

BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES - DATE: May 17, 2021

3:00 p.m. - Convened/Board of Health.

Present: Chris Skidmore, Brandy Brown, Fletcher Aukerman, Sharron Cunningham, Chelsea Cannard, Brad Bowman, Abigail Dallas and Jacob Jones. (3:00 p.m.).

DIVISION UPDATES:

Minutes:

1. Commissioner Largent **moved** Commissioner Handy **seconded** the motion and it **carried** to approve the Board of Health minutes of March 15, 2021.

Health Officer Update:

2. Chris Skidmore reported COVID-19 cases have fallen in Whitman County, from 205 to 135 confirmed cases; attributing this to college students leaving the area and the lower age of immunizations. Immunizations for ages 2-12 is coming soon. Beginning June 30, 2021 or sooner if Washington reaches the WA-based vaccination goal of 70% of age 16+ individuals initiating vaccine, Whitcom County will move to Phase 3.

Some rural schools have taken a pause on vaccine administration due to confirmed cases in the schools.

Supply of vaccines has been increased and is considered on demand. Focus has moved to making vaccines available to clinics, provider offices. Sid's Pharmacy, Pullman is focused on vaccine administration at schools. Some schools and rural communities have opted out of on-site (school) vaccine administration.

Another vaccine clinic will be held the end of May, serving eligible children and adults. The Health Department has received two new vaccine freezers with refrigeration.

WIC meetings are still being held remotely.

House Bill 1152 will change the composition of the Board of Health.

Chairman Swannack asked if there was an update on WSU vaccine requirements. Chris responded that vaccine records will be required. However, there will be steps to opt out/avoid the vaccine requirement. Dr. Brad Bowman added WSU is trying to limit exceptions and is waiting on court decisions to make final decision. Dr. Brad Bowman shared the hope is as many students eligible be vaccinated and then look to encourage students rather than force. There is a concern of outbreaks when students return in the fall. Dr. Brad Bowman thinks there will be testing as students return and acknowledged Student Health has done a good job with immunizations. There is also a concern with private businesses (such as SEL) and funding for clinics they hold.

Chairman Swannack asked what the amount of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money would be needed to continue/hold vaccine clinics. Dr. Brad Bowman shared that funds are being filtered through the Department of Health(DOH) and those funds are getting lost. Adult Care and Long-term care facilities are being reviewed, they may need money to prevent extended long-term hospital stays. Clinics, such as Palouse Medical, may be ineligible for funds because they bill insurance companies for care. Public Health Director, Chris Skidmore shared \$1.7 billion is/was to go out, but has not been received at this point. The current funds should last for the next few months.

Commissioner Tom Handy asked what the plan is for COVID-19 case measurements after June 30, 2021 when the all restrictions are lifted. Per Chris Skidmore, there is not a specific plan, however if the ICU bed rate raises to 90%, the Governor can roll back a phase.

Environmental Health Update:

3. Amanda Niedosmialek has moved from the Health Educator position to Environmental Health. Amanda will be assisting Chelsea Cannard. Concentration will be spent on COVID-19, and the restaurant opening progress.

Administrative Update:

4. Health Director, Chris Skidmore provided a staffing update.

HIPAA Update:

5. No discussion

Next Meeting/Adjournment:

6. Chairman Swannack formalized, noted Board of Health meetings will be held the third Monday of every other month at 3:00 p.m.

Commissioner Largent moved, Commissioner Handy, seconded, motion carried.
The next Board of Health meeting is Monday, July 19, 2021.

7. The Board adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

8. Future Meetings:

July 19, 2021

September 20, 2021

November 15, 2021

Maribeth Becker, CMC
Clerk of the Board
BY: Corey Mitzimberg
Deputy Clerk of the Board

Arthur D. Swannack, Chairman
Board of Health