

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Regular Meeting  
March 1, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Mayor Greg Wheeler at 10:31 a.m.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Ed Wolfe moved and Commissioner Robert Gelder seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the February 1, 2022, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The March consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2216 Amendment 1 (2236), *North Kitsap School District, Covid-19 Case Investigation Assistance*
- 2233, *Kitsap County, GIS Services*

Commissioner Gelder moved and Mayor Rob Putaansuu seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda, including the Contracts Update and Warrant and Electronic Funds Transfer Registers. The motion was approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Wheeler allowed for two minutes of public comment per person.

Yukari Evans commented that she has been living in Washington State for the past 23 years and originally moved here from Japan. She let the board know she has three kids and moved from King County to live in Bremerton. She stated that she is very stressed out about pushing the mandates to order kids to get vaccinations. She thanked the board for listening to her opinion. Ms. Evans said that COVID-19 is all about the restriction of travel and that is not constitutional. She said that COVID-19 has a 99.99% recovery rate and the average age of anyone who has passed away is over 87 years old. She asked the board to not call this a vaccine; she said it is gene therapy. She shared that she spoke with her dad in Japan and he has lost 10 coworkers and neighbors three days after getting the shot. She said this is the reality that media doesn't share.

Yvonne, a resident of Port Orchard, said she was reviewing the contracts that the board has in place that the board recently approved. She does not understand why the board is continuing to put aside money for continuing COVID-19 measures. She said she would also like to know how long this will go on for and when those measures will stop. She asked if the board would ask for more money from the taxpayers. She feels transparency is important and feels that the financials are not transparent on this subject.

There were no additional public comments.

## **HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

### Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, provided the Board with information on the Chronic Disease Prevention Program. He shared that this program will be receiving a grant to be used in the cannabis and commercial tobacco prevention program for the Olympic region. Dr. Morrow shared this will be used to plan, coordinate, and implement cannabis and commercial tobacco prevention activities. The Health District will be getting more specifics about the expectations of work, deliverables, and specific amounts in the near future.

There was no further comment.

### Administrator Update:

Mr. Keith Grellner, Administrator, let the board know that the COVID-19 counts have begun to decline in Kitsap County. He said he has been working with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) implementing a slow demobilization of our emergency response efforts for COVID-19. He reported things are going well and assured the board that things are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Grellner reminded the board that, on March 10<sup>th</sup>, there will be a policy committee meeting to discuss the implementation of Engrossed 2nd Substitute House Bill 1152 (E2SHB 1152). He said this bill changes the composition of our local board. Mr. Grellner shared that the Health District met with Chair Wheeler of the Health Board, Chair Wolfe of the Board of Commissioners and Karen Goon, the Administrator for Kitsap County, last week to finalize some of the information to present to the policy committee. He hopes that this meeting will firm up some plans and he will be able to bring a full update to the board at the April regular meeting. Mr. Grellner said in April he may include a first look at the revised bylaws to incorporate the plan and direction that the board intends to take for remaking the composition of the board to meet the new state law.

Mayor Becky Erickson stated that she is honored to work on the code and bylaw amendments and asked if the policy committee was a public meeting. Mr. Grellner replied that at this time the meeting is not scheduled as a public meeting and they do not have a quorum of the board, therefore the committee would be unable to vote or make decisions that impact the public. Mr. Grellner stressed that he would bring any of those recommendations forward at the public meeting in April. Mayor Erickson confirmed that she wanted to be transparent with the public and make sure they understood this process and that the findings would be brought forward for the public and full board.

There was no further comment.

## **RESOLUTION 2022-04, REPEALING KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD ORDINANCE 2016-02, SECURE MEDICINE RETURN REGULATIONS**

Mr. Steve Brown, Solid and Hazardous Waste Program Manager, approached the board regarding Resolution 2022-04 which would repeal the Kitsap Public Health Board Ordinance 2016-02 regarding secure medicine return regulations. Mr. Brown said recently Washington State passed their own law that preempted Kitsap Public Health's secure medicine return regulation. He shared that this is some regulatory housekeeping. Mr. Brown highlighted the following parts of the program while it was under Kitsap Public Health's purview. Mr. Brown shared information regarding when Kitsap Public Health took over the Secure Medicine Return Regulations in 2016 until the statewide program from the Department of Health began operations and took over. He let the board know that, based on the RCW preemption language, the local ordinance is no longer enforceable. Mr. Brown also showed some stats from the Secure Medicine Return Program which included 3,848 pounds of medicine collected in 14 kiosks in 2018 compared to the 5,333 pounds of medicine collected in 13 kiosks in 2020. He shared that the kiosks will still be accessible, however the project who runs those kiosks will now be reporting to the Department of Health instead of the Kitsap Public Health District. Mr. Brown shared that the Kitsap Public Health website will have links to the MedProject, the company who is currently running the medicine return program. He shared that there are 16 kiosks dispersed around the county.

Mayor Erickson asked if the kiosks are going to be secured, she shared that Poulsbo has had issues with these kiosks being broken into. Mr. Brown shared that these kiosks are under the privy of the State Department of Health. He let Mayor Erickson know that he was surprised there had been issues and he was not aware of them. Mr. Brown let Mayor Erickson know that the kiosks are in high traffic, public areas. He was unaware of any plans to further the security and encouraged Mayor Erickson to relay this to the state Department of Health who is regulating the program.

Commissioner Gelder said when the local ordinance was developed with the policy committee the Health District was tasked with trying to come up with a program when the state wasn't moving forward with a comprehensive approach. He said he would like to give kudos to the Health District for the work done moving products out of circulation and abuse.

Mayor Erickson agreed that we need places for people to dispose of the medicine, however, encourages when the kiosk placement is done the security of the kiosk is considered and put in open and visible places. She suggested treating them like an ATM machine and encouraged this to be done in a safe way.

Commissioner Gelder moved to adopt resolution 2022-04 amending the Kitsap Public Health Board Ordinance 2016-02 amending the third and fifth whereas paragraphs to reflect the Chapter 246-480 in the Washington Administrative Code. Mayor Erickson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

There was no further comment.

## **KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH CORE INDICATORS: ASSESSMENT AND EPIDEMIOLOGY**

Ms. Kari Hunter, Assessment and Epidemiology Program Manager, shared with the board that she would like to introduce her team, talk about the indicator and disparities report, and go over the key findings from the report.

Ms. Hunter introduced her team: Ally Power, who works with COVID-19 and behavioral health; Jordan Arias, who works with Communicable Disease; Amanda Tjemsland, who works with Equity, Maternal Child Health, Program Evaluation and Wendy Inouye who does database management and Chronic Disease Prevention.

Ms. Hunter reviewed the history of indicators and let the board know that the Kitsap Public Health Core indicators is a data product that has been produced annually by the epidemiology team from 2006 to 2018. This report shows the overview of the health and well being of Kitsap County Residents and includes between 40 and 60 indicators that were selected based on topic priority and available data. Ms. Hunter shared that the goal of this report is to identify metrics with the opportunity for improvement.

Ms. Hunter said the latest indicators report could be viewed on the Kitsap Public Health website. In 2018, in addition to indicators Kitsap Public Health District produced a report for Kitsap looking at the differences in health outcomes by subgroup. Ms. Hunter went on to explain that this report can compare groups by age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and look for metrics where the outcome is not the same across all groups. She shared that roughly every five years another assessment is done with over one hundred indicators. This assessment is called the Kitsap Community Health Priorities Assessment (KCHP). The last assessment was completed in 2019. Ms. Hunter shared that the plan in 2019 was to continue indicator work yearly, and noted we are currently in year 3 of this cycle.

Ms. Hunter shared that many of the indicators have been sidelined over the past 2 years due to COVID-19 occupying most of the attention in terms of data. She noted the team has made strides over the past two years in technology. Ms. Hunter shared that in 2022 they are going to list some indicators which have changed due to the pandemic. She shared the data comes from many sources such as national, state level, surveys, and Kitsap Public Health. Ms. Hunter shared that there are a few limitations; not all data is real time data and is confusing when reported data changes over days. Generally, the indicators for the survey are 2 years old. Some of the indicators have a little more recent data, which is preliminary data. Ms. Hunter shared that there have been some struggles with collecting data during the COVID-19 pandemic due to schools moving to remote learning and the US Census did not release their data due to collection issues.

Ms. Hunter showed how to find the indicators on the Kitsap Public Health website and how to read those indicators and explained how they change from year to year. Ms. Hunter introduced Ms. Tjemsland to explain the key findings of this report. Ms. Tjemsland identified three areas of concerns. She explained the first area is the economic wellbeing of the county and that, in 2020, Kitsap County saw worsening economic trends including increases in unemployment and student eligibility for free and reduced lunches. She also said that females were more likely to be living below the poverty level in Kitsap County. The second concern was maternal child health

findings. Kitsap County has not seen the same decrease as Washington State in their infant mortality rates. Two maternal risk factors, prenatal care initiation in the first trimester and smoking during pregnancy were significantly higher than the rest of Washington State. Ms. Tjemsland shared that the final area of concern is substance use and abuse. The drug mortality rate is continually increasing each year. Opioids and Fentanyl deaths are rapidly increasing in Kitsap County. She said 2020 had the highest year of Opioid deaths in Kitsap County, and noted one third of all drug related deaths in 2020 were due to Fentanyl.

Chair Wheeler said he is very interested in the economic indicators due to the government stimulus in the past year. He strongly believes it could be a lot worse without the federal intervention.

Commissioner Gelder asked if there is a COVID-19 lens that can be attributed to the economic factors that provided a safety net. He would like to know how it's all factored into this. Ms. Hunter replied that this was straight data on people pulling unemployment. She hopes that as we move forward, we can analyze the 2020 data better.

## **COVID-19 VACCINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT REPORT**

Ms. Siri Kushner, Assistant Director of the Community Health Division, gave the board an update on the COVID-19 outreach project. Ms. Kushner thanked Ms. Holly Bolstad for her amazing work on this project. She shared that, through the COVID-19 response, there was an embedded equity approach across all vaccine delivery models, focusing on those who are the most at risk or are impacted working with communities sharing factual, culturally appropriate information and looking to ensure equitable access to everyone. She said that there have been gaps in vaccine rates and shared data that showed the differences over time. Ms. Kushner shared that, while we know that long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many groups at increased risk of getting sick and suffering from COVID-19, those same inequities impact the vaccine initiation in many communities.

Ms. Kushner said the Kitsap Vaccine Equity Collaborative has worked to bring access to their communities. Ms. Kushner shared that the COVID-19 vaccine outreach project and key informant interviews grew from an identified need to better understand vaccine uptake, such as barriers, motivators, and reasons for hesitancy. This project partnered with the Washington State Department of Health and Village Reach (a non-profit DOH contractor). Ms. Kushner explained that the questionnaire was based on behavioral and social drivers of vaccination framework by the World Health Organization (WHO). Ms. Kushner explained that the WHO framework looks at four different domains that influence the vaccine uptake. She explained that those domains are what people think and feel, social processes, motivation, and practical issues. The interview populations were based on those who had gaps in vaccine uptake which included: adults ages 19-34, Hispanic/LatinX, Black/African American and in the subcounty areas of Bremerton and South Kitsap.

Ms. Kushner explained the different interview sections. She said Kitsap Public Health developed the questions and conducted test interviews with several people in Kitsap County to figure out

what was going to work. Ms. Kushner said many of the people who participated in the survey were referred from the Kitsap Public Health Vaccine Collaborative. She shared that Health District also included the opportunity to participate in the interview in their social media and general online communications.

Ms. Kushner said that after recruitments, in partnership with Village Reach, they began conducting interviews in November and December of 2021. Village Reach helped with the analysis of results, and they are currently in the dissemination and implementation phase of this model. She shared that there were 25 interviews, 3 were conducted in-person. Ms. Kushner shared the demographics of those who were interviewed with the board and noted each interviewee had their time recognized via a gift card funded by a COVID-19 grant. Ms. Kushner explained that the interviewees were given the opportunity to request an interviewer of their same linguistic or cultural group.

Ms. Kushner discussed the key learnings and recommendations which included provider support, messaging, addressing misinformation and external factors such as incentives and problems larger than COVID-19. She shared that the findings of these interviews will be published on the Kitsap Public Health website and shared with the Kitsap Public Health Board. The Health District will implement potential next steps through process of prioritization, talk to communities and continue to engage community members to ensure the Health District is on the right track.

Commissioner Gelder asked Ms. Kushner, in terms of sample size, if 25 people is statistically significant and what validity that carries. Ms. Kushner replied that in qualitative assessment we can look for the repetition of themes which help us to decide whether we are continuing to hear similar information across interviews.

Mayor Erickson asked if there were more people than 25 interviewed and informed Ms. Kushner that there is no way 25 people is statistically significant. Ms. Kushner explained that these interviews were considered a community sampling of individuals and was not meant to be statistical information. She shared that the interviews reflected the input and perceptions from those interviewed, so we are not generalizing it to the entire full population. Ms. Kushner went on to explain that we are able to learn from the information that was provided by these individuals, not generalizing the experience of all people but of the people who gave us input.

Chair Wheeler shared that the first half of his career he was a nuclear worker and noted that job was based on a lot of protections, preventative measures and the effects of radiation based on years of science. Chair Wheeler was curious about diving deeper into the reasons people who have used science as a basis to make decisions in the past and didn't use science to make decisions now regarding the vaccine. He shared a study like that would carry a lot of weight and would like to see this survey broken down even further. He shared that this was very useful work to put all the comments we have been hearing into one survey. Ms. Kushner replied that there was an executive summary in the board packet for Mayor Wheeler to refer to.

## **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, said the staff who spoke today have provided a tremendous amount of information and encouraged the board members to reference the data page on the website. He also shared that most of that data is quantitative data which will be useful going forward to understand the impacts of COVID-19. Dr. Morrow shared that the recent venture into the more qualitative research was geared toward why people do not pursue a very safe and effective vaccine. Dr. Morrow said vaccination is truly the best public and personal health invention any of us can take to get out of this pandemic.

Dr. Morrow said he plans to update the board on the CDC community indicators and levels, Western State masking requirements, Universal case investigation and contact tracing, shifting the responsibility from governmental requirements to individual responsibility, along with a vaccination, testing and therapeutics update.

Dr. Morrow let the board know that the CDC community indicators and levels are low for Kitsap County. He shared that this incorporates case rate data and hospital capacity. He explained that case rates have been split into two groups, either above or below seven-day case rates of 200 per 100,000 and then adding 2 health systems measures which include hospital admissions as well as hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. He shared that these indicators are used to protect the most vulnerable in Kitsap County through vaccination and individualized masking for those who most need it.

Dr. Morrow explained that Kitsap is currently at a low 7-day case rate. He explained this is subject to change as we add cases on a regular basis. Dr. Morrow showed a graph which provided the board with information on a slight bump to 52 new COVID-19 hospitalizations over the past 7-day period within Kitsap County. He let the board know that, currently, Kitsap County is averaging about 31 COVID-19 patients out of the 150 staffed acute care beds in Kitsap County. This makes the percent of hospitalized patients who have Covid at about 25%.

Dr. Morrow said that due to the numbers the Kitsap County, community level is still barely in the high zone, however the case counts are rapidly dropping and expected to be into the medium and low levels in the coming days. Dr. Morrow discussed the discrepancies between the Kitsap Public Health data and the CDC COVID Data tracker. He believes that this discrepancy comes from the CDC getting their hospital data from health service areas and noted our health services area crosses multiple county lines. Dr. Morrow strongly feels we are headed toward the green zone.

Dr. Morrow explained that as we drop out of the high zone, we know these metrics are valid and have impacts on our health care system. The CDC will review each county's data on Thursdays of every week. Kitsap Public Health will be doing the same thing to make sure the data is accurate. Dr. Morrow shared that these metrics would have been beneficial during the courses of the Alpha, Delta and Omicron surges, he shared that this really shows the tool is a more refined, useful measure to show the risks to the healthcare systems.

Dr. Morrow shared some information on community levels and encouraged everyone to talk to their medical provider if they have questions. He stated if we evolve into the high zone again

masking will be advised again. Dr. Morrow showed Governor Inslee's slide on masking requirements that will end on March 12, 2022. Dr. Morrow said that this will occur in California, Washington, and Oregon. He said masking is still required in health care, public transportation, and other federally regulated guidelines. Dr. Morrow shared businesses can make their own rules regarding masking and the Kitsap Public Health District has no current plans to enact any mandates which would be more stringent than the current government mandates on state and federal levels. He stressed that it is important to remember that many individuals who are immunocompromised or unvaccinated may elect to continue to wear masks. He asked all residents to be kind and respect those wishes.

Dr. Morrow explained that the emergency response to COVID-19 is scaling back and as COVID continues to evolve into an endemic, it's at the level of individuals to test and self-isolate. Dr. Morrow commented that public health will assist in high-risk disease places and continue to support those facilities who need the support such as schools, jails and congregate living facilities. He strongly encouraged those who feel ill to inform those they have exposed, stay up to date on their vaccination status and have plans in place for testing if they are exposed or symptomatic. He recommended that people wear a mask if they come out of isolation after 5 days, noting people can test positive during days 5-9 through the shortened isolation period. He shared that public health is a good investment and a much better investment versus ICU level care at the individual level.

Dr. Morrow thanked the health board for all their support.

Chair Wheeler mentioned the idea of meeting in person in the future. He suggests deciding in April and figuring out a timeline then.

Mayor Erickson let Dr. Morrow know that she is doing research on the vaccines and if they are going to start modifying them to degrees for potential new strains. She asked if Dr. Morrow has seen anything along these lines. Dr. Morrow replied that there are some issues with the waning immunity with respect to antibody titers. He feels that those who are vaccinated and boosted are in pretty good shape at this point. He stated the other issue is immune evasion, which if a new variant emerges that is even more reconfigured on spike proteins than the Omicron variant, he believes that the development of production and distribution of variant specific vaccines should happen relatively quickly. He let Mayor Erickson know that at this point we are waiting to see what happens and to consider herself protected.

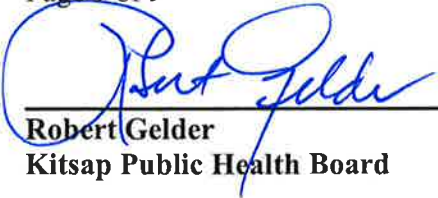
Mayor Erickson thanked the health district for all they have done in the last two years.

There was no further comment.

## **ADJOURN**

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.





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**Robert Gelder**  
Kitsap Public Health Board



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**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:** 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*; Holly Bolstad, *COVID Community Outreach Specialist, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Steve Brown, *Program Manager, Solid and Hazardous Waste*; Stephanie Byrd, *Confidential Secretary, COVID-19*; April Fisk, *Program Coordinator, Contracts Manager, Public Records & Safety Officer, MAC, Administration*; Yolanda Fong, *Director, Community Health Division*; Callie Ford, *Secretary Clerk 2, Environmental Health Permitting*; Keith Grellner, *Administrator, Administration*; Jessica Guidry, *Program Manager, Equity*; 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*; Talia Humphrey, *Disease Intervention Specialist, COVID-19*; Kari Hunter, *Manager, Assessment and Epidemiology*; Wendy Inouye, *Epidemiologist 2, Assessment and Epidemiology*; Sarah Kinnear, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention*; Siri Kushner, *Assistant Director, Community Health Division*; Melissa Laird, *Manager, Accounting and Finance*; Anne Moen, *Public Health Educator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Alex Moore, *Environmental Health Specialist 1, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems*; Megan Moore, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention*; Dr. Gib Morrow, *Health Officer, Administration*; Carin Onarheim, *Disease Intervention Specialist, Communicable Disease*; Ally Power, *Epidemiologist 1, Assessment & Epidemiology*; Barbara Steusloff, *Environmental Health Specialist, Solid and Hazardous Waste*; Amanda Tjemsland, *Epidemiologist, Assessment and Epidemiology*; Mindy Tonti, *Community Health Worker, HIV Case Management*; Hannah Vinyard, *Environmental Health Specialist 1, Solid and Hazardous Waste.*