



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 October 13, 2020

1) Call Meeting to Order

Chair Tye Menser called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

In Attendance:

Tye Menser, Chair; John Hutchings, 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.

Schelli Slaughter introduced staff participating in the meeting: Jennifer Dixon, Education and Outreach Program Assistant; Sue Poyner, Emergency Preparedness and Response Supervisor; and Keylee Marineau, Homeless and Affordable Housing Coordinator

Approval of the Board of Health Agenda:

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

Approval of meeting minutes:

Commissioner Edwards moved to approve meeting minutes from the August 11, 2020 regular meeting and work session notes from August 4, 2020 and August 11, 2020. Chair Menser seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

2) Presentation – Recognition of the Medical Reserve Corps efforts supporting the COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Jennifer Dixon, Education and Outreach Program Assistant with the Emergency Preparedness Response Team, introduced the topic providing a background of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program which was started in 2003 under the previous Director, Sheri McDonald and Health Officer, Dr. Diana Yu and was one of the first units in Washington State during the call to serve after the 9/11 disaster. She explained since then the efforts of many people and partners have put us in the position we are today with a ready-trained team of healthcare and other professionals who are ready to serve the community in the event of a public health emergency. Currently there are 90 active members - 60% medical and 40% non-medical. Ms. Dixon briefly described the extensive on-boarding and screening process the members go through which includes an application packet, orientation, background and licensure checks, and core competency trainings. The MRC participates in trainings and community events annually, which in addition to

building relationships, help train and prepare for response to public health emergencies. She explained through MRC activities we collaborate with a wide variety of community partners such as with local school districts, local colleges, local hospitals, Nisqually & Chehalis Tribes, local healthcare providers such as Sea Mar, Valley View, and Olympia Free Clinic. Ms. Dixon noted 2020 has proven to be a different year with COVID-19 as the MRC has not participated in as many community events as usual due to cancellations. She explained even with the current pandemic we have been able to continue some events, with precautions in place, such as four immunization clinics for school-aged children during the month of September in partnership with Sea Mar Community Health Centers; and a COVID-19 testing clinic and a Flu Shot clinic with Nisqually Tribe. Ms. Dixon explained in response to the COVID-19 pandemic the MRC has been called on to support PHSS and the community unlike they have before. They have participated in several response activities that have included: Mental Health Support; Case Management; Case Investigation; Contact Tracing; Community Based Testing; and Strike Teams to perform testing at locations with outbreaks. To date our MRC has provided over 1,400 hours of their time in supporting these activities, equaling an economic impact of over \$80,000 and they continue to provide support weekly. Recruitment efforts are underway to further build and develop our MRC Unit; targeting recruitment with healthcare partners. Anyone interested in joining the MRC can visit www.waserv.org; contact mrc@co.thurston.wa.us; or call Sue Poyner, Emergency Preparedness and Response Supervisor, at (360)-867-2500.

At Vice Chair Hutchings' request, Ms. Dixon explained the qualifications for MRC volunteers which include being 18 years or older, passing a background check; participating in the orientation process and reading the volunteer handbook which includes County policies. Commissioner Edwards requested, when the COVID-19 pandemic is over, a function be held in honor of the volunteers.

Sue Poyner acknowledged Ms. Dixon for her commitment and work on the Emergency Preparedness and Response Team over the last four years. She then announced Ms. Dixon will be leaving Thurston County employment to go to the Washington State Department of Health to share her expertise with the whole state. The Board Members congratulated Ms. Dixon and wished her well.

Ms. Dixon then introduced MRC Volunteers, Cate Fairhead, RN; Katherine Flynn, RN; and Dr. Britt Smith available to speak and provide some information on their experiences. Ms. Fairhead addressed the Board sharing her experience with the MRC and expressed her gratitude for the honor to work with the Team. Ms. Flynn addressed the Board providing her background, shared her experience with the MRC and expressed her appreciation of the great partnership with PHSS. Dr. Smith addressed the Board explaining he has been an MRC member since its inception 17 years ago and shared his long-time experiences. The Board Members each expressed their appreciation of the three volunteers and Ms. Dixon for all they do for the community.

3) Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Citizen: Jon Pettit

Issue:

- Acknowledged MRC Program
- Expressed concerns regarding the Board not meeting in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic

- Compared Thurston County's current COVID-19 positive cases and deaths to the number of suicides in our County. He feels the Board should spend more efforts on preventing suicides instead of COVID-19.

Chair Menser confirmed a total of ten people at one time, including the three Commissioners, are allowed in the Commissioners' meeting room #280.

DEPARTMENT ITEMS

4) An emergency ordinance continuing selected sections of emergency ordinance H-4-2020 suspending, waiving, and amending certain provisions of the Sanitary Code for Thurston County due to the Covid-19 outbreak

Chair Menser explained the topic is to review a proposed emergency ordinance to continue selected sections of emergency ordinance H-04-2020 suspending, waiving, and amending certain provisions of the Sanitary Code for Thurston County due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Art Starry, PHSS Environmental Health Division Director, noted that on April 30, 2020 the Board of Health adopted Ordinance H-04-2020 to help alleviate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. H-04-2020 provided waivers and extensions related to permits and approvals until September 30, 2020. The COVID-19 emergency declarations at the federal, state and county levels remain in place, and the COVID -19 pandemic continues to impact the community. The proposed ordinance continues some of the waivers and extensions approved in Ordinance H-4-2020 to help address the continuing impacts of the coronavirus pandemic until March 31, 2021. Mr. Starry provided more details on the proposed ordinance and reviewed the highlights of the ordinance as follows:

- Section 1: Suspends 45-day time limit for Board of Health emergency declarations adopted before March 31, 2021.
- Section 2:
 - Establishes that for time computations County offices are considered open on any day that County services are available by phone, email or through alternative arrangements during emergency closure made by the County
 - Allows the Thurston County health officer or hearing officer to extend deadlines and expiration dates as appropriate to circumstances that arise due to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Section 3: Suspends the need for participants to attend hearings in person and allows the hearing to be conducted electronically, by phone, or other manner that provides for participation with appropriate social distancing and sanitation measures.
- Section 4.
 - Automatically extends by one year the expiration date for septic system applications that expire between March 12, 2020 and March 31, 2021
 - Automatically extends until March 31, 2021 the expiration date for a septic system application that has already received a one-year extension that would expire between March 12, 2020 and March 31, 2021.
- Section 5. Automatically extends until March 31, 2021 the expiration of any septic system installation permit that expires between March 12, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

- Section 6. Automatically extends until March 31, 2020 the expiration of any septic system repair application or permit that expires between March 12 and March 31, 2021.
- Section 7. Waives requirement for installers, pumpers and monitoring specialists to meet education requirements and provide documentation to the health officer until December 31, 2021.

Mr. Starry noted the provisions do not include renewal of Water Recreation Facilities. He also noted this is an Emergency Ordinance for which the normal notification to the public is not required. Commissioner Edwards commended Mr. Starry for bringing this forward as the public is depending on the extensions.

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve Ordinance H-09-2020. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

5) Update on Homelessness Public Health Crisis

Ms. Slaughter explained on June 14, 2018 the Board of Health adopted Resolution No. H-02-2018 declaring homelessness a public health crisis in Thurston County, directing the Director of the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services to lead the response, committing support for community wide efforts to reduce homelessness, and resolving to convene the Hazardous Weather Task Force and implement the hazardous weather plan. Ms. Slaughter introduced Keylee Marineau, Homeless and Affordable Housing Coordinator. Ms. Marineau provided an update on the progress made regarding the homelessness public health crisis referencing sections from Resolution H-02-2018 as follows:

- Section 1: Homelessness is declared a county wide public health crisis in Thurston County – Ms. Marineau noted homelessness was a crisis in 2018 and still is. She then shared the Point in Time Census Data Report explaining there was a 35% increase in homelessness over 2019.
- Section 2: The Board of Health declares support for and solidarity with the City of Olympia and other municipalities' efforts to address homelessness in Thurston County – Ms. Marineau explained an interlocal agreement with the Regional Housing Council is to be approved this week. She then shared what the agreement will provide regarding regional response.
- Section 5: Board of Health Leadership – Ms. Marineau discussed partnerships with the Community Investment Partnership (CIP); Regional Housing Council, Thurston Thrives Coordinating Council, Opioid Task Force, Housing Action Team, and Hazardous Weather Task Force.
- Section 5 and 6: Hazardous Weather Task Force (HWTF) – Ms. Marineau explained the HWTF was formed in Fall of 2017 to address the need for an efficient and effective hazardous weather response system involving jurisdictions, faith-based providers, service providers and concerned citizens. She explained the bed capacity in November 2019 was 423 while capacity in November 2020 will be 254 due to social distancing requirements for COVID-19. She has worked closely with bed providers to supply resources on-site for those who cannot find shelter.
- Section 7: Hiring a Homeless Response Coordinator – Mr. Marineau shared her Homeless Coordinator activities.
- Section 8: Address Underlying Causes of Homelessness – Ms. Marineau discussed underlying causes such as the racial disproportionality for people of color; LGBTQ+ homeless youth and young adults; eviction due to loss of housing; and job loss/unemployment.

Ms. Marineau then discussed addressing underlying causes of homelessness in a new reality – addressing racial disparity at all levels; emergency homeless response and long-term planning for 2021 and 2022); and eviction prevention. She expressed concerns regarding what comes after January 2021 regarding evictions.

Vice Chair Hutchings commended Ms. Marineau for her phenomenal work and stated he is proud to be a part of the engagement that has taken place. Commissioner Edwards also commended Ms. Marineau for her enthusiasm and putting her heart in this work. Chair Menser agreed with other Board Members noting Ms. Marineau is the face of homelessness in the community. He then questioned information regarding homelessness for students by school district. Ms. Marineau noted there was a significant increase in homelessness for young people and families with school age children. She explained the 2020 data report will come out next week. Vice Chair Hutchings commented that Thurston County has committed money to this issue. He also noted schools are mandated to track homeless children.

6) Board of Health Members' Health Related Activities and Accomplishments

- Commissioner Edwards – commented that water quality in our County needs help.
- Vice Chair Hutchings - noted he has received a flu vaccine.
- Chair Menser – will be getting a flu vaccine; COVID-19 response; Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) meetings

7) Health Officer's Report

Dr. Abdelmalek reported on:

- COVID-19 update
 - 1479 positive cases to date
 - 13 new cases today
 - 20 deaths to date
 - 14 congregate care setting outbreaks – 6 current
 - More cases of older people testing positive
 - We are still in the middle of a pandemic
 - Keep 6 feet away those not in your household
 - Wear a mask
 - Wash hands
 - Sanitize
 - Stay home if sick - get tested; noted COVID symptoms are similar to the flu
 - Remember who you were in contact with under 6' away for longer than 15 minutes – information shared with a Health Department contact tracer is kept confidential
- Recommended everyone get a flu shot. For additional information visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/Health/personalhealth
- Syringe Services Program (SSP) – continuing to offer Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS testing at their downtown location (1000 Cherry St SE, Olympia) and Lilly Road (412 Lilly Rd NE, Olympia). There has been an increase of HIV cases in people who inject drugs (PWID); reminder – do not share syringes and get tested within 72 hours if you do. For additional information visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/Health/personalhealth

- Communicable Diseases update – 145 general communicable disease cases were investigated by the Disease Control and Prevention (DCP) Team last month.
- Toxic Algae Blooms – Pattison Lake and Long Lake warnings have been lifted; there no current toxic algae blooms currently. Visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/Health/personalhealth or call (360)867-2626 for algae bloom information.

At the Board Members' requests Dr. Abdelmalek provided clarification on the <6' distancing for 15-minute exposure to COVID-19; discussed multiple variables regarding who gets sick and the level of symptoms they experience. She noted there is much to learn from this novel virus. Commissioner Edwards thanked her for her weekly Health Officer letters to the community and asked her to include this information in the next letter.

8) **Director's Report**

Ms. Slaughter reported on:

- Commended and thanked presenters and especially the MRC volunteers working to keep our community safe.
- COVID-19 update – noted we are on day 251 of response and thanked all staff for their work. She then provided the following information regarding upcoming strategies due to the up rise in positive cases:
 - Increase access to testing
 - Ensure there is enough staffing to investigate positive cases
 - Continue to provide accurate data
 - Work with partners to make sure they have the capacity to respond
 - Noted the ongoing investigation and response is taking a toll on those working on COVID response and on those that have contracted COVID
- Domestic Violence Action Month – noted she was wearing purple in honor of victims of domestic violence and those that have lost their lives to domestic violence. She shared the domestic violence 24/7 hotline at 1-800-799-7233 to be connected to resources.
- October 10th is Mental Health Day – she commented no one is alone; shared the PHSS Resources page for those that need support.
- Washington State Safe Medication Return Program – begins this fall (November 2020); Washington residents will be provided with free, convenient, and environmentally responsible options for disposing of unwanted medication; pharmaceutical manufacturers will fund the program; the previous Thurston County program operated by law enforcement collected 56,370 pounds of unwanted medications from 7 county locations from 2010 – 2019. For more information visit www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/HealthcareProfessionsandFacilities/SafeMedicationReturnProgram. Ms. Slaughter confirmed during the transition from the county to the state program the current county drop boxes will stay in place; the new state program will provide boxes in more locations.

Vice Chair Hutchings encouraged everyone to take COVID-19 seriously.

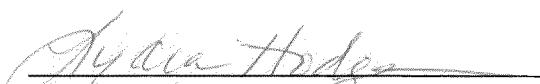
Chair Menser noted a public hearing on proposed Ordinance H-08-2020 adopting a new Article VIII to the Thurston County Sanitary Code will follow the adjournment of this meeting. (Public Hearing will have separate minutes.)

9) Adjournment – Chair Menser adjourned meeting at 5:03 PM.

BOARD OF HEALTH
Thurston County, Washington


TYNE MENSER, Chair

ATTEST:


Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board


JOHN HUTCHINGS, Vice Chair

Date: November 10, 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.