

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

July 16, 2020

Jefferson County Public Health, 615 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend WA 98368

Board Members

Pamela Adams, Vice Chair, Port Townsend City Council
Greg Brotherton, County Commissioner, District #3
Kate Dean, County Commissioner District #1
Kees Kolff, Public Hospital District #2 Commissioner
Denis Stearns, Citizen at large
David Sullivan, County Commissioner, District #2
Sheila Westerman, Chair, Citizen at large

Staff Members

Michael Dawson, Water Quality Manager
Vicki Kirkpatrick, Public Health Director
Thomas Locke, Health Officer
Apple Martine, Community Health Director
Pinky Mingo, Environmental Public Health Director
Veronica Shaw, Public Health Deputy Director

Chair Sheila Westerman called the July 16, 2020 meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Health to order at 2:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

Members Present: Pamela Adams, Greg Brotherton, Kate Dean, Kees Kolff, Denis Stearns, David Sullivan, Sheila Westerman

Staff Present: Michael Dawson, Vicki Kirkpatrick, Thomas Locke, Apple Martine, Pinky Mingo

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Sheila Westerman asked for approval of the agenda for July 16, 2020.

Member Kees Kolff motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Pamela Adams. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Deputy Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners Carolyn Gallaway said the live streaming did not appear to be working and she requested a recess to address technical difficulties. The meeting recessed at 2:40 p.m. and reconvened at 2:46.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Sheila Westerman asked for approval of the minutes for June 18, 2020.

Member Kees Kolff motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Pamela Adams. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Jefferson Healthcare Update

Member Kees Kolff said JHC: 1) successfully passed both the DNV and ISO accreditation surveys, 2) hired two new providers to work at the women's clinic and at the dental clinic, 3) treated two patients with COVID this week in the ICU, 4) has had no transmission of COVID to the hospital staff and has tested about 130 staff members to date, 5) is conducting more testing and operating the COVID clinic three days per week and COVID hotline seven days per week, and 6) is uncertain about reimbursement for COVID testing (at a cost of \$80k per month for machinery) but will not be sending any outstanding bills to patients for it. Member Kees Kolff thanked Dr. Tom Locke and the CD team at JCPH for quickly responding to positive cases and conducting contact tracing and notifying impacted residents. He also encouraged residents to not delay in getting important medical needs met.

2. King County Board of Health Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Emergency

Dr. Tom Locke, Health Officer, said both the King County Board of Health and the Peirce County Board of Health have passed resolutions declaring racism as a public health emergency. Member Kate Dean provided an update on how Jefferson County is working to address personal and institutional roles in perpetuating racism. Member Kees Kolff (JHC), Member Pamela Adams (City of PT), JCPH Director Vicki Kirkpatrick, and JCPH Community Health Director Apple Martine also provided updates from the agency they represent on actions taken to address institutional racism.

The Board discussed the importance of taking action along with issuing a resolution.

Member Greg Brotherton moved to make a subcommittee to develop a resolution in response to racial equity issues with Member Kate Dean, Member Kees Kolff and Member Denis Stearns. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Pamela Adams. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Cascade Care to Begin in Washington State

Dr. Tom Locke said the Washington State Legislature has created the first in the nation "public option" for health insurance. Cascade Care is a low-cost non-employment based health insurance plan available to anyone in the state. Coverage is set to begin January 1, 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Draft Policy Re: Extension of Onsite Septic System Permits during the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency

Pinky Mingo, Environmental Public Health Director, said the policy would automatically extend permits to June 30, 2021. A backlog was created due to the stop of non-essential work during the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

Member Kate Dean moved to approve the extension of septic permit expiration dates to June 30, 2021. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Pamela Adams. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Water Quality Director Michael Dawson called in to address an issue with roll-call during virtual meetings. Dr. Tom Locke agreed to address the issue with staff.

2. COVID-19 Update: County, State, National Outbreak Activity and Response

Dr. Tom Locke said although Washington State was one of the most successful states in slowing the curve of COVID transmission early on, transmission has now started to rise again. Nationwide, there are five states that are experiencing exponential growth of Covid-19 cases and will most likely have to step back to implementing shut down measures similar to Phase 1. Dr. Locke provided information on local exposures to COVID and noted, that in the last two weeks, Jefferson County has exceeded the recommended goal of 25 cases per 100,000 population for moving to Phase 3. Dr. Locke discussed the contact tracing process, the current understanding of how the virus is transmitted and stressed the importance of strictly adhering to state and county guidelines and mandates to slow the rate of transmission. He said it is highly unlikely that a vaccine will be readily available to the public by the end of the year. Dr. Locke clarified Phase 2 restrictions and said risk increases with exposure to high prevalence areas of transmission and lax use of safety precautions.

3. Masking Updates: State Mandates and Local Compliance Data

Dr. Tom Locke reviewed the masking mandates that have been issued over the last two months and informed the Board that King County recently invoked the imminent hazard in food service clause where food service establishment licenses could be suspended for failing to follow any of the Safe Start Washington guidelines. Dr. Locke discussed medical exemptions to wearing masks, occupational restrictions and accommodation plans. Dr. Locke said he is looking into enforcement options for food service establishments that don't follow the masking mandate in Jefferson County and working with other health officers to create a process for verifying medical exception documentation.

The Board commented positively on the graphic issued from the WA State Department of Health demonstrating how the risk of transmission varies when masking and social distancing are used. The Board discussed medical exemptions to mask wearing and enforcement under the food code.

4. Phase 3 Application Update

Chair Sheila Westerman informed the Board that Governor Jay Inslee just announced that the number of individuals allowed in social gatherings during Phase 3 will be reduced from 50 people to 10 people, although this does not apply to weddings, funerals and religious services.

Dr. Locke said the waiting period to move to Phase 3 has been extended through July and maybe longer if disease transmission continues to increase. In addition, Phase 3 restrictions may continue to be revised.

5. Planning for School Reopening

Dr. Locke said he is working with the four school districts in Jefferson County to make things as safe as possible for the students and staff. The prevalence of COVID transmission is the key factor in determining if there can be in-person attendance.

ACTIVITY UPDATE

Community Health Division Updates

Apple Martine, Community Health Director for JPCH, briefly reviewed metrics for the Syringe Exchange Program and said it is the only program that has remained on drop-in status since the clinic closed.

The Board thanked Jenny Matter and Carolyn Gallaway for their service to the Board.

AGENDA PLANNING CALENDAR

There was a no agenda planning.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next Board of Health meeting will be held online as a GoToMeeting on Thursday, August 20, 2020 from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheila Westerman adjourned the July 16, 2020 Jefferson County Board of Health meeting at 4:41 p.m.

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

Approved telephonically
Sheila Westerman, Chair

Approved telephonically
Pamela Adams, Vice Chair

approved telephonically
David Sullivan, Member

Approved telephonically
Denis Stearns, Member

Approved telephonically
Kate Dean, Member

approved telephonically
Greg Brotherton, Member

Approved telephonically
Kees Kolff, Member

Respectfully submitted
J. Matter