Dr. Morrow began by outlining that the purpose of this meeting is to propose and discuss a draft resolution titled, “Resolution Declaring High Costs and Insufficient Access of Healthcare Services in Kitsap County a Public Health Crisis.” Committee members were provided with the draft resolution, explanatory memos, and supporting data prior to the meeting. Dr. Morrow noted that improvements are desperately needed and partners have expressed interest and excitement about this resolution. He then asked Policy Committee members for their feedback.

Mayor Erickson was the first to comment by noting her concern about the resolution. She said she believes there is a place for the resolution, but that it should come after the Johns Hopkins healthcare access study of Kitsap. The study would provide data on the issues Kitsap is facing with healthcare access and costs and would provide substantiated evidence that would support the resolution. Mayor Erickson does not want to react to the issue prematurely and therefore inadequately.

Mayor Wheeler said he looks at the resolution as being separate from the study. He said we know there is a healthcare crisis and does not believe it is essential for the Board and Health District to wait for the study to come out in order to take steps to address the issues. He also noted that the passing of this resolution would prioritize building projects of healthcare facilities, particularly those with critical phases. Mayor Wheeler said the resolution could potentially politicize the building permit process, but that is a decision the Policy Committee has to make due to the healthcare crisis.

Mayor Erickson added that if any of the statements in the resolution are materially wrong or contradicted by the Johns Hopkins study, the Board and Health District are undermining our credibility and efforts that have been put in so far. Dr. Watson agreed with Mayor Erickson. He said a half-measure would be ideal, such as a statement to acknowledge the emergency and that a study is being conducted to try to address it. He said he is hesitant to declare an emergency without substantiated evidence. Dr. Morrow said there is hard evidence behind the resolution and provided some of that information to the committee. He added that in one of the explanatory memos, there is supporting data and information for the draft resolution. He said that Johns Hopkins is using the data collected by the Health District and other agencies/organizations, so he is confident that the data is sound. He also noted that acting locally in this way would bring awareness and spur discussions at the state and national levels, so Kitsap could potentially be a leader in the movement to address the healthcare crisis. Dr. Morrow emphasized that this resolution is a tool to stimulate reinvestment of profits from healthcare organizations back into
the local community and that saving the system money would not be beneficial if it was not being reinvested locally.

Dr. Kirk Sell thought it was compelling that the resolution could spur Kitsap to be a leader in this area and if it were to wait for six months, that window of opportunity may close. She said the goal of the resolution is for it to be a catalyst for aggressive action, but the actions listed may differ from those published in the Johns Hopkins study. She wondered about the possibility of the Johns Hopkins consultants to look at the language in the resolution to see if they have any concerns. Alternately, the consultants could put this type of language in the study, which could then be used in a second resolution. Mayor Erickson agreed.

In general, the members of the Policy Committee did not agree on some of the language used throughout the draft resolution and agreed to make revisions, then take it to the Board as a discussion item during the July 11 regular meeting. It would be added to the Board packet that is distributed on the Thursday before the meeting. Mayor Wheeler will take the lead on the discussion item and will work with Dr. Morrow to create an introductory statement that will be used. This would give the public ample time to prepare public comments that can be made at the September 5 regular meeting. Dr. Watson offered to be a co-sponsor for the resolution.

Adrienne will send committee members the draft resolution Word document to allow them to make revisions, then the revisions will be agreed upon via email by June 30.

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.