



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 May 22, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING

1) **Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Tye Menser opened the special meeting at 8:34 a.m.

He then shared the call-in information for the meeting.

(360)252-9020 PIN 1234

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; and Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board of Health.

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.

2) **Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board of Health** - none

3) **Recommendation of variance to Phase 2 of Safe Start Plan**

Schelli Slaughter, Public Health and Social Services Director, deferred to County Manager Ramiro Chavez to provide a background of the request to approve the Board of Health Resolution H-05-2020 requesting a variance to implement Phase 2 modifications of the Governor's "Safe Start" plan. Mr. Chavez explained:

- 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.
- March 23, 2020 the Governor extended the state of emergency and established the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, effective until April 6, 2020.
- April 2, 2020 the Governor announced a month-long extension of the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order through May 4, 2020.
- May 1, 2020 the Governor announced the extension of the stay home order until May 31, 2020 and provided the "Safe Start Washington" which is a phased approach of recovery as to how the economy of the State of Washington can start opening; the Governor also allowed 10 smaller counties to apply for a waiver to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

- May 19, 2020, the Governor outlined circumstances under which counties that meet certain criteria could apply for a variance to allow them to move quicker into Phase 2 of the “Safe Start” approach – such as having fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents over a 14-day span.

Mr. Chavez explained based on data Thurston County became eligible this week to apply for a variance to move into Phase 2 and this is the purpose of the Resolution. He described the steps Thurston County needs to meet in order to move into Phase 2 via an application to the State of Washington Department of Health (DOH) which must include:

- The Health Officer, Dr. Diana Yu, must review the Governor’s guidelines and provide a recommendation to the Board of Health (BoH). Dr. Yu’s letter dated May 20, 2020 recommends the BoH request a variance to allow Thurston County to implement all Phase 2 modifications.
- The BoH must concur with the Health Officer’s recommendation and achieve a majority vote.
- The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) must vote on the BoH plan; fully participate and meet all requirements of Phase 2 of the Governor’s plan; and cannot make any modifications to the BoH approval. Mr. Chavez confirmed the BoCC will take action on this item on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

Mr. Chavez stated he believes Thurston County can meet the necessary requirements to meet the criteria of the Variance Application to move forward into Phase 2. He then asked Dr. Yu to provide additional perspective in terms of her letter of recommendation.

Dr. Yu addressed the Board explaining she has reviewed the application criteria for a variance to the recovery plan as outlined by DOH and feels Thurston County has all elements to move to Phase 2 without any modifications to the Governor’s plan. She stated with Thurston County’s current low case load, testing capacity, and the capacity and ability to do case and contact investigation using the standardized protocols outlined by DOH, we fully meet the criteria set. She feels we can safely enter into Phase 2 but stressed the importance of the public’s understanding that we need to continue social distancing, wearing cloth face coverings when unable to social distance, and continue to follow proper hand washing. Dr. noted the COVID-19 virus is still around and moving into Phase 2 does not mean we are out of the woods but we are ready to move to Phase 2.

Commissioner Edwards commended and thanked Dr. Yu for her work and for expediting this process. Vice Chair Hutchings stated he hopes the public recognizes this is a momentous day as was March 12th when the BoH and BoCC declared this emergency; this is the first step in recovering but as Dr. Yu stated there are still concerns. He then thanked Dr. Yu for her tested and proven leadership through all of this, as well as Director Ms. Slaughter.

Chair Menser confirmed with Dr. Yu we are prepared to meet all required criteria to move to Phase 2 without any modifications to the Governor’s plan. Dr. Yu confirmed. He then introduced Resolution H-05-2020 and confirmed the Board Members have had an opportunity to review the Resolution and are ready to move forward.

Mr. Chavez read the two items being considered on the Resolution:

1. The Thurston County Board of Health has reviewed Dr. Diana Yu's letter and concurs in her findings and recommendation that Thurston County submit a request for a variance from the Governor's Stay Home Stay Healthy Proclamation to fully enter into Phase 2 at this time. A copy of Dr. Yu's letter is included as Attachment A to the Resolution.
2. The Thurston County Board of Health approves submitting a variance request to DOH to implement all Phase 2 modifications of the Governor's "Safe Start" Plan and requests that the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners approve the Board of Health's variance request.

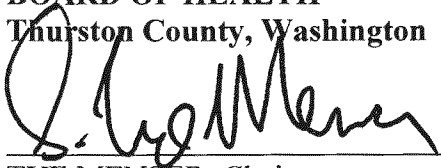
Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve the resolution to affirm the recommendation of the Thurston County Health Officer to apply for a variance to move into Phase 2 of Governor Inslee's Safe Start Plan. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Discussion – Commissioner Edwards questioned if the BoCC could act on this variance application before next Tuesday (May 26th) recognizing the public's desire to move forward as soon as possible but also acknowledged there may be legal restrictions or additional work that needs to be done. Mr. Chavez explained the complexity of the Governor's Plan requires time to review and ensure all criteria requirements are met; therefore, he did not advise moving forward before next Tuesday. Vice Chair Hutchings stated he agreed with Commissioner Edwards' desire to move forward sooner but feels it is critically important to make sure the application is completely in order to not risk a denial of the variance request. Mr. Chavez's noted letters from both hospitals used by the county must be received certifying their bed capacity for COVID-19 patients and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies. Ms. Slaughter confirmed letters have been received from Capital Medical Center and Providence St. Peter Hospital; and the application package will be complete for review by the BoCC on Tuesday, May 26th. Chair Menser noted the original proposed date for the BoCC regarding the variance application was originally scheduled for next Friday, May 29th, but was moved up to May 26th. Dr. Yu reminded the public Thurston County is still in Phase 1 until the variance is approved. **The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.** Chair Menser confirmed the BoH Resolution H-05-2020 and the completed variance application will go before the BoCC for consideration on Tuesday, May 26th at 9:00 a.m.

4) Announcement of new Health Officer

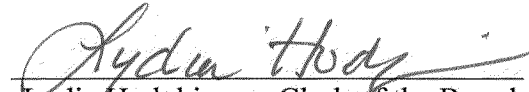
Ms. Slaughter explained recruitment for a permanent health officer has been in process since December 2019; over 20 applications were received; five candidates were selected for interviews by the BoH and the BoCC; there were two top finalists; and a final offer was made to Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek which she accepted. Ms. Slaughter stated Dr. Abdelmalek's first day of employment will be July 1st; she is relocating from California. The Board will officially appoint Dr. Abdelmalek at a future BoH meeting. Ms. Slaughter thanked all interim health officers for their support and especially Dr. Yu the acting health officer for her guidance and contributions during this crisis. Ms. Slaughter noted Dr. Yu will continue as the acting health officer until Dr. Abdelmalek begins her employment. She then shared Dr. Abdelmalek's biography. Vice Chair Hutchings expressed his appreciation of Dr. Yu and Dr. Abdelmalek for the community. Chair Menser spoke in favor of Dr. Abdelmalek's recruitment and Dr. Yu's contributions. Mr. Chavez confirmed formal action to appoint Dr. Abdelmalek will be scheduled at a future BoH meeting.

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

BOARD OF HEALTH
Thurston County, Washington


TYE MENSER, Chair

ATTEST:


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.