

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
May 7, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Christine Rolfes at 10:31 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Becky Erickson moved and Member Drayton Jackson seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the April 2, 2024, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The April consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2408, *Washington State Department of Health, Water Recreation Facilities*
- 2210, Amendment 3, *Jefferson County, Nurse Family Partnership, Department of Children Youth & Families*
- 2410, *Office of the Washington State Auditor, SAO Audits*

Member Stephen Kutz moved and Mayor Erickson seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Update:

Yolanda Fong, Administrator, shared three updates:

- Lynn Pittsinger has been selected as the new Community Health Division Director. Ms. Fong explained that Ms. Pittsinger has years of experience in both nursing and leadership, noting that the Health District is fortunate to have her join the team. If Board members would like to meet with Ms. Pittsinger one-on-one, they can contact Ms. Fong.
- Documentation has been submitted to the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) for the Health District's reaccreditation; a PHAB specialist will conduct a site visit in September. Part of the site visit will include a review of the Board's relationship to the Health District as its governing entity. The Board will be kept informed of the process.
- Member Jackson will be presenting at the 2023 National Association for Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. His presentation will discuss strategies to align the diversity of health board leadership with their communities. Member Jackson said he has enjoyed working on the Kitsap Public Health Board and appreciates the diversity of its board members.

There was no further comment.

Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, provided the Board with several updates:

- Dr. Morrow wished Kitsap mothers a happy Mother's Day.
- This week is National Nurses Week. Dr. Morrow thanked nurses for their hard work and dedication.
- May is National Hepatitis Awareness month. Dr. Morrow explained that more than half of Americans with hepatitis are unaware they are infected. He noted that those who are unaware of their hepatitis infection have a higher risk of liver dysfunction and death. The Health District will be sending a healthcare provider advisor encouraging providers to screen for and treat hepatitis.
- Dr. Morrow explained that there have been no diagnosed measles cases in Kitsap this year. Nationally, there are over 100 measles cases, exceeding the average case count in the decade since the disease was considered eliminated in the United States in 2000. The Health District disseminated a message to healthcare providers reminding them to vaccinate children for measles before international travel.
- An outbreak of over 70 pertussis cases, another highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease, activated the formation of an emergency response strategy in the counties of Chelan and Douglas. King, Pierce, and Clark counties have had over 50 cases. Dr. Morrow noted that there are likely pertussis cases in Kitsap that have not been diagnosed yet. The Health District is monitoring disease activity and preparing for pertussis cases.
- Mpox rates have subsided significantly but there are ongoing, low-level case rates. Dr. Morrow reminded those who are eligible to get the mpox vaccine.
- There has been a resurgence in avian influenza, also known as bird flu. The ongoing outbreak has led to 13 human cases globally as well as infections documented among various animal species. As 36 dairy cattle herds across nine states have been infected, cattle crossing state lines are required to be tested for bird flu and dairy workers are encouraged to wear advanced PPE with respiratory and eye protection and gloves. Though Washington has not had any known cases of bird flu in cattle, the Health District will be conducting outreach to known cattle farmers in Kitsap to explain the risks of infection and risk mitigation strategies. Dr. Morrow noted that bird flu has been found in the milk of infected dairy cows and discouraged any human or animal consumption of unpasteurized milk. The Health District is addressing the outbreak through education, risk communication, monitoring, testing, and if necessary, will use prophylactic treatment for those exposed to an infected animal.

Board members discussed Dr. Morrow's update and asked clarifying questions. Councilperson Ashley Mathews asked how the Health District plans to communicate bird flu risks and prevention strategies to the public. Ms. Fong explained that information from the Department of Health is coming in quickly and that the Health District will research updated communications that can be shared with the public, sent to the Board, and posted on the agency's website.

There was no further comment.

HEALTH BOARD LETTER CONCERNING MILITARY HEALTH STRATEGY

Dr. Morrow discussed the Board letter concerning military health strategies. He thanked the US Navy representatives who joined today's Board meeting: Commander Carolyn Ellison and Acting Commanding Officer Brandon Wolf.

Dr. Morrow explained the following points:

- Kitsap has been impacted by the formation of the Defense Health Agency in 2013, which aimed to reduce healthcare costs by moving military medical care into the private sector.
- Over the past 10 years, Naval Hospital Bremerton has closed their inpatient, emergency, critical care, and obstetrical departments, despite the private sector health system in Kitsap being overstretched and underserved.
- The military's new strategic plan acknowledges that degrading and underfunding the military health system poses a significant national security risk. The plan commits to rebuilding and strengthening the military health system to reattract patients and beneficiaries, improve access to care, and increase opportunities to sustain military clinical readiness for medical forces.
- On behalf of the Board, the Health District drafted a letter requesting Pentagon officials to prioritize rebuilding military health systems in Kitsap. The letter notes specific requests, such as prioritizing primary, behavioral, and obstetrical care services; modernizing data systems; integrating data and health services with local private and public sector systems; and contributing to workforce development efforts.

Dr. Morrow asked the Board to approve, sign, and send the letter to Pentagon officials and continue community-wide efforts to advocate for a stronger health system in Kitsap.

The Board asked clarifying questions, discussed current actions being taken by the Navy to address concerns outlined in the letter, and thanked Cmdr. Ellison and Cmdr. Wolf for coming to the meeting. Mayor Erickson proposed the letter be signed by all Board members individually, rather than being signed by the Vice Chair on behalf of all members, as it may have more of an impact. Board members agreed.

Mayor Greg Wheeler moved and Member Jackson seconded the motion to approve the signing and sending of the letter to Pentagon officials, with the amendment that the letter be signed by all Board members via DocuSign. The motion was approved unanimously.

There was no further comment.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS UPDATE

Vice Chair Rolfes asked that the healthcare access update be moved to the next month's meeting agenda due to time limitations. Dr. Morrow agreed.

There was no further comment.

PROPOSED FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT FOOD SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

John Kiess, Environmental Health Division Director, introduced Dayna Katula, Food and Living Environment (FLE) Program Manager. Mr. Kiess explained that Ms. Katula will be proposing a new food safety rating system.

Ms. Katula provided the Board with a presentation outlining the food service establishment food safety rating system being proposed by the Health District. Ms. Katula provided an introduction of FLE program staff and explained the work conducted by the program. A significant part of their work is regulating food establishments, the main goal of which is to reduce the rate of foodborne illnesses through education, inspections, and prevention. During her presentation, Ms. Katula noted:

- The data from a large Minnesota study shows most customers want food inspection information posted at the point of sale.
- While food establishment inspection reports are available online, many members of the public do not know they are available. The reports can also be difficult to access and, because they are a legal document, the reports use technical language.
- Six years ago, when Public Health Seattle and King County (PHSKC) implemented their food safety rating system, the Board's Policy Committee discussed implementing a similar system. The committee decided to wait and observe the successes and challenges faced by PHSKC. In 2022, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) successfully implemented a similar system.
- The Health District consulted with PHSKC, TPCHD, the Policy Committee, FLE inspectors, and the Kitsap Food Advisory Council to develop the proposed food safety rating system, which aims to provide easy-to-read food safety inspection information at the point of customer interactions. Additionally, the Health District hopes the system will provide positive reinforcement to food establishment operators, communicate risks to customers, incentivize operators to improve sanitary conditions, and reduce the number of outbreaks, reinspections, and complaints.
- The proposed system will not go into effect until July 1, 2025, and will use four categories: best, great, okay, and needs to improve. Each category is associated with a specific color and an emoji. Food establishments will be placed into a category using the average score of about the past two years' worth of routine inspections. New establishments will have a sign noting they are still new and do not have a rating yet. Each sign will display a QR code, which can be scanned to allow customers to look at full inspection reports. The establishment will then be required to display their category's sign at main customer entrances or interaction sites.
- Challenges expected include the ability to keep current on routine inspections and pressure on FLE inspectors to not write violations. Ms. Katula provided strategies to address these challenges.
- If the food rating system is successful, the Health District hopes to see a decrease in the number of complaints and reinspections, and an overall shift of food establishment ratings into better categories.

- A robust communications plan has been developed to communicate the new system to food establishment operators. The plan includes messaging, education during inspections, handouts, and a long implementation phase.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Katula thanked TPCHD for the time and materials they have shared to help the Health District be successful in the system's development and implementation.

Board members asked clarifying questions and provided their feedback.

There was no further comment.

ONSITE SEWAGE SYSTEM (OSS) ORDINANCE REVISION

Mr. Kiess explained to the Board that the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently adopted a new Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for onsite sewage system (OSS) regulations. He provided the Board with a presentation, which noted:

- The definition of an OSS and how frequently these systems are used throughout Kitsap. There are around 57,000 systems in the county due to sewer system infrastructure.
- In 1961, the first local OSS ordinance was adopted by the Board and was last amended in 2011. As a result of Chapter 246-272A being adopted, the Health District's OSS ordinance must be updated. The update will be reviewed and voted on by the Board.
- The WAC will be effective April 1, 2025, giving local health jurisdictions time to align their local ordinances. The Kitsap ordinance may only require three areas of revision as a significant part already aligns with the new WAC. Changes include:
 - Increasing minimum lot size and useable land area requirements for the creation of new lots that will utilize onsite sewage systems.
 - New definitions and updates to technical design standards.
 - DOH review of local OSS management plans to determine if updates are needed.
- Over the next few months, the Health District will create a final draft containing the proposed revisions which then will be brought to the Board.

Mr. Kiess noted that the Board will be kept up to date throughout the OSS ordinance revision process.

After Board members discussed the agenda item and asked clarifying questions, Mr. Kiess asked to provide another update. He explained that in late April, DOH released their annual water quality status report for shellfish growing areas affected by fecal pollution. In this year's report, they identified three areas in Kitsap: Dyes Inlet, Liberty Bay, and Miller Bay as threatened. These areas still meet water quality standards but are showing an increase in bacteria levels. Mr. Kiess said that is not a new listing for some of these areas, and the Health District's Pollution Identification and Correction Program is aware and actively working to identify and correct any pollution sources in these areas.

Board members discussed the update and asked clarifying questions.

There was no further comment.

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.


Dr. Tara Sell
Kitsap Public Health Board


Yolanda Fong
Administrator

Board Members Present: *Mayor* Becky Erickson; *Member* Drayton Jackson; *Member* Stephen Kutz; *Councilperson* Ashley Mathews; *Mayor* Rob Putaansuu; *Commissioner* Christine Rolfes; *Member* Dr. Michael Watson; *Mayor* Greg Wheeler.

Board Members Absent: *Member* Dr. Tara Sell; *Member* Jolene Sullivan.

Community Members Present: Monica Bernhard, *Kitsap Mental Health Services*; Carolyn Ellison, *United States Navy*; Stephanie Hahn, *Representative Derek Kilmer's Office*; Brandon Wolf, *United States Navy*.

Scribe: Margo Chang, *Management Analyst, Kitsap Public Health District*.

Staff Present: Angie Berger, *Management Analyst, Administration*; Yolanda Fong, *Administrator, Administration*; Heather Fucini, *Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food and Living Environment*; Adrienne Hampton, *Policy, Planning, and Innovation Analyst, Administration*; Isabella Hansen, *Disease Intervention Specialist, Sexually Transmitted Infections*; Dayna Katula, *Program Manager, Food and Living Environment*; John Kiess, *Director, Environmental Health Division*; Sarah Kinnear, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*; Albert Lawver, *Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food and Living Environment*; Melissa O'Brien, *Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food and Living Environment*; Dr. Gib Morrow, *Health Officer, Administration*; Lynn Pittsinger, *Director, Community Health Division*; Justin Shoriz, *Disease Intervention Specialist, Sexually Transmitted Infections*; Tad Sooter, *Public Information Officer*; Jacob Wimpenny, *Environmental Health Specialist 2-RS, Food and Living Environment*; Layken Winchester, *Environmental Health Specialist 2-RS, Food and Living Environment*.