



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 June 17, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING

1) Call Meeting to Order

Chair Tye Menser opened the special meeting at 9:00 a.m.

In Attendance:

Tye Menser, Chair; John Hutchings, Vice Chair; Gary Edwards, Commissioner; Ramiro Chavez, County Manager; Robin Campbell, Assistant County Manager; Elizabeth Petrich, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney; Dr. Diana Yu, Acting Health Officer; Schelli Slaughter, Public Health and Social Services Department Director; Elizabeth Petrich, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney; Dr. Dimyana Abdemalek; and Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board of Health.

Approval of Agenda:

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

2) Affirm recommendation of variance to Phase 3

County Manager Ramiro Chavez provided a background of the request for the Board to approve Resolution H-06-2020 requesting a variance to move into Phase 3 of the Governor's "Safe Start" plan. Mr. Chavez explained:

- On February 29, 2020, the Governor of Washington State issued Proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a state of emergency for all counties throughout the state of Washington as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State.
- On March 23, 2020 the Governor extended the state of emergency and established the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, effective until April 6, 2020, prohibiting persons from leaving their homes or place of residence except to conduct or participate in essential activities and/or for employment in essential business services.
- On April 2, 2020 the Governor announced a month-long extension of the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order through May 4, 2020.
- On May 1, 2020 the Governor announced the extension of the stay home order until May 31, 2020 and provided the Safe Start Washington: A Phased Approach to Recovery ("Safe Start") that will be implemented in a four-phase approach to reopen businesses and modified physical distancing measures.

- On May 19, 2020, the Governor outlined circumstances under which counties that meet certain criteria – such as having fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents over a 14-day span – could apply for a variance to allow them to move to Phase 2 of the “Safe Start” approach prior to other counties.
- Thurston County met the criteria to apply for a variance to allow it to move to Phase 2 of “Safe Start.
- Thurston County’s Acting Health Officer, Dr. Diana Yu, reviewed the guidelines of the Governor requests, assessed the public health response within Thurston County, and submitted a signed letter, dated May 20, 2020, recommending the Thurston County Board of Health request a variance to allow Thurston County to implement all Phase 2 modifications of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan.
- On May 22, 2020 the Board of Health passed Resolution No. H-05-2020 concurring with Dr. Yu’s recommendation to request a variance to move to Phase 2, and requested the Board of County Commissioners to approve the request for a variance.
- On May 26, 2020 the Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution No. 15896 approving the request for variance and directed the Director of Public Health and Social Services to submit the variance request.
- On May 26, 2020 the Director of Public Health of Social Services Director submitted to the State Department of Health the variance request.
- On May 27, 2020 the State Department of Health authorized Thurston County moving into Phase 2 of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan.
- On May 29, 2020 the Governor announced the expansion of the “Safe Start” plan, ending the “Stay Home Stay Healthy” order on Sunday May 31, 2020, and allowing Counties already in Phase 2 to move into Phase 3 with a minimum of three weeks in Phase 2.
- As a result, Thurston County is now eligible to submit a request to move into Phase 3 of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan.
- Public Health and Social Services Department Director, Schelli Slaughter, and Thurston County’s Acting Health Officer, Dr. Diana Yu, have reviewed the guidelines of Phase 3 the State Department of Health requests, and assessed the public health response within Thurston County. Dr. Yu has submitted a signed letter, dated June 17, 2020 recommending the Board of Health request a variance to allow Thurston County to implement all Phase 3 modifications of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan.

Mr. Chavez explained for the Board’s consideration today is to affirm the recommendation of Dr. Diana Yu and to consider sending her recommendation, to submit a request for a variance to implement all Phase 3 modifications of the Governor’s “Safe Start” Plan, to the Board of County Commissioners. He then asked the Board members if they had any questions, for which they did not.

Dr. Yu explained she does believe Thurston County with the current case load; testing capacity; hospital capacity; and our public health department's capacity and ability to do case and contact follow-up can safely enter Phase 3, while continuing to encourage citizens to physically distance, wear cloth face coverings and to continue to wash their hands. She then expressed her concern, which she feels is out of our control, of citizens' ability to comply with the requirements.

Vice Chair Hutchings and Chair Menser commented on the last paragraph of Dr. Yu's letter – "I believe we are ready to implement phase 3 We will need the full cooperation of our citizens with taking the preventive measures so that we can successfully implement our community's recovery plan." The Board expressed their hope that all citizens in our community will continue to telecommute, cover their faces and follow all other recommendations.

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve Resolution H-06-2020 to affirm the recommendation of the Thurston County Health Officer to apply for a variance to move into Phase 3 of Governor Inslee's Safe Start Plan. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

3) Announcement of new Health Officer

Ms. Slaughter, Director of Public Health and Social Services Department (PHSS), presented Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek for the Board's consideration to appoint her as Thurston County Health Officer to be effective July 1, 2020. She then explained Dr. Abdelmalek was selected as the top candidate after a robust national search over several months for a permanent health officer. Dr. Abdelmalek will relocate from California the following week.

Ms. Slaughter noted Thurston County has had an acting health officer and interim health officers since December 1, 2019. She explained the Board of Health has the responsibility to appoint a health officer as per RCW 70.05.040 and the health officer must meet all requirements as per RCW 75.05.050; which Dr. Abdelmalek meets. Ms. Slaughter thanked the following local health officers and Washington State health officer who served as interim health officers during the permanent health officer recruitment: Dr. Alan Melnick, Dr. Chris Bitters, Dr. Masa Natrita, Dr. Kathy Lofy, Dr. Dan Stein, and a special thank you to Dr. Diana Yu as our acting health officer. Ms. Slaughter noted the interim health officers' appointments will expire as of July 1, 2020 if the Board appoints Dr. Abdelmalek as the permanent health officer.

Dr. Abdelmalek addressed the Board expressing her excitement to join Thurston County at this momentous time of our state's and nation's history. She stated she looks forward to working with staff and the community to keep Thurston County healthy and safe; and all the PHSS Department's essential work.

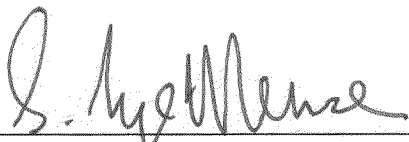
The Board welcomed Dr. Abdelmalek aboard in these trying times and stated they look forward to working with her. County Manager Chavez Ramiro also welcomed her to our Thurston County organization and feels confident she will protect our community as well as Dr. Yu has done in the past several months. Dr. Abdelmalek thanked the Board and Dr. Yu for her work as interim health officer. Dr. Yu expressed her appreciation of her time spent as interim health officer and expressed her appreciation of the excellent PHSS department, staff and the leadership.

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to appoint Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek as the Thurston County Health Officer. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Ms. Slaughter requested the Board consider revising the motion to include the effective date of July 1, 2020. **Vice Chair Hutchings moved to appoint Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek as the Thurston County Health Officer effective July 1, 2020. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.**

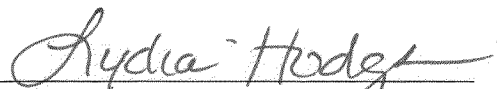
4) Adjournment – Chair Menser adjourned the meeting at 8:59 a.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH
Thurston County, Washington

ATTEST:



TYE MENSER, Chair



Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board



JOHN HUTCHINGS, Vice Chair

Date: August 11, 2020



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.