



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 of April 11, 2017 Public Hearing

Public Hearing on an Ordinance Repealing Rates and Charges on On-site Sewage Systems Imposed to Fund Implementation of the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

In Attendance: Bud Blake, Chair; John Hutchings, Vice Chair; Gary Edwards, Commissioner; Ramiro Chavez, County Manager; Robin Campbell, Assistant County Manager; Schelli Slaughter, Director Public Health and Social Services Department; Art Starry, Environmental Health Division Director; and Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board of Health.

Chair Blake called the public hearing to order at 5:30 P.M. at the Thurston County Courthouse.

Chair Blake explained the purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on an ordinance to repeal rates and charges on on-site sewage systems to fund implementation of the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update. The charges were imposed by Ordinance H-3-2016 that was adopted last year. The charges would go into effect in 2018 if the Ordinance remains in place. This hearing is only about the rates and charges and the sanitary code amendments that were adopted last year to implement the septic system management plan. It is not about the actual septic system management plan itself. Later this year the Board of Health will review and evaluate the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update.

Schelli Slaughter, Public Health & Social Department (PHSS) Director, thanked everyone in attendance and those individuals that submitted written comments on this important issue. She also thanked of PHSS Environmental Health Division staff for their many years of hard work on the Onsite Sewage Management Plan and this issue. She explained the mission of the Department is to promote the healthful, social, economic and environmental conditions for all residents, and to that end we are committed to ensuring that our community has safe clean water and habitats.

Art Starry, Environmental Health Division Director of the PHSS Department, explained the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update (Plan) was prepared to comply with state law (WAC 246-272A-0015) that requires the Thurston County health officer develop and implement a management plan for the development and management of on-site sewage systems (OSS) within Thurston County. The Board of Health approved Resolution H-2-2016 adopting the Plan on November 8, 2016. This resolution directed the PHSS Department Environmental Health Division to prepare a

funding proposal and amendments to the Sanitary Code for the Thurston County Board of Health to consider. The Plan recommends that the county's OSS regulatory and oversight programs be funded by a charge on all OSS to be collected via the property tax statements, and that the charge replace the time of transfer, septic tank reporting, and operational certificate renewal fees. The Plan recommended a three tiered charge structure that based charges on the geographic location of the OSS and the work the PHSS Department anticipates is needed to implement the Plan in that area. On December 6, 2016, the Board of Health held a public hearing on an ordinance to impose rates and charges and implement the tiered charge structure. The majority of those testifying opposed the level of rates and charges. Many others questioned the tiered structure and the need to replace time of transfer, septic tank reporting and operational certificate renewal fees with a charge on the property tax statement. Following the public hearing, the Board of Health directed staff to prepare a proposal to reduce the annual base charge to \$10 for all OSS; except any properties subject to shellfish protection district rates and charges for an on-site sewage system operation and maintenance program; and to leave in place other fees set forth in the Sanitary Code. The majority of the Thurston County Board of Health approved Ordinance H-3-2016 on December 16, 2016. The ordinance imposes the \$10 charge on on-site sewage systems to fund the Plan. The rates and charged authorized by the ordinance will generate approximately \$394,000 per year beginning in 2018. In January 2017, the three-member Board of Health gained two new members. The Board of Health now desires to repeal Ordinance H-3-2016 and eliminate the associated rates and charges. Later this year the Board will review and evaluate the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update and Resolution H-2-2016.

Mr. Starry stated over a year there were three (3) public workshops held, one in Olympia, Rainier and Steamboat Island area; 300 people attended. Past summer used social media to inform the public, PHSS website, additional workshops on septic education, Septic Smart Week, public hearings in November and December also publicized.

Thurston County received twenty three (23) comments prior to this hearing. Five (5) comments were in favor of the ordinance repealing fees; 16 comments were opposed to the ordinance repealing fees; and two comments expressed concern.

Chair Blake explained the process that would be used to receive oral testimony; each person has three (3) timed minutes to testify; the time is monitored by a countdown clock on the wall.

Oral testimony from the following citizens was received as follows:

- Linda Hoffman – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Callie Wilson – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Susan Campbell – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
- Kerry Hart – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
- Doug DeForest – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
- Glen Morgan – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
- Roger Max – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Holly Gadbow – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Esther Kronenberg – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Donna Weaver – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
- Matthew Porter – opposed to ordinance repealing fees

Gordan Norquist – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Jon McAninch – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Dave Ellison – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Don Beatty – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Dennis Lingle – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Dirk Dekker – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Jim Zahn – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Bobbie Hatton – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Larry Weaver – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Ramona Hinkle – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Ken Morse – in favor of ordinance repealing fees
Yanah Cook – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
Erica Marbet – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
Diane Dondero – opposed to ordinance repealing fees
Ed Larsen – opposed to ordinance repealing fees

Eleven (11) people were opposed to the ordinance repealing the fees and fifteen (15) people were in favor of the ordinance repealing fees.

Written testimony was received at the Hearing from:

Linda Hoffman - opposed to ordinance repealing fees
Holly Gadbow - opposed to ordinance repealing fees
Elinor Jordan - opposed to ordinance repealing fees

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to close the Public Hearing. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The Board Members asked several questions of staff:

Chair Blake requested clarification on timing of the \$10 fee in relation to having the charge placed on the property tax statement: Robin Campbell, Assistant County Manager and Art Starry addressed the question – the Assessor and Treasurer need to have accurate charges by October 1st of 2017 to be placed on the 2018 property tax statements.

At Chair Blake's request Mr. Starry explained for several years there have been efforts made by the State to come up with a plan to fund on-site septic system maintenance monitoring programs for the 12 Puget Sound counties; it is a topic that comes up in the Legislature, Bills have been filed in an attempt to rectify the issue but none have passed.

Mr. Starry stated Kind County started a process to implement fees, similar to our process but with less public notification, last year but due to the public outcry their Board of Health chose to shut down the process. Other counties that have successfully implemented fees are San Juan, Whatcom and Jefferson.

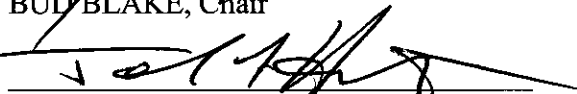
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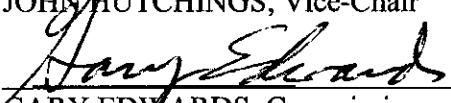
Vice Chair Hutchings moved to adopt Ordinance H-2-2017 to repeal Ordinance H-3-2016, dated December 16, 2016, thereby repealing the rates and charges on on-site sewage systems imposed to fund implementation of the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management Plan Update. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Blake thanked all in attendance. The meeting was adjourned.


BOARD OF HEALTH
Thurston County, Washington


BUD BLAKE, Chair


JOHN HUTCHINGS, Vice-Chair


GARY EDWARDS, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board

Date: 