

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
January 04, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Commissioner Charlotte Garrido at 10:30 a.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA

Mr. Keith Grellner, Administrator, informed the board there is no need for the executive session that was listed on the agenda at the end of the meeting. He suggested to move on to the administrative report, public comment, and scheduled program presentation, with the legislative priorities and Dr. Morrow's update at the end. The board had no opposition to this agenda change.

ELECTION OF 2022 HEALTH BOARD OFFICERS & COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Chair Garrido called for nominations and let the board know that normally they alternate someone from the county and city as the Health Board Chair. Since Chair Garrido is a county member, this year the Health Board Chair should be a city member.

Mayor Becky Erickson nominated Mayor Greg Wheeler as the Board Chair and Commissioner Robert Gelder as Vice Chair of the Kitsap Public Health Board. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Ed Wolfe. The nomination was approved unanimously.

Newly appointed Chair Wheeler moved on to committee assignments. He requested that all members continue to serve in their current roles, and if members would like a change, they should discuss that change with Chair Wheeler offline.

Mr. Grellner explained that the finance and operations committee consisted of Mayor Becky Erickson, Commissioner Charlotte Garrido and Mayor Greg Wheeler; the policy committee consisted of Mayor Becky Erickson, Commissioner Robert Gelder and Mayor Robert Putaansuu; and the personnel committee consisted of Councilperson Kirsten Hytopoulos, Mayor Greg Wheeler and Commissioner Ed Wolfe.

Chair Wheeler asked the board if anyone objected to their assignment to please raise their hand. There were no objections from the board and committee assignments were approved unanimously.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mayor Putaansuu moved and Commissioner Garrido seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the December 7, 2021, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The January consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2181 Amendment 1 (2218), *Clallam County Health & Human Services, Youth Cannabis & Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program (YCCTPP)*
- 2182 Amendment 1 (2222), *Jefferson County Public Health, Youth Cannabis and Tobacco Prevention Program (YCCTPP)*
- 2210, *Jefferson County Public Health, Nurse Family Partnership*
- 2215, *Kitsap County, Nurse Family Partnership*
- 2217, *South Kitsap School District, COVID-19 case Investigation Assistance*
- 2221, *Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney, Legal Services*
- 2223, *Clallam County, Communicable Disease/Opioid Dashboard*
- 2224, *Kitsap County, Therapeutic Court Tax Programs*

Commissioner Gelder moved and Commissioner Wolfe 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 Wolfe said he is looking forward to 2022 and is optimistic that by the end of the year we will see significant progress. He noted there was significant progress in 2021 but hopes that everyone will be able to return to some stage of normalcy by the end of 2022.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Grellner announced the Health District received word this morning that the bargaining unit, PROTEC 17, has tentatively approved the 2022-2024 union agreement. Mr. Grellner said this information was just communicated this morning and there was not enough time to prepare the related materials for board consideration and approval at today's meeting. He said the District will have it ready for the February 1, 2022, meeting. He noted he will also bring forward an amended budget, including the new contract changes, for the board's consideration and approval.

Mr. Grellner noted the board packet included the 2020 Audit Report summary from the Washington State Auditor's office. Mr. Grellner thanked Mayor Putaansuu and former Chair Garrido for attending the meeting with the state auditor. Mr. Grellner explained that it was a clean audit for the Health District. Mr. Grellner thanked Melissa Laird, Accounting and Finance Manager, and her staff for keeping the Health District's finances in order. The full detail of the report can be found on the state auditor's website.

Mr. Grellner announced that the City of Poulsbo awarded Anne Moen, Health District employee, and Doug Blangsted, Emergency Operations Center, with a health care award for going above and beyond the call of duty with the COVID-19 testing facility in Poulsbo. Staff continued running the testing site through adverse weather conditions and large increased demand for testing.

Mayor Erickson added that there are so many health heroes in Kitsap County. The City of Poulsbo Health and Human services wanted to recognize those who are doing heroic work. She said a classic example of this work is the Kitsap Public Health District. She said Health District and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff continued to show up and run the COVID-19 testing site in the City of Poulsbo parking garage during a cold snowstorm last week to meet high demand. Lastly, Mayor Erickson let the board know that there will be more discussion about this at the City of Poulsbo Council meeting on next Wednesday. She said it is an honor to recognize these people.

Mr. Grellner mentioned the District is working with the EOC on expanding COVID-19 testing opportunities to increase from three days to five or six days a week and increase testing locations in the community.

Next, Mr. Grellner provided an update from the Washington State Board of Health regarding Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1152 (E2SHB 1152), which was passed in the last legislative session. This requires local boards of health to expand membership to include community and tribal members. He noted the board packet includes the second draft of rules to implement E2SHB 1152, new WAC 246-906, and noted the State Board of Health is accepting public comment through January 14, 2022. Mr. Grellner encouraged the board to either send their comments into the state or to send them to Mr. Grellner and he would collate them and submit them for review on behalf of the District.

He said he will work with this board's policy committee to implement this locally. Mr. Grellner explained that, the way the law is written, it is the Board of Commissioners' responsibility to do interviews and make appointments for new board of health members. The Health District will be supporting these endeavors. He let the board know that recruitment for these board member positions needs to begin soon to be in place by July 1st when the new law is supposed to take effect. Mr. Grellner will also reach out to the policy committee to amend the board bylaws.

Commissioner Gelder asked Mr. Grellner to clarify the required make-up of the board. He inquired if there was one representation of each tribe, which would mean offering two seats, or if we needed one tribal member total. Mr. Grellner said he understands that only one tribal position is appointed to the board. If there are multiple tribes in the jurisdiction, the American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) will work with the tribes to pick a single representation for the health board. At this time, The District is waiting to hear from the AIHC who will represent the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Suquamish tribes for the future expansion for the health board. Mr. Grellner will seek additional clarification from the State Health Board and bring it to the policy committee.

Mr. Grellner shared that written public comments received through Thursday of last week are posted on the Health District website. Additional written comments received after Thursday will be added in a second attachment on the board materials page on the website after this meeting.

There was no further comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Wheeler opened public comment and noted that there is no proposal on the agenda for mandates.

Janell Hulst said she is concerned with vaccine passports and adding emergency use authorized COVID-19 vaccines to the school vaccination schedule. She said it doesn't make sense to have vaccine passports when the vaccine doesn't stop you from getting and spreading covid. She said the vaccine passport is only used for coercion and pressuring people to get vaccinated. She said no COVID-19 vaccine has been FDA approved and therefore none should be added to the vaccine schedule for schools.

Kaitlin Stone said she had questions regarding things Dr. Fauci, the CDC, and other medical experts have said lately. She said New York is now separating people who were hospitalized *with* covid from people who were hospitalized *from* covid. She asked if we are going to have a distinction for this as well in Kitsap. She said Dr. Fauci also said that childhood hospitalizations are inflated because they include children who are hospitalized for other things but are testing positive at admission and asked if this distinction is going to be made in Kitsap. She also raised concerns about children in school wearing cloth masks, if we are now being told they aren't effective. She asked if masking guidance will change for the county with this new information.

Susan Brooks Young said she wanted to speak out for members of the community who believe in the science and CDC guidance. She said they understand that this is a novel virus and the reason guidance keeps changing is because scientists are learning day by day what works and what doesn't. She said it would be ridiculous for scientists and medical experts to continue operating today based on knowledge they had in 2020. She said that it's our job to follow science and look at what is best for the community at large. She said some people may not care for the restrictions and guidelines that are based on science, but she fully supports this guidance.

Brian K thanked the board for wrestling with this issue and noted that he sent an email to the board as well. He said he appreciated the comments from the person who just spoke, however rested his position on the valued comments of the previous folks. He said, because we are still learning, it is not necessarily in our best interest to put down a hard and fast rule on what people are supposed to do. He said, across the country, the stats have shown that lock downs and various restrictions don't stop the spread. He added that we should also look at the masks that are potentially on the ground and affecting the environment. He recommended waiting to make and decisions until after the Supreme Court finalizes decisions on this topic. Lastly, he said our response shouldn't be what the counties around us should be doing.

There were no more public comment requests.

DRINKING WATER AND ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Ms. Kimberly Jones, Drinking Water/On-site Sewage (DWOS) Manager, shared a presentation on the DWOS program. Ms. Jones introduced the board to her eleven team members, who are all

field workers and work closely with the District's permitting team. She said the overall purpose of the program is to help keep the county's drinking water clean and septic systems operating properly. The DWOS program assures the safety and health of Kitsap County by reviewing land use to ensure proposals conform to septic and drinking water regulations. Ms. Jones shared that one of the biggest things her department does is evaluating septic systems and wells in accordance with state and local ordinances for new construction applications. There were 800 new building sites in Kitsap County last year. If the proposal involves drilling a well, DWOS staff will inspect that project on behalf of the Washington State Department of Ecology, and, if there is a septic system, it will be inspected again after construction and completion. Last year there were 247 septic installations and 120 well installations in Kitsap County.

Ms. Jones shared that her team also inspects water systems, both public and private, for operational compliance. These are inspected on behalf of the Washington State Department of Health. She shared that every property with a sewer or well system is reviewed for compliance every time the property is sold, which helps property owners understand what they're getting. Last year 2,378 septic systems were inspected. The Drinking Water/On-Site Sewage team also checks private wells and small water systems when houses are sold to ensure they are safe, sanitary and sealed. Ms. Jones said the DWOS team are seeing a lot of abandoned or unused wells in properties. In 2018 regulations gave the team the authority to require decommissioning of abandoned or dangerous wells. They inspected the decommissioning of 57 wells last year.

Ms. Jones said that often times failure of systems is identified by the Pollution Identification and Corrections program. The owners submit a repair plan and the DWOS program inspects those repairs when they are finished.

Ms. Jones shared that constant communication with stakeholders allows her team to look for innovative changes. With the Covid-19 pandemic, most applications are received online and can be processed quickly without coming to the Health District office. The workload has continued to increase about 7% each year since 2019. Ms. Jones said the program goals for the next year are moving the rest of the applications online, hiring new staff members and revising Health District regulations when the new state WAC revision for on-site sewage finalized. Ms. Jones predicts this state rule revision will be complete in 2023.

Chair Wheeler asked how the Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage team prioritizes their work plan to inspect wells and septic systems. Ms. Jones said the program is bound by regulations to application timelines and most of their work is based on prioritizing those timelines and ensuring they are met. Ms. Jones shared that everyone on her staff has an assigned region of the county but added that inspectors help each other meet timelines if one person has a higher volume of work than another.

Commissioner Wolfe commented that it was an excellent report and asked if the inspection at time of sale includes the drain field. Ms. Jones said inspectors walk over the drain area looking for additional strain on the drain field, such as a building on top of the drain field, and inform the property owner, because it can lead to problems down the road.

There was no further comment.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mr. Grellner shared draft legislative and rulemaking priorities for board review and approval. He noted that, as a governmental entity, The Health District is actively involved with proposed bills that could affect operations or budget. The Health District coordinates with the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC), and Association of Washington Cities (AWC) among others. Mr. Grellner explained that it is important for the Health District, as a government entity, to advocate for or against bills or portions of bills to let our local legislatures know where the District stands on these bills.

There are six items in this proposal:

1. Support Dedicated Funding Source for Foundational Public Health Services
2. Support Coronavirus Response and Recovery Efforts Funding
3. Support Collaborative Processes for Local Public Health Governance
4. Oppose Efforts to Reduce or Eliminate Local Public Health Authority
5. Oppose Reductions or Limitations on Funding for Local Health Jurisdictions
6. Oppose Bills which would Allow Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF) to be Prepared and Sold from Residential Kitchens.

Mayor Putaansuu moved, and Commissioner Gelder seconded the motion, to approve the Legislative and Rule-Making Priorities for the 2022 legislative session. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Gelder commented this will be a short but challenging legislative session due to being remote. Mr. Gelder feels that there is less connection and less meaningful conversation in a remote hearing situation.

HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, provided the board with a COVID-19 update. He also said he would address some of the public comments that were made earlier in the meeting. He shared that 77% of Kitsap residents aged 5 and up have received vaccinations. This is about 4 out of 5 people. He continued to emphasize that vaccination is important and thanked the individuals who have gotten vaccinated for making that wise choice.

Dr. Morrow emphasized there are no vaccine mandates in Kitsap County and there are none on the table. He noted the board had previously considered vaccine mandates for local businesses but made a deliberate decision not to pursue that option. He also stated there are no vaccine requirements that go beyond those enacted at federal or state levels for educators, health care workers and other larger employers and businesses. He doesn't see mandates coming back to the table for Kitsap.

Dr. Morrow said any addition of vaccines to the school schedule would be made by the state level and not by this board. He also noted that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has received full FDA approval for ages 16 and over.

Dr. Morrow said the question about hospitalizations related to COVID-19 is a good one. He said often it is a judgement call to determine if the individual is hospitalized for COVID-19. He said Kitsap has erred on the side of caution by not including questionable hospitalizations as COVID-19 hospitalizations. Individuals listed on the Health District's website have presented with relatively classic symptoms. Dr. Morrow does not believe COVID-19 hospitalization numbers are inflated in Kitsap.

Dr. Morrow said, with masks, it's important to acknowledge there is a gradation of benefit to respiratory protection from N95s to cloth masks. N95s, when fit tested and worn properly, provide the highest level of protection. Medical and surgical masks provide excellent protection, though not quite as effective as N95s. Cloth masks, when made with the appropriate materials and if worn appropriately, covering both the mouth and nose, provide appropriate source control as well as some protection from incoming particles. Cloth masks should be washed after each use. He added that it is important to dispose of masks properly, so as to not cause environmental harm.

Dr. Morrow shared the timeline of the Omicron variant and said it arrived in Kitsap in December and is now the predominant variant in the county and nation. As of January 3, Omicron made up 84% of Kitsap cases. This rapid spread has led to the highest case rate in Kitsap so far of the pandemic, approaching 400 cases per 100,000 residents. However, he noted that these numbers may be drastically underreported due to at home testing with rapid antigen tests, because many people do not self-report their positive tests to the Washington Department of Health (DOH).

Dr. Morrow noted the hospital system is becoming strained again and may soon halt non-emergency services. It is requested that individuals with symptoms or exposures of COVID-19 stay home and isolate for 5 days and until symptoms resolve, and then avoid others and continue masking for 5 additional days. He asked that individuals not use the emergency department for COVID-19 testing.

Dr. Morrow and Mr. Grellner, along with leaders from the Emergency Medical Services council, Department of Emergency Management Director and leadership from Virginia Mason Franciscan Medical system, discussed addressing significant volume changes in the hospital. There are many health care and EMS workers out with confirmed COVID-19 which puts a strain on the hospital system. There is also a shortage of trained medical professionals in the country which contributes to the strain. Over 25 FTE staff have been deployed to assist the local hospital system. The Health District has increased communications to the public and is increasing the number of locations and hours of community testing sites. The District is also meeting with DOH and Northwest Healthcare Response Network to provide resources and, hopefully, avoid crisis standards of care, where the hospital system would have to make difficult prioritization decisions.

Additionally, Dr. Morrow said the local hospital has been provided a number of rapid antigen tests. He noted that these tests correlate with highly with infectivity and may help healthcare workers return to work safely.

Dr. Morrow noted that high volumes of individuals requiring testing and supply chain issues are causing a high demand for tests. While a wide variety of testing options are available in Kitsap, they continue to be very busy. He said Kitsap school districts have done a wonderful job of getting their own staff and students tested. Additionally, schools have introduced test to stay protocols. He said over the counter tests are widely available and encouraged individuals to use at home test kits. Federal and state programs are also in the works to provide at-home tests directly to individuals.

Dr. Morrow shared updated CDC guidance for COVID-19 isolation and quarantine (released on December 27, 2021).

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must stay home for 5 days. If they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days, they may leave their house, but continue to wear a mask around others for an additional 5 days. Individuals with fever must continue to isolate until fever resolves.
- Individuals who were exposed to COVID-19 and have been boosted or received the initial series of vaccine within the last 6 months (Pfizer or Moderna) or 2 months (Johnson & Johnson) should wear a mask around others for 10 days and test on day 5, if possible.
- Individuals who have not been boosted and completed the initial series of Pfizer and Moderna over 6 months ago, or Johnson & Johnson over 2 months ago, or are unvaccinated, should stay home for 5 days. Then continue to wear a mask around others for an additional 5 days. Individuals who cannot quarantine must wear a mask for 10 days. Individuals should test on day 5 if possible.
- Anyone who develops symptoms should get a test and stay home.
- New work restrictions for health care workers were also released.

Dr. Morrow said 72.8% of Kitsap County residents aged 5 and up have initiated vaccination and 66.2% are fully vaccinated. People who are unvaccinated between ages 12-34 are 19 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19. Unvaccinated people aged 35-64 are 18 times more likely to be hospitalized, and unvaccinated people aged 65 and over are 13 times more likely to be hospitalized. Vaccination continues to be the best tool to end this pandemic.

Commissioner Wolfe thanked Dr. Morrow and Mr. Grellner and said he is proud of the passion and dedication of the Health District team. He asked why there is a nationwide shortage of at-home rapid tests. Dr. Morrow said he doesn't know why there is a shortage and that a presidential enactment of the Defense Production Act earlier on would have been beneficial. He noted that there had been some concern about the sensitivity and specificity of rapid antigen tests relative to PCR tests, but said rapid tests are the test of choice for evaluating infectivity level. He said PCRs tend to stay positive for a longer period of time because they are more sensitive.

Mayor Erickson noted one of the public commenters said none of the vaccines have received FDA approval. She asked Dr. Morrow to set the record straight. Dr. Morrow said Pfizer has received full FDA approval. He said there has never been a vaccine as extensively evaluated or as closely monitored as the COVID-19 vaccines. He said there is a very small risk of myocarditis, typically in younger healthy males after the second shot with the Moderna vaccine more so than Pfizer. To his knowledge, no one has died from myocarditis from an mRNA vaccine.

Councilperson Hytopoulos asked if she understands correctly that the rapid antigen tests are more likely to show positive during the contagious period and if schools should be placing so much weight on these tests. Councilperson Hytopoulos also asked why there is not much information shared about the long-term effects of covid on breakthrough cases (individuals who have been vaccinated). She said she's concerned that individuals may be participating in activities because they think they are not at risk of any serious effects of COVID-19 once they are vaccinated. Dr. Morrow said there is no vaccine on the planet that 100% protects individuals from getting a virus through the nose. He said vaccines prevent more severe health issues that come from COVID-19, like cognitive deficits and neuropsychiatric, vascular, and pulmonary issues. He said COVID-19 causes more severe cases of myocarditis than the vaccine.

There was no further comment.

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.



Greg Wheeler
Kitsap Public Health Board



Keith Grellner
Administrator

Board Members Present: *Mayor Becky Erickson; Commissioner Charlotte Garrido; Commissioner Robert Gelder; Councilperson Kirsten Hytopoulos; Mayor Robert Putaansuu; Mayor Greg Wheeler; Commissioner Ed Wolfe.*

Board Members Absent: *None.*

Community Members Present: *See Attached.*

Staff Present: *Ornela Abazi, Disease Intervention Specialist, COVID-19; Amy Anderson, Public Health Educator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response; James Archer, Accounting Assistant, Finance and Accounting; Kandice Atismé-Bevins, Program Manager, Case and Contact Investigation, COVID-19; Leslie Banigan, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Water Pollution Identification and Correction; Angie Berger, Administrative Assistant, Administration; Dana Bierman, Program Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention; Ireland Burch, Public Health Nurse, Ireland Burch; Stephanie Byrd, Confidential Secretary,*

COVID-19; Deanna Eakes, Secretary Clerk 3, Support Services; George Fine, Community Health Worker, Communicable Disease; April Fisk, Program Coordinator, Contracts Manager, Public Records & Safety Officer, MAC, Administration; Yolanda Fong, Director, Community Health Division; Keith Grellner, Administrator, Administration; Gabrielle Hadly, Program Manager, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response; Sarah Henley, COVID Emergency Operations Coordinator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response; Grant Holdcroft, Program Manager, Pollution Identification and Correction; Karen Holt, Program Manager, Human Resources; Jakob Hughes, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Solid and Hazardous Waste; Kimberly Jones, Program Manager, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems; John Kiess, Director, Environmental Health Division; Melissa Laird, Manager, Accounting and Finance; Victoria Lehto, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Pollution Identification & Correction; Megan Moore, Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention; Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, Administration; Crystal Nuno, Environmental Health Specialist 2-RS, Solid and Hazardous Waste; Melissa O'Brien, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food and Living Environment; Carin Onarheim, Disease Intervention Specialist, Communicable Disease; Linda Pandino, Accounting Assistant 2, Accounts Receivable; Ally Power, Epidemiologist 1, Assessment & Epidemiology; Debbie Rassa, Public Health Nurse, Communicable Disease; Nolan Simmons, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food and Living Environment; Kelsey Stedman, Program Manager, Communicable Disease; Hannah Vinyard, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Solid and Hazardous Waste; Laura Westervelt, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Water Pollution Identification and Correction; Mark Wickhamshire, Community Health Worker, HIV Prevention.