returning to in-person meetings should take into consideration the ability to control proper safety measures, such as social distancing and ensuring masks are worn by non-vaccinated people.



Children don't spread the disease as easily as adults and it's unusual to have transmission from one child to another. However, the emergence of the delta variant, and uncertainty about its transmissibility among children has led both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics to recommend mask wearing as an added layer of protection in the school environment.

Information Items

Chair Wright announced upcoming meetings and reminded Board members that there would be no Board or Committee meetings in August.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Stephanie Wright, Chair

Shawn Frederick, Administrative Officer / Secretary