



## **BOARD OF HEALTH**

**The Thurston County Board of Health has responsibility  
and authority for public health in both incorporated  
and unincorporated areas of the County.**

### **Minutes for February 9, 2021**

#### **Call Meeting to Order**

**Chair Tye Menser called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.**

#### **In Attendance:**

Tye Menser, Chair; Carolina Mejia, Vice Chair; Gary Edwards, Commissioner; Ramiro Chavez, County Manager; Robin Campbell, Assistant County Manager; Schelli Slaughter, Public Health and Social Services Department Director; Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek, Health Officer; and Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board of Health.

#### **Approval of the Board of Health Agenda:**

Vice Chair Mejia moved to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

#### **Approval of meeting minutes:**

Vice Chair Mejia moved to approve the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

#### **1) Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board**

The following citizens addressed the Board via zoom:

Citizen: Sarah Overbay

Issue: Spoke in support of opening schools for in-person instruction

Citizen: Jim Lazar

Issue: Availability of portable toilets along the county trails system when restrooms are unavailable.

#### **DEPARTMENT ITEMS**

#### **2) Vector Response – Pest/Rodent Management**

Schelli Slaughter, Director of Public Health and Social Services Department (PHSS) introduced topic and Sammy Berg, PHSS Food and Environmental Services Section (FESS) Manager, who would provide a presentation on the topic. Mr. Berg provided information and discussed the following:

- Rats, Rodents and the Vector Program

- Rats are county-wide
- House mice and deer mice; deer mice are a source of Hantavirus
- Vectors and Zoonotic diseases – Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, rabies biggest concern
- Rats in houses and businesses
  - In attic or crawlspaces – causing damage, odor, decay and intrusion into house or work spaces
  - Looking for comfortable/warm living space, food/water
  - Reproductive rate – 4-7 litters/year; 8-12 per litter
  - FESS program can provide information to deal with issues
- Shared examples and information on situations that invite rats into homes
  - Readily available food and water
  - Trees over roof, holes in walls, access through foundation, vegetation near foundation, ivy, blackberry vines.
- Shared three steps to deal with rodent problems – must do all three steps
  - Seal up all accesses
  - Use snap traps or bait stations
  - Clean up surrounding areas
- Spread the word with neighbors
  - Any food left outside for dogs, cats, chickens, and birds are also feeding rodents
  - Work with neighbors together to limit shelter, food, water, etc.
- Shared available resources for assistance
  - Our website: <https://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehvec/pdf/RatsGetRidof.pdf>  
Phone – 360.867.2667
  - Daily practices/daily users of the space are key to control activities
    - Keep it clean, keep it closed up
  - Owners and renters need to work together to control the pests to limit damage
  - Noted rats in an area are not always a violation of any regulations/codes
  - Complaints about garbage or restaurants can be submitted to:  
<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Pages/eh-problem.aspx>
  - Additional information or questions - Sammy Berg: [Sammy.berg@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:Sammy.berg@co.thurston.wa.us);  
(360)867-2568

Chair Menser requested clarification and information for which Mr. Berg responded as follows:

Is feeding birds in yards a problem?

Feeding hummingbirds is ok; remnants of bird seed is kicked out by birds and attracts rodents; move feeders away from house; do not leave pet food outside during the night.

If the presence of rodents is not breaking County code, what is?

Restaurant garbage not held properly is a violation of the Food Establishment regulations; garbage on private home properties is a Solid Waste violation for which staff can provide education and assistance; neighbors having rats which are coming into an adjoining yard is not a violation and PHSS has no authority to deal with the situation.

Are their policy choices the Board can make?

Education is the best option such as information on composting, etc.; communicate with the community members instead of, for example, creating a back-yard poultry policy.

The Board thanked Mr. Berg for the presentation and information.

### **3) Board of Health Members' Health Related Activities**

The Board Members reported on public health and social services involvement since the last Board of Health meeting:

- Commissioner Edwards –
  - schools reopening
  - COVID-19 vaccination
- Vice Chair Mejia –
  - Attended the mass vaccination at the RAC
- Chair Menser –
  - Interview on TC Media regarding COVID-19

### **4) Health Officer's Report**

Dr. Abdelmalek reported on:

- Thanked citizens who addressed the Board with their concerns;
- COVID-19 mass vaccination at the RAC went well;
- COVID-19 Vaccine – discussed Pfizer, Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the pipeline;
- Vaccine supply – discussed the availability of vaccine and allocations for Thurston County;
- PHSS Disease Control and Prevention (DCP) - program staff investigated 89 confirmed cases of various communicable diseases;
- Influenza - COVID mitigations have attributed to no influenza related deaths for 2021, including no illness outbreaks in long term care facilities
- Cold Weather upcoming – recommended everyone prepare for forecasted cold weather: wear appropriate clothing, fill vehicle gas tanks, bring cats and dogs inside, stay informed of weather status, maintain safe indoor heating – no propane inside, shovel snow safely – don't over exert, use rock salt or sand for slippery conditions at home.

County Manager Ramiro Chavez noted Vice Chair Mejia had to leave the meeting.

Commissioner Edwards spoke in support of opening all schools for in-person learning; questioned if we can be optimistic about opening soon; and expressed his frustration with not opening schools now.

Dr. Abdelmalek explained her recommendation will be updated when the present trend of less than 200 positive cases per 100,000 continues.

### **5) Director's Report**

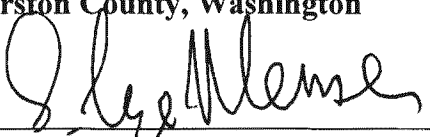
Ms. Slaughter reported on:

- Extended her appreciation to those constituents that addressed the Board and those that send emails expressing their frustration; she noted all emails are read and appreciated. She thanked those who have received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- COVID-19 Update –

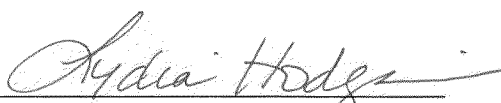
- Vaccination clinics and distribution – shared information on three successful vaccination clinics held over the weekend;
- Thanked staff and volunteers for their work and participation; thanked the current 43 vaccine providers;
- PHSS is focusing on improving access to vaccine for all to include mobile, drive-thru and walk up clinics –
  - Visit [www.findyourphase.org](http://www.findyourphase.org) – State of Washington Department of Health (DOH) phase finder; if you are eligible the link will take you to vaccination locations
  - For those that need assistance with internet access call DOH at 800-525-0172 seven days a week or call PHSS (360)867-2610 for assistance with appointments;
- February Children's Dental Health Month – tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases of early childhood; she noted dental care is important to maintain regardless of COVID-19; resources are available for those with out insurance; PHSS partners with ARCORA and other dental programs in the community; the Smile Mobile will be in Yelm February 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>;
- February is National American Heart Month - a time when all people can focus on their cardiovascular health;
- Physical activity – noted the importance of physical activity regardless of COVID-19; avoid smoking, work on weight and continue to get regular physical check-ups;
- Upcoming cold weather – a hazardous weather event has been declared from February 10<sup>th</sup> thru the 14<sup>th</sup>; a press release is scheduled to go out that afternoon; for questions call the Thurston County Shelter Hotline at 1-844-628-7343.

**8) Adjournment at 5:07 p.m.– Chair Menser adjourned the meeting.**

**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
Thurston County, Washington

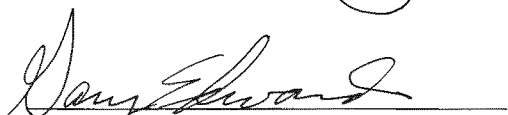
  
TYE MENSER, Chair

**ATTEST:**

  
Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board

  
CAROLINA MEJIA, Vice Chair

Date: March 9, 2021

  
GARY EDWARDS, Commissioner

**Thurston Community Television (TCTV)** - The Board of Health meetings are aired on TCTV each week on Sundays at 3:30 p.m., Mondays at 8:00 p.m., Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., and Fridays at 6:30 a.m. and at 5:00 p.m.