

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
May 5, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Mayor Rob Putaansuu at 12:30 p.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Charlotte Garrido moved and Mayor Becky Erickson seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the March 17, 2020 special meeting and April 7, 2020 regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The May consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 1749 Amendment 14 (2072), *Washington State Department of Health, Consolidated Contract*
- 2018 Amendment 1 (2073), *Washington State Department of Ecology, Local Source Control*
- 2070, *Jefferson County Public Health, Nurse Family Partnership Supervisor*
- 2071, *Kitsap County, Nurse Family Partnership*

Commissioner Rob Gelder moved and Commissioner Garrido seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda, including the Contracts Update and Warrant and Electronic Funds Transfer Registers.

Councilmember Kol Medina abstained from the vote, noting a relationship between his job with Kitsap Community Foundation and the Nurse Family Partnership contract.

The motion was approved.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Mayor Putaansuu noted that several jurisdictions are strategizing how to use the CARES act funding they may be receiving. He noted that the Kitsap Public Health District and the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management may be options for dispersing this funding because of expenses incurred that jurisdictions may need to help cover. He asked that Health District staff keep the Board apprised of what those expenses may be moving forward.

Mr. Keith Grellner, Administrator, said staff have been in communication with Mayor Putaansuu, the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners, Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management and Kitsap County Department of Human Services. Staff are looking at all the information coming from the Governor's office to determine what work is funded and

what work will need to be covered by other monies. He said the Health District should have information prepared for the jurisdictions in the next week.

Mayor Putaansuu said there will likely be a need for additional test kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc. He said it would make sense to work jointly to acquire these things than working separately.

There was no further comment.

HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Grellner, thanked BKAT for streaming the meeting today so that everyone in the community has the opportunity to watch live or later.

Mr. Grellner said, due to the extension of Governor Inslee's Stay Home Stay Health Order, the Health District offices remain closed to the public through at least May 31, 2020. He reminded the public and Board that many of the Health District's services are available online and by phone. Staff are currently in the process of making plans for reopening when the Governor announces businesses can reopen.

Mr. Grellner explained that the Health District food permit cycle is generally May-May between years. The Health District has decided to temporarily extend 2019 permits for at least 30 days. He noted that most of our food establishments in Kitsap County are closed or operating with limited takeout. The Health District will hold off on sending out permit renewal notices until there is more clarity from the state. Once the Health District has more clarity, staff will put together a packet for the Board's Finance Committee to review.

Dr. Turner deferred Health Officer comments to have ample room for presentation and discussion related to COVID-19.

Mayor Erickson commented that it would be helpful to look at the needs in a comprehensive way. She said the Health District may need to hire additional contact tracers. She said, once business starts opening back up, there will be staffing issues at the District to do regular work and continue COVID-19 response. She said it would be helpful for the Health District to make a list of needs and bring it to the Board or Finance Committee. Mr. Grellner said he would be happy to bring that information to the Board.

There was no further comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nancy Langwith, member of the public, thanked the Board for making these meetings available to the public. She also thanked the Health District for providing accessible data on a daily basis. Ms. Langwith had several questions and comments for the Board:

- Can the Health District share hospitalization numbers in their data?
- What does the Board attribute to low rates of mortality, how do we leverage this as we open back up?
- In view of low rates, will the Board consider a variance to move through phases more quickly?
- Will it be possible to have any summer youth programs this summer? What would the decision process be for these?
- Has the Health District considered using residents as volunteer contract tracers?

Ms. Langwith had no further comments.

Roger Gay, South Kitsap resident, said he appreciates the info shared at the beginning of the meeting regarding permitting. He said he was also curious how health inspections for food establishments and farmers markets are going to continue or if they have been occurring, with all the changes made to operating procedures in food service.

There was no further public comment.

COVID-19 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Turner and Mr. Grellner approached the Board to provide an update on COVID-19.

Since December 2019, the world has experienced an international outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The COVID-19 outbreak has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

On February 4, 2020, the Kitsap Public Health District “activated” an Incident Command System to efficiently coordinate our COVID-19 containment efforts, and on February 27, we broadened our response to slow and limit the spread of the novel infection. Statewide social distancing and other mitigation methods implemented shortly thereafter appear to have effectively slowed the spread of the infection, thereby preventing the healthcare system from being overwhelmed and reducing severe illness and deaths in Washington State and Kitsap County.

The healthcare system continues to face intermittent shortages in recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), and until this shortage is resolved permanently the healthcare system will continue to be vulnerable to overload should outbreaks or recurrences of viral spread occur. There also remains a national shortage in testing supplies, and as such, testing for COVID-19 is still limited. The limited availability of testing supplies has hampered not only the District’s ability to provide surveillance data describing the status of community spread of COVID in Kitsap, but also hampers the surveillance and recovery efforts at the state and national levels. The shortage of these supplies continues to threaten and undermine our ability to respond to outbreaks and/or to detect a resurgence of community spread moving forward.

During this Board meeting, the District provided an update on the District's current activities, expenditures to date, available COVID epidemiologic data, and the status of our preparations for the next stage of response as social distancing measures are relaxed. The Health District's data dashboard, reports and case details discussed during this meeting can be found at kitsappublichealth.org.

Mr. Grellner shared dates of significance beginning December 2019. While the first case in Kitsap was March 8, Kitsap's response has begun to decrease and level off during the latter half of April. He noted that all local health jurisdictions have been suffering from a lack of funding for decades. He said adequately funded local health jurisdictions are better positioned to respond to outbreaks.

Mr. Grellner noted several strengths of our local COVID-19 response: community agencies have worked together, staff have been trained in new tasks, and generally, most Kitsap residents have done a good job of staying home. In response to Ms. Langwith's question, Mr. Grellner said one of the reasons Kitsap County has had fairly low positive COVID-19 rates is because of the commitment from Kitsap residents to stay home and keep each other healthy. Additionally, the Health District has several staff trained and on reserve for contact tracing, though as Mayor Erickson noted, this may not be enough in the case of a surge.

Through the end of April, the Health District expenditures related to COVID-19 response have included 9,400 hours of staff time at a cost of \$600,600. The Health District just received \$309,000 of disaster response money from the state, which will only cover part of the expenditures so far. There is also an additional \$340,000 of federal funding coming. Health District staff, in coordination with the Kitsap County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), will put together a budget estimate for the next year to continue tracking COVID-19 and working to keep the rate of infection down so that the county can reopen.

Dr. Turner provided an update on COVID-19 testing. Many tests have come to the Kitsap market. She noted that the standard COVID-19 test is a PCR test distributed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to accredited labs. Testing is becoming more widely available across Kitsap, but global supply shortages are still an issue. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently changed testing recommendations to include all symptomatic people. Point of Care PCR tests have proven problematic, while many other PCR tests being offered have not been fully explored by the FDA, but have been approved through emergency use authorization.

Additionally, Dr. Turner noted the introduction of serology testing, which analyzes bloodwork for immunoglobulin to COVID-19 or other coronaviruses. She said that, according to two studies (linked in the presentation), current serology testing has no role in diagnosis and no clear role in surveillance. Dr. Turner is hopeful that this will become more useful the future.

Dr. Turner shared some Kitsap COVID-19 testing data.

Commissioner Gelder asked if the uptick in number of tests and increase in providers testing could be attributable to the expansion of testing criteria? Dr. Turner suspects that this is likely, however she said we can only hypothesize at this point.

Mayor Erickson asked if the Health District called providers directly and asked how many supplies they each have. Dr. Turner said the Health District has not yet done this but has been strategizing with unified command. Health District staff feel that the community should be made aware of locations of test kits to align with the Governor's guidance for recovery. The EOC has reserved some kits for high surge risk locations, such as long-term care residences. Mr. Grellner said test kit levels have been good for Kitsap the last 2-3 weeks but is hearing it may be another 2-3 kits before Kitsap gets a test kit refill. He also noted that Kitsap is lucky and he has heard reports of counties in Eastern Washington that have been waiting over 5 weeks for test kits. Despite any comments to the contrary, there is still a severe shortage of test kits.

Mayor Erickson said she is part of the EOC and based on what she has heard, she doesn't believe there is a test shortage in Kitsap and that we won't know until we call every testing provider.

Commissioner Ed Wolfe said he agrees with Mr. Grellner. He said all of the Health Board members have participated in several of the same meetings. Commissioner Wolfe said testing is not limited, it is severely depleted. He said we are competing with every other county in the state and the nation. He said the Board of Commissioners discussed a variance from the Governor's orders, but said it became very clear to them that Kitsap County probably can't move forward until we have adequate testing. He said the testing stock is dismal in Kitsap. He said he hopes it gets better in the near future, because the lack of available test kits is holding Kitsap back from reopening small businesses.

Mayor Wheeler said now is the time to be transparent with the public about what measures need to be met in order to start moving toward reopening. He said the public needs to know what our current testing and personal protective equipment (PPE) levels are and what the required levels are to apply for a variance. Mr. Grellner said having sufficient testing supplies means when healthcare facilities need them, they have them on hand. If they need to order testing supplies, they get them within a day. He said this is not the reality in Kitsap right now. He added that, because of limits to testing and PPE, only the individuals with the most severe illness have been allowed to be tested to date. There are many people with mild symptoms that the Health District suspect have COVID-19 but were not tested.

Mayor Erickson said she is looking for more data regarding how many tests each testing site is providing each day, and what their stockpile numbers are, so that we know the quantity of supplies we need to request. Dr. Turner said this is a time-consuming thing to do, that has not yet been done, however, but the EOC and community are working to put one together. Dr. Turner said the Health District knows how important testing is for all of us to move forward. She expects supply requests will be based on best guesses as providers begin testing more people and, as our messaging to the public changes, and how this increases demand.

Dr. Turner said the Governor has indicated that only counties with populations of less than 75k can apply for variances at this time.

Commissioner Wolfe recommended that the Health District and Board start the application process so it is ready when more testing kits become available in Kitsap.

Commissioner Gelder asked what denominator is being used to determine the infection rate in Kitsap County. He said there are some contradictory numbers for Kitsap population, but wants to ensure the same number is used consistently throughout the tracking process. Additionally, he asked how the state's stockpile of test supplies will filter down to the county.

Dr. Turner said her understanding that the state tests that were expected 2 weeks ago did not arrive and are not anticipated for another couple of weeks. She explained that, information from the EOC, suggests that those tests won't become avail to state for at least 2 weeks and will likely be sent to regions experiencing surges in outbreak, like Eastern Counties. She noted again that these issues are global and national. She said it will be a challenge to test a significant part of our community.

Dr. Turner continued the presentation and explained the Governor's prerequisites for easing restrictions which include decreasing disease morbidity, increasing healthcare capacity, public health capacity and ability to protect high risk populations.

Mr. Grellner said if Kitsap county were to apply for variance right now the state would not approve it. Right now, only small counties with 75k residents or less AND have not identified a resident with COVID-19 for the past 3 weeks qualify. Kitsap County is still getting, on average, 2 positive cases per day.

Mayor Wheeler said there are a lot of unknowns, but we need to start communicating to the public what we *do* know. He said we can't just hope more test equipment comes in. Hope is not a plan – citizens are going to need to know the plan.

Commissioner Gelder said communication is important but everyone may not know how to find this information on the Health District website to see how it aligns with the data with the state's metrics. He asked if the Health District can partner with other agencies to get some space on the top of their websites to show day by day look at our metrics.

Commissioner Garrido agreed with Commissioner Gelder and said we also need to continue communicating reminders of guidance to not pass on the virus.

Mayor Erickson thanked Dr. Turner and Mr. Grellner for working around the clock the last two months. She added that we need to double the amount of testing we are doing so we can move forward.

Mayor Kol Medina asked if Health District staff would you be willing to present the survey results on the pandemic coalition phone call next week? Dr. Turner said the data shown is only a subset of data, but the Health District can have someone share the data available by that time.

Mayors Wheeler and Putaansuu noted that the cities of Bremerton and Port Orchard, respectively, will both put out press releases by the end of the day.

ADDITIONAL BUISINESS

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.



Robert Putaansuu
Kitsap Public Health Board



Keith Grellner
Administrator

Board Members Present: *Mayor* Becky Erickson; *Commissioner* Charlotte Garrido; *Commissioner* Robert Gelder; *Councilmember* Kol Medina; *Mayor* Robert Putaansuu; *Mayor* Greg Wheeler; *Commissioner* Ed Wolfe.

Board Members Absent: *None.*

Community Members Present: Vivianne Altree, *self*; John Clauson, *Kitsap Transit*; Kristine Cowan, *self*; Melanie Dalton, *self*; Daniel Frederick, *self*; Roger Gay, *self*; Geoffrey Hellstrand, *self*; Brian Kelly, *Bainbridge Island Review*; Richard Kirton, *Kitsap 911*; Michelle Laboda, *North Kitsap Fire & Rescue*; Nancy Langwith, *self*; Monte Levine, *self*; Amber Lewis, *self*; Austen Macalus, *Kitsap Sun*; Rebecca Pirtle, *Kitsap County*; G. Porter, *self*; Mary Schofield, *self*; Katharine Shaffer, *Kitsap County*; Stacy Smith, *Kitsap County*; Rick Sutton, *self*; Brett Warner, *self*; Jennifer Wilson, *self*.

Staff Present: Amy Anderson, *Public Health Educator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Leslie Banigan, *Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Water Pollution Identification and Correction*; Angie Berger, *Administrative Assistant, Administration*; Keith Grellner, *Administrator*; Karen Holt, *Program Manager, Human Resources*; Lyndsay Kellum, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention*; Andrew Lau, *Epidemiologist 1, Community Health*; Megan Moore, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention*; Gregoria Noble, *Environmental Health Technician 2, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems*; Crystal Nuno, *Environmental Health Specialist 2-RS, Solid and Hazardous Waste*; Beth Phipps, *Public Health Nurse Supervisor, Communicable Disease*; Debbie Rassa, *Tuberculosis Infection Specialist, Communicable Disease*; Denise Turner, *Senior Accounting Assistant, Payroll*; Susan Turner, MD, *Health Officer*; Kate Wagner, *Secretary Clerk 2, Parent Child Health*.