

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting (Virtual)
August 4, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Mayor Rob Putaansuu at 10:34 a.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA

Councilmember Kol Medina moved and Mayor Greg Wheeler seconded the motion to approve the agenda for the August 4, 2020 Meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Rob Gelder moved and Commissioner Charlotte Garrido seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the June 19, 2020 regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The August consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 1749 Amendment 16 (2095), *Washington Department of Health, Consolidated Contract*
- 2053, *Kitsap County, Clean Water Kitsap*
- 2099, *Kitsap County, COVID-19 Contact Tracing*

Commissioner Ed Wolfe moved and Councilmember Medina seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda, including the Contracts Update and Warrant and Electronic Funds Transfer Registers. The motion was approved unanimously.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Putaansuu, on behalf of the Board, thanked Health District staff for their hard work and case and contact investigation. He said Kitsap County will be sending some staff to the Health District to help with COVID-19 work.

Chair Putaansuu welcomed Dr. Morrow, our new health officer to his first Board meeting.

Chair Putaansuu noted that the Board normally takes the month of August off from meetings, but he and Mr. Grellner agreed it was important to continue providing COVID-19 updates during this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Greg Lynch, Superintendent of Olympic Educational Service District 114 (OESD), thanked the Health District for their partnership with OESD through this pandemic. He said he is trying to lend his support in any way to get the Health District more resources. Additionally, he noted that most schools in Kitsap will be done remotely in the fall. He also welcomed Dr. Morrow to the team.

There was no further comment.

HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Update:

Mr. Keith Grellner, Administrator, welcomed Dr. Gib Morrow, new Health Officer to the district. Mr. Grellner also thanked Dr. Susan Turner for her 6 years with the Health District. Dr. Turner graciously gave the Health District 9 months of notice for her retirement, which helped the Health District prepare and handle COVID-19 response while recruiting for Health Officer.

Mr. Grellner said that operations at the Health District continue to focus on COVID-19. He said of 100 employees at the Health District, the Health District has directed up to 50 staff daily to work on COVID-19 response efforts and another 20 employees are trained to help as needed for surge support. The final 30 employees are either working remotely or working on other District work. He said the Health District is fully focused on COVID-19 response and keeping the community safe.

He said the Health District has reached an interlocal agreement with Kitsap County, who will lend the District 4-5 staff to help with COVID-19 work. The county staff will start training with Health District staff on August 10.

Lastly, he thanked Superintendent Lynch for his comments. The Health District has been working with all the public schools in Kitsap County through OESD to figure out how to continue educational services for our kids. Mr. Grellner said there is no disagreement that we all want our kids in school. The school environment is the best place for kids to learn and grow, but unfortunately COVID-19 is present in the community and poses a risk to in-person learning. The Health District released a letter last week to Kitsap school districts that's support virtual learning. Mr. Grellner said in-person learning may continue after this fall, depending on the spread of the virus.

There was no further comment.

Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, thanked the Board for the welcome. He introduced himself and shared his professional experience. Dr. Morrow spent the last month working closely with Dr. Turner and feels confident moving forward in his role. He said the Health District is a well-oiled machine and feels that the hand-off from Dr. Turning went smoothly. He said this is a thoughtful, collaborative team of people looking to improve the health of people in Kitsap County.

Dr. Morrow said COVID-19 is a very serious disease and it has devastated our economy and caused a tremendously difficult period for all of us. He said that, by conveying the right messages, using data to explain the issues, and being collaborative and kind, we can get through this successfully.

There was no further comment.

COVID-19 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Morrow gave an overview of the current COVID-19 data at the national and state levels, which mirror the activity in Kitsap County. Cases are approaching five million nationally with daily deaths at around 1,000. Some of the places that were initially hit harder (New York City, New Jersey, Seattle, etc.) are in a lull now due to enacting early restrictions and actions.

Dr. Morrow showed the Washington Department of Health (DOH) data dashboard. As of today, there have been nearly 60,000 confirmed cases in Washington State. He also noted that 10% of people who have tested positive in Washington have ended up in the hospital, and 2.7% of positive cases have died. He reminded the Board that these deaths are people's family members who died prematurely.

Next, Dr. Morrow shared the state epidemiologic curves which illustrate how Washington was COVID-19 free until start of February but now has a large presence of disease in the state. He noted that relaxation of restrictions throughout the state correspond with case increases.

Next, Dr. Morrow shared DOH Situation Report 11 and referenced the reproduction level number (R_e) which is above 1 throughout the state. This means that for every 1 person who is positive for COVID-19, they will infect 1.5-2 other people. The threshold for declining transmission is below 1. He noted in Eastern Washington the R_e was never below 1 and has been consistently spreading faster there. He also showed data related to age groups affected by the virus. Right now the younger adult age group (15-35 years) is the highest affected population. He noted that this age group tends to have lower fatality rates and lower hospitalization rates but spread occurs regardless. He explained that this virus is opportunistic and spreads through people who don't know they have it. He said we wear masks and social distance as a form of source control.

Dr. Morrow said it is important for people to self-monitor and be aware that any minor symptoms can be this infection. If you have any symptoms, even allergies, stay home, don't go to work, avoid exposing others and go get tested for COVID-19

Dr. Morrow said no community is immune to COVID-19 and believes we can kick this virus but it will take some effort. We must keep ourselves and each other accountable. We will absolutely get through this but it will take time.

Commissioner Wolfe asked Dr. Morrow asked if the 10% hospitalization rate and 6% positive rate are state or local data. Dr. Morrow said those are statewide numbers.

Mr. Grellner showed the COVID-19 surveillance report on the Kitsap Public Health website. He noted the number of cases has increased significantly in July. The percent of positive tests have

increased from <2% to 5% for the month of July, however, over the last two weeks the percent of positive cases is at 8%.

Kitsap data shows that the highest prevalence of diseases is in people aged 0-39. Mr. Grellner noted that these age groups are school age kids and their young parents, which exemplifies why we can't send kids back to school for in-person learning in the fall.

Mr. Grellner explained that we are seeing a huge increase in the number of close contacts each positive case has since moving to Phase 2 in Kitsap County. There are more close contacts at places of employment and in social gatherings. The Health District believes people are letting their guard down and being more social which is causing spread.

Despite dramatic case in disease activity, Kitsap hospitalizations have been low and our hospital continues to have adequate capacity.

Currently, Kitsap County has a good level of testing. Most people are getting their test results back in about two to three days in Kitsap. Mr. Grellner reminded the public that the percent of positive tests are increasing compared to the number of tests overall. The positives aren't increasing because testing is, which is a common misconception. Kitsap has three to four times the percentage of positives we had before.

Councilmember Medina shared an anecdote of a man telling his friend he doesn't believe in the accuracy of COVID-19 case numbers because he said any time anyone walks into the hospital with any illness it's counted as COVID-19. Mr. Grellner said there is a large part of the community that do not believe COVID-19 is a concern or are tired of staying home.

Councilmember Medina asked if the Health District predicts the case numbers will eventually plateau or will continue to rise unless our community takes some action bring it down. Mr. Grellner said he doesn't have a good feeling about cases plateauing. He said the Health District is starting to see connections between positive cases (whereas cases prior did not have a clear cause) which indicates community spread. If the social gatherings continue at this rate, COVID-19 will be around for a lot longer.

Mayor Wheeler asked if the Health District has comparisons for flu versus COVID-19 hospitalization rates. Dr. Morrow noted that comparisons between the two may be difficult to make because not everyone who gets sick during flu season is tested for the flu. He added that COVID-19 is a more significant illness than the flu for most people that has some evidence of long-term consequences. He said he will look for comparison information to share with the Board.

Dr. Morrow also explained that there is a flu vaccine, which creates major differences from COVID-19. He reminded everyone of the importance of getting their flu shot in the fall.

Commissioner Wolfe said Kitsap County is lending employees to the Health District to assist with contact training. He also asked if we will reach a point where contact tracing will be impossible to do and asked for clarification on community or pool testing.

Dr. Morrow said that contact tracing requires timely, easily readily available testing. He also said that there is a point at which there are too many cases and contact investigation will not be sustainable.

Dr. Morrow explained that pool testing is widespread, large-scale testing of groups (generally 4-10 people) and is done to reduce the cost of testing. However, he noted it is most effective in areas of low prevalence of disease. He said pool testing is generally seen in settings such as universities or military installations. He said Kitsap doesn't have low enough disease prevalence to utilize pool testing.

Commissioner Gelder said he is currently working out of the county's isolation and quarantine center. He noted that most guests are in the age range indicted by the previous charts (under 40). Commissioner Gelder asked if it is expected that we will have a new baseline of disease activity. He said that without a vaccine, the disease activity won't decrease to zero. He asked what the new baseline measure is moving forward.

Dr. Morrow said other communities around the world have managed to get the number down to zero through aggressive identification of cases, isolation and quarantine, and minimizing contacts. He said our baseline does not need to be high enough that we have to decide between saving lives or saving the economy. He believes we can both contain the disease and protect the economy. He said there will be some level of disease present in our community for a while but that we need to rethink how we do things day to day.

Councilmember Medina asked if there has been any discussion of moving backwards in the phases statewide or locally. Mr. Grellner said he has not heard anything lately in this regard from the governor or the secretary of health. It has not been discussed locally. The Health District would engage the Board in that conversation. At this stage, he thinks it would be very difficult to get the community as a whole to go backwards and noted that there are already enforcement issues. He said Kitsap's COVID-19 activity levels are too high for us to move to Phase 3 yet. He said it would help if more people in the county practiced health and safety precautions, like wearing a mask and social distancing.

Mayor Putaansuu said it is our duty as residents of Kitsap to remind people we interact with to maintain a 6-foot distance from us and to help stop the spread of disease.

Commissioner Wolfe said the entire county's elected officials should come together to create a shared message and educate our community. Mr. Grellner said he will talk to the Health District's public information officer about this and will also work with the county's joint information center to increase communications to hard to reach groups and the age groups with the highest disease rates.

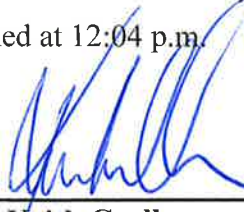
There was no further comment.

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.



Robert Putaansuu
Kitsap Public Health Board



Keith Grellner
Administrator

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

Board Members Absent: *Mayor Becky Erickson.*

Community Members Present: *Attached.*

Staff Present: *Amy Anderson, Public Health Educator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response; Angie Berger, Administrative Assistant, Administration; Dana Bierman, Program Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention; Karen Boysen-Knapp, Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention; Keith Grellner, Administrator, Administration; Grant Holdcroft, Program Manager, Pollution Identification and Correction; Melissa Laird, Manager, Accounting and Finance; Megan Moore, Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention; Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, Administration; Linda Pandino, Accounting Assistant 2, Accounts Receivable; Kelsey Stedman, Program Manager, COVID-19; Kate Wagner, Secretary Clerk 2, Parent Child Health;*