



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

MINUTES

District 1 Board of Health

July 23, 2020

**Kootenai County Administration Building
451 Government Way, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho**

Room 1A and 1B

Board Members Present: Marlow Thompson, Commissioner Walt Kirby (via telecommunications), Commissioner Mike Fitzgerald, Glen Bailey, Dr. Allen Banks, Jai Nelson (via telecommunications), Dr. Richard McLandress

Staff Present: Lora Whalen, Director; Don Duffy, PHS Division Administrator; Joe Righello, EHS Division Administrator; Mashelle Kenney, Human Resource Specialist; Christine Crummer, Finance Manager; Jill Ainsworth, Management Assistant; Katherine Hoyer, PIO.

1. Chairman Thompson called the Board of Health meeting to order at 12:37 p.m. Chairman Thompson completed a roll call. All board members were present.

2. **Public Comment Session**

Chairman Thompson called for public comment. Attorney for the Board, Marc Lyons, outlined the protocol of public comment. Written or oral comments will be accepted. Oral comments limited to 2 minutes; comments should not be repetitious or disrespectful. Comment Session is limited to 20 minutes. The following people addressed the Board with comments:

- Chris Dortigna , Kootenai County– opposed to a mask mandate
- Savannah Buppert, Kootenai County – opposed to mask mandate
- Ron Mendive – forwarded time to Tony Wisniewski
- Summer Buschnell, Kootenai County – opposed to mask mandate
- Ted Grafton, Bonner County – opposed to mask mandate
- Tim Remington – yielded time to Tony Wisniewski
- Pamela Norby, Kootenai County – supports mask mandate
- Bridgette DeMouy, Kootenai County – supports mask mandate
- Norma White does not support mask mandate.
- Dennis Wilson, does not support mask mandate
- Tony Wisniewski, Representative of District 3– discussed the different kinds of masks and uses, discussed CDC protocol for mask wearing. He opposes mask mandate
- Daniel Owsley, Kootenai County – discussed studies regarding use of masks. Does not support use of masks.

At 1:17 the chairman stated there will be a three-minute recess due to technical difficulties. Meeting resumed at 1:25 pm

- Harry, Benewah County –Opposes mask mandate.
- Patrice Barnes, Kootenai County –Opposes mask mandate.
- James Seamers, Bonner County –Opposed to mask Mandate
- Dawn Entraime, Kootenai County – Opposed to mask mandate

- Shannon, Kootenai County – Opposed to mask Mandate.

At 1:37 Chairman Thompson closed the public comment period.

3. Consent Agenda – Marlow Thompson

- Chairman Thompson called for approval of the consent agenda to approve the May 28, 2020 Board of Health minutes, and the minutes of the Special Meetings held on July 7, 2020 and July 17, 2020, approve divisional reports and ratify contracts.

MOTION: Dr. Banks moved to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Dr. McLandress. All were in favor; motion carried.

4. Hospital Capacity Related to COVID -19 Kootenai Health/Bonner General Hospital – Presenters: John Ness, Chief Executive Officer, Kootenai Health; Jeremy Evans, Executive Vice President, Kootenai Health and Erin Binnal, Public Information Officer, Bonner County General Hospital

Lora Whalen said that Bonner General Hospital was unable to attend. She introduced Jon Ness and Jeremy Evans of Kootenai Health (KH). Mr. Ness stated the issue at hand is larger than masks. He provided a high-level assessment of our regional COVID 19 status. March 11, 2020 a pandemic was declared, we have never seen a pandemic sparked by a corona virus, or one that cannot be controlled without a vaccine. By July 26 KH had 3 COVID-19 positive hospitalized patients and 326 positive tests. Today KH has 26 COVID-19 positive hospitalized patients and 4 deaths. Glen Bailey asked the ages of the 4 individuals who died, Mr. Ness responded he would follow up with that information. Mr. Ness shared that Idaho is attractive to many in and out of state visitors. We have a high number of vulnerable seniors in our community. It appears that we will be in this situation for 6 mos to a year. We need to assure we have the health care capacity to treat all patients.

Jeremy Evans provided an overview of KH data to date. KH has tested 22,000 individuals, 5% or 1,125 tests have come back positive. Of 1,125, 65 have been admitted to the hospital. Of those 1 to 2% require critical care. There is limited hospital inpatient capacity; 331 licensed beds; run an average 80 -85% capacity. Critical Care has total of 26 beds. On any typical day 22-24 are filled by cardiac care, neurosurgery, and/or trauma patients. KH ceased all elective surgery in March and April, and a significant backlog and are currently through about 66% of the backlog.

KH developed plans to expand capacity but require staff and equipment. Moving Forward Plan: currently operating at Level 3; threshold between level 2 and 3 is 26 patients. If COVID continues to grow, KH may have to reduce elective surgeries to meet the COVID needs. Washington Hospitals are experiencing similar capacities.

Staff is a limited resource. KH has 3,500 employees; 45 have tested positive for COVID from community transmission. Equipment is also a challenge; 18 days of isolation gowns; 10 days of lab test kits.

KH the only full-service hospital in North Idaho with critical care unit and certified staff. Uniquely qualified to care for critically ill COVID patients

Dr. Banks asked questions about when someone is admitted to the hospital, are they tested for COVID-19, and whether KH laid off employees. Mr. Ness replied that all inpatients are tested for COVID-19, and he explained that when elective surgeries were canceled, some staff were furloughed.

Jai Nelson stated that the Board of Health adopted a position statement on July 7th; and asked if it has that been enough to make an impact. Mr. Ness replied that more needs to be done.

Glen Bailey asked about treatment for COVID-19 patients and how long is their hospital stay. Dr. McLandress said it depends; ICU patients can stay 7 up to 10 days. Then they will often go to another follow up care facility. Glen asked if the hospital has a campaign to educate the public on COVID-19. Mr. Ness replied that KH and PHD have jointly produced 40 - 50 COVID news articles.

Recess at 2:23PM to bring Commissioner Kirby back on to the zoom platform. Meeting resumed at 2:35 PM

5. COVID-19 Update and Potential Board of Health Response in Kootenai County.

Glen Bailey shared that the Board is interested in the comments from the public. He shared that he does not believe that masks work and that social distancing should be maintained. He stated that we need to achieve herd immunity and that there are medications and treatments that have proven successful. He does not see mandating the use of a mask as the answer. He supports educating and encouraging people to wash their hands, maintain social distancing, and wear a mask if they like.

Dr. Banks – does not believe there is a pandemic. He stated masks are not intended to stop viruses, and that masks are harmful due to oxygen deprivation and Co2 overload. Masks and lockdowns do not stop infections. PCR tests inserts say that a positive test result should not be considered a positive case without corroborating symptoms. He stated false positives can be due to other respiratory viruses in a person's system. The more tests that are done, the more positive results you will have.

Walt Kirby stated that he wanted to have a motion to have a yes or no vote now.

Marc Lyons, Attorney for the Board indicated that there is a draft order and a draft of a motion available for consideration. He said that if the board is going to move in that direction, he would like to ensure that the public understands the proposed order.

MOTION: Dr. McLandress moved to authorize the board of health to approve and authorize the chair to sign and execute the order that is in draft form effective immediately. This motion was seconded by Walt Kirby.

Marc Lyons stated this draft Order is similar to the order approved by the central health district. Marc Lyons read the operative language of the draft order, including exceptions and explained that its exceptions are identical to those the eastern health district approved.

Jai Nelson – thanked those that who have reached out with their comments, as well as the medical staff that provided comments and comments from school board trustees. She asked Marc Lyons to address the legal authority the Board has to make a mandate.

Marc Lyons stated that Health Districts throughout the state have been granted the authority to act on health issues. He cited Idaho code and IDAPA rules that provide this authority. He noted that some health districts have exercised those powers, and some have not. The issue before the board is whether to or not to exercise those powers.

Jai Nelson referred to the letter from Dr. Cook from the Coeur d'Alene School District, which she felt was compelling. Ms. Nelson appreciated hearing from Mr. Ness on bed capacity at KH. She provided an overview of her research on COVID-19 and the effectiveness of masks. Ms. Nelson asked Dr. McLandress about a recent Lancet article that spoke to the benefit of masks.

Dr. McLandress provided a synopsis of the Lancet article that shows an 85% reduction of virus transmission with use of masks. This study was what prompted the CDC to change their guidance on masking. Dr. McLandress stated he has read over 250 emails, has done much research and has cared for COVID-19 positive patients. He stated that the Governor has given us the responsibility to take action in accordance with what is happening in our communities.

Marc Lyons clarified for the Board and the public that the draft proposed order is limited to Kootenai County, not the other counties in the health district.

Dr. Banks stated that the large number of deaths identified as having corona virus entered the hospitals with a different ailment, died and the death was listed as a COVID death. He reported that he reviewed testing literature and noted that packaging identifies that a positive test is not a positive case unless there are corroborating symptoms. Dr. Banks reported that some tests have 80% false positives, yet we are relying on testing to close businesses, put people out of work, and to wear cloth masks that do not work. He is opposed to such an order as overly restrictive and goes beyond our mandate as a health district. He does not support such an order.

Dr. McLandress indicated that the vast majority of those tested were symptomatic.

Walt Kirby stated that every county is different. He feels we should take politics out of it. He doesn't think it should be for all counties, and should be up to that particular county, He doesn't know that we will make a difference with a mandate, as people are people and their thoughts are not going to change. Mr. Kirby questioned whether law enforcement would enforce a mandate. He suggested each County Commissioner should do what he thinks is right for his county. Does not know that he can support a mandate to something that people are not going to pay attention to. He wondered whether the board of PHD should mandate wearing of masks under certain circumstances or should we just encourage the use?

Glen Bailey stated that failure to comply with the mandate is a misdemeanor, with a fine of up to \$1000 or one year in jail.

Lora Whalen appreciated the public comment and the hospital capacity presentation. She stated that hospital capacity is the true issue at hand. There are going to be COVID- 19 positive patients hospitalized and in need of critical care. We need to assure that the capacity is there for those who need it. Doing our best to promote healthy behaviors looking at another PSA to educate. We need to watch to what is happening with our hospital capacity.

Chairman Thompson called for the question and asked for a roll call vote on the Motion.

Roll Call:

Walt Kirby, Vice Chairman	yes
Allen Banks	no
Glen Bailey	no
Richard McLandress	yes
Jai Nelson	yes
Mike Fitzgerald	yes

Chairman Thompson declared that the vote was 4 to 2 in favor and the Motion passes.

6. **Fiscal Report – Christine Crummer**

• **Monthly Financial Report**

The June ending cash balance was \$3,389,709 which is a decrease of \$848,633 as compared to June 2019. After removing the Board committed funds of \$316,224 and program restricted funds of \$236,286, there are approximately 2.69 months cash reserves.

○ **Year-to-date Revenue:**

- ❖ Environmental fees revenue was over budget by \$59,382 (4%).
- ❖ Home Health Services revenue was under budget by \$384,407 (-21%).
- ❖ Clinical Services fee revenue was under budget by \$83,144 (-8%).
- ❖ General Support Services revenue (local death certificate issuance) was under budget by \$544 (-3%).
- ❖ Grants and Contracts revenue was over budget by \$203,126 (4%).
- ❖ Interest revenue under budget by \$2,060 (-3%).
- ❖ Donations, Miscellaneous revenue was over budget by \$109,007 (+623%).

○ **Personnel Expenses:** Total Personnel Expenses were under budget by \$493,551 (+6%).

○ **Operating Expenses:** Total Operating Expenses were under budget by \$453,531 (+14%).

○ **Capital Expenses:** Total Capital Expenditures are over budget by \$39,349 (-3%).

○ **Trustee/Benefit Payments:** Total Trustee/Benefit Payments are under budget by \$7,888. (+21%)

7. **Election of Officers Chairman/Vice Chairman/Trustee**

Chairman: Dr. McLandress nominated Chairman Thompson to continue as chair, and this was seconded by Glen Bailey. All in favor; no opposed. Motion carried.

Vice Chair: Dr. Banks nominated Glen Bailey as Vice chair as Walt will be retiring as county commissioner. This was seconded by Mike Fitzgerald. All voted in favor, no opposed. Motion carried.

Trustee position: Mike Fitzgerald moved that Glen Bailey continue as trustee. This was seconded by Dr. Banks. All in favor; no opposed. Motion carried.

8. Director Report – Lora Whalen

- Jeff Lee provided a brief presentation that shows the current status of COVID19 in each of the five counties. Slides included Summary data of Case distribution data by county; summary data age distribution by county; Cumulative Count from March 15, 2020, a frequency/running average chart beginning 3/15/20 through 7/19/20; Epi curve by date received (positive tests); Epi curve by date of test; and testing site cumulative positivity rate.
 - Lora stated she has forwarded Eastern Idaho’s plan, and is prepared to draft a plan for the Board to consider. Cases today are a result of behaviors. Lora asked if they want her to put together a plan for each county, with different benchmarks. She stated there is no meeting in August and asked how often the board wants to meet. Dr. McLandress offered that is important to have collaboration with Kootenai Health, since it is about their capacity. Marlow stated August 27 would be the last Thursday of the month and suggested to meet that day at 12:30 pm. Location to be determined.
 - Glen would like to see data in an easier format. Show total cases, new cases in each county for that day, number of hospitalized, number out of hospital, and number of ICU beds taken and available.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2020 at 12:30 PM.

Marlow Thompson Aug 27, 2020
Marlow Thompson, Chairman Date

Lora Whalen 8/27/20
Lora Whalen, Director and Date
Secretary to the Board

