



**BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

**THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION BY PREFERENCE OF BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mark Burrows, Wes McCart, Robert Rosencrantz, Elbert Koontz, Greg McCunn, Robert Dean, Michael Heath

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Brian Smiley, Keith Campbell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeanie Beegle, Sonja Moore, Jon Ness, Matt Schanz, Logan Worley, Molly Corvino, Dr. Artzis, Dale House

**GUESTS:** Nancy Churchill, Shelly Nelson, Christina Wagar, Mary Selecky

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** Board Chair Wes McCart called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made by all.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 18, 2023:** Mayor Koontz moved, and Mayor McCunn seconded the motion to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCES:** No public appearances were pre-registered.

**ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO AGENDA:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD (PHAB) REPORT & COMMENTS:** Christina Wagar stated the PHAB has met regularly the past several months, providing recommendations to NETCHD on the Domestic Animal Waste Policy, Community Health Needs Assessment, public health focus areas, and more.

**FERRY COUNTY PHAB MEMBERSHIP:** As previously discussed in prior BOH meetings, Dr. Caleb Hotzer has offered to step back from the PHAB to allow an opening for a Ferry County resident. Commissioners Heath and Dean recommend Mike Martinoli for the Ferry County PHAB vacancy.

Commissioner Heath moved to appoint Mike Martinoli to the PHAB in place of Dr. Holtzer; Commissioner Burrows seconded the motion. Motion carries.

**CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP):** Matt Schanz provided an overview of the intent of the COOP and stated the plan will continually undergo updates, brought before the Board annually.

Commissioner Rosencrantz commended Matt Schanz for the work on the COOP and will use it as inspiration for the Pend Oreille County COOP.

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Commissioner Heath moves to approve Resolution 02-2023 Adopting a Continuity of Operations Plan, seconded by Commissioner Rosencrantz. Motion carries.

**NETCHD STRATEGIC PLAN:** NETCHD worked with VillageReach (contracted through DOH) to create the strategic plan. Following feedback from the PHAB and the BOH, NETCHD adjusted the plan to become a rolling yearly plan instead of a three-year plan. A dashboard was created to track goals, action items, and overall progress on the plan. A copy of the dashboard was shared with BOH members, and a permanent agenda item will be added to future BOH meetings to provide updates to BOH members.

Commissioner Rosencrantz moved to approve the Northeast Tri County Health District Strategic Plan as presented, seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Motion carries.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CHNA) REPORTS:** The completed CHNAs were included in each Board member's packet. The top issues identified were as follows:

- Transportation
- Substance abuse and treatment
- Housing – affordability and availability
- Health care
- Law enforcement
- Retaining workforce
- Education & communication of services
- Tribal and county relations
- Jobs – lack of opportunities, decent pay, industry
- Cost of living
- Childcare
- Mental health

Next steps will be to create work groups of those who work in the communities to do the boots on the ground work. These workgroups will be tasked with determining how to apply what was learned to available resources within each county to make real progress. The improvement plan will be based around metrics to ensure goals are met.

Matt Schanz commented that NETCHD will utilize the findings from the CHNAs to focus on grant opportunities which address the identified needs. As an example, an issue identified during the CHNAs was the necessity for an expanded gas voucher program that covers all three counties. The program, which provides gas vouchers to those travelling to facilities in Spokane for cancer treatment, is donation based and only covers Stevens County residents currently. However, following the CHNA process, NETCHD secured a \$15,000 grant with the Fred Hutch Cancer Center. The grant funds will allow NETCHD to provide vouchers to all three counties for those who are undergoing cancer treatment.

**ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS RULE UPDATE, WAC 246-272A:** In 2018, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) began the process to update the On-Site Sewage Systems Rule and created an On-site Rule Revision Committee. The DOH worked with environmental health directors, real estate, landowners, installers, pumpers, engineers, designers, and more to provide input and feedback during the review period. While the pandemic slowed the progress on the rule update, DOH has renewed

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efforts to update the rule. Jon Ness provided input to DOH on the revised rule and successfully negotiated revisions to:

- Successfully advocated that non-Puget Sound counties do not need to have the same level of Local Management Plans as Puget Sound counties.
- Advocating for the sub-division of properties with individual wells not be mandated to have a 100-foot water protection zone be located entirely within the boundaries of a single lot. We have been informed by the Department of Health they will make this change.
- Successfully advocated to modify the definition of “septage” to clearly include portable toilet waste. This is important because currently companies that only haul portable toilet waste do not need to be licensed as septage pumpers with us. We have had experiences in our communities where portable toilet pumpers have dumped their waste into city sewer systems, which substantially impacted the functionality of the sewage treatment plant. Being the companies were not required to be licensed by NETCHD, we had little regulatory oversight.
- Successfully advocated that local health jurisdictions not be mandated to follow Department Standards and Guidance, as that would essentially be rule making without a public process.

The rule will be adopted March 2024 and become effective March 2025. The property transfer rule will become effective March 2026.

Matt Schanz stated NETCHD has previously taken the WACs to our own coalitions and Board members for review in order to draft policy and regulations locally, in addition to removing provisions that are not pertinent to our counties.

**DOMESTIC ANIMAL WASTE POLICY:** Following feedback from the PHAB and BOH, a final policy was created. No further comments from Board members.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION PER RCW 42.30.110(1)(i):** Wes McCart moved the executive session to the end of the meeting to allow all other meeting attendees to sign off and not have to rejoin following session.

**BETTER HEALTH TOGETHER (BHT):** Matt Schanz noted that while there is contention around the equity statements BHT put out in 2022, NETCHD also has the need to continue care coordination services, due to renew at the end of 2023. Funding for care coordination activities allowed NETCHD to provide wraparound services for people with COVID-19 during the pandemic, but will also allow NETCHD to transition into offering services for those that have other communicable diseases requiring isolation and assistance. In addition, there are significant dollars that come through BHT to cover items on the improvement plans that will be generated through the CHNA process.

Wes McCart issued the following statement on BHT policies:

“We oppose several policies of the BHT Board; specifically, their stance on abortion, equity, and hiring preferences are unjust, lack equal treatment, and violate state and Federal laws. We reaffirm that all people should be treated equally in the ability to be hired and in their ability to receive healthcare. Unfortunately, BHT has been named our Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) by the State Healthcare Authority (HCA) and as such our regional funding agent for many aspects of receiving both state and Federal pass-through dollars for the greater Spokane Region, which includes Ferry, Pend

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Oreille, and Stevens Counties. We will strive to best serve our community by using these dollars without adherence to their policies.”

Commissioner McCart commented that while BHT is our regional funding source, we do not have to follow their policies. We must separate our feelings on their policies from the funding that is so needed for our communities.

Mayor McCunn also voiced concern over BHT’s statements, and referenced the following statement on BHT’s website, “We acknowledge the presence of systemic racism and white supremacy culture at play, and the policies and culture that governs our work.” He said that needing the funding puts us in a precarious spot of association with such statements, policies, and beliefs.

Commissioner Heath stated a close eye should be kept on the BHT funding requirements to ensure NETCHD is not required to follow and support their policies.

Matt Schanz said NETCHD will ensure this by reviewing the contracts thoroughly, and will make certain there are no applicable stipulations.

**PUD SEPTAGE FACILITIES UPDATE:** Jon Ness stated capacity issues still exist at the Pend Oreille Public Utility District. During the pandemic there was a significant increase in septage due to many individuals having found the time to have their systems pumped. With the Pend Oreille PUD reaching capacity during that time, many resorted to disposing of their septage at the Spokane Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facility; while it used to be free, it is now thirty cents per gallon which can equate to \$800 - \$1000 for a standard size system. This has become a financial barrier for people to properly maintain their systems, and has resulted in an increase in usage of the Pend Oreille PUD because it is more affordable at eighteen cents per gallon. In addition, this time of year is problematic for attempting to alleviate capacity issues, as the PUD cannot land apply due to ground conditions. Capacity issues is not isolated to our three counties, and has been a growing issues across all of Washington.

NETCHD will work with the Department of Ecology to organize a workshop for prospective land owners on the biosolids approval and application process.

Commissioner McCart stated Stevens PUD was previously awarded a grant through Cathy McMorris Rodgers office that aided in the expansion for the Valley facility. This could be an option for Pend Oreille and Ferry County, in addition to possible options through the Department of Agriculture.

**NETCHD ANNUAL REPORT FORMAT:** Matt Schanz commented that NETCHD seeks to change the format of the annual report; the information would be displayed in data that is available on NETCHD’s website.

Commissioner McCart agreed, as staff endured unprecedented workload during the pandemic, and it may help to remove some of the burden with this report.

**PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Matt Schanz provided a brief legislative update. Of note, NETCHD is still monitoring HB 1012 regarding extreme weather events, HB 1337 regarding the acceptance of accessory dwelling units, and SB 5022 which addresses the regulations surrounding administration of fentanyl testing strips. In addition, NETCHD continues to monitor ESSB 5365, which prevents use of

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vapor and tobacco products by minors. The bill would reduce penalties on the individual (youth) and place the penalties and responsibility on the retailers, as it was found that nearly 25% of retail sales are illegal sales to minors, whether intentional or unintentional.

**NETCHD SURPLUS PERSONAL PROPERTY:** Resolution 03-2023 Granting Authorization for Surplus of Northeast Tri County Health District Personal Property was presented to Board members; the item in question is a 2015 Chevy Silverado that is no longer appreciable. It is at the direction of the Board to declare items surplus. Since the vehicle is no longer appreciable, it would allow NETCHD to trade it in or dispose of it when appropriate.

Mayor Koontz motioned, and Commissioner Heath seconded the motion to approve Resolution 03-2023 Granting Authorization for Surplus of Northeast Tri County Health District Personal Property. Motion carries.

**FOOD PROGRAM OVERVIEW:** Rebecka Hullinger provided a presentation on NETCHD's food program. The food program's main focus is maintaining the following goals:

- Safe food handling practices
- Educated food workers
- Providing safe food to our communities
- Prevent food borne illnesses
- Partnership with restaurant owners and managers, providing assistance and guidance

There are currently 310 permanent food establishments that are inspected on a regular basis in the tri county area. Includes food trucks, carts, caterers, coffee shops, and more. NETCHD's food program is a critical service for our communities to ensure safe, clean, and compliant food establishments.

According to the CDC, every year one in six Americans get sick (approximately 48,000), 120,000 are hospitalized, and 3000 die from foodborne illnesses. The USDA estimates that food borne illnesses cost the US more than 15.6 billion each year. The top five foodborne illnesses include Norovirus, Salmonella Typhi, Hepatitis A, E. coli and Shigella. Temporary food establishments pose a higher risk for safety due to their high capacity serving, exposure to debris, food on ice and refrigeration outdoors, common equipment failure, and more. In fact, food trucks are required to obtain approval from various regulating agencies and L&I prior to operating. While there have been delays at L&I in processing due to staffing challenges, they are working with contracted engineers to meet the need. NETCHD has a current list of local contractors.

**CHAIR REPORT:** Chair Wes McCart mentioned the Local Board of Health (LBOH) training will take place in Blaine, Washington from May 2 - 4. He encouraged all Board members to attend. Registration, food, and accommodations are covered.

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS REPORTS:** Commissioner Rosencrantz stated Pend Oreille County may be losing its private ambulance service, Pend Oreille Emergency Medical Services (POEMS). Rosencrantz has been designated as liaison to the fire districts, hospitals, NEW Health, City of Newport to bridge the gap losing this service will leave.

Commissioner McCart recommends reaching out to the Stevens County Emergency Coordinator, Adenea

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Thompson, for support and guidance. Commissioner Burrows recommends speaking with Sheriff Manke of Stevens County Sheriff.

**HEALTH OFFICER REPORT:** No report.

**ADMINISTRATION REPORT:** As submitted in the report. Matt noted NETCHD continues work towards a better solution for Board materials and meeting information to be shared and housed on the website.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH REPORT:** As of August 9, 2023 the remote service waivers will end for the WIC program. Following this date, families will have the option to complete appointments in person or virtually. Unfortunately, there have been many families that have never been seen in person due to the pandemic, so WIC program staff look forward to returning to in person services.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT:** There is currently a recall in the State of Washington for frozen organic strawberries due to a Hepatitis A outbreak. A list of affected brands is available on the Washington State Department of Health website [2023 Hepatitis A Outbreak Associated with Frozen Organic Strawberries | Washington State Department of Health](#).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** No announcements.


**PAYROLL AND VOUCHERS:** Attached to these minutes are benefits and payroll amounts for February 3, 2023 through March 3, 2023; and voucher amounts from January 18, 2023 through March 15, 2023.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION PER RCW 42.30.110(1)(i):** Executive Session began at 10:46am and concluded at 11:01am. No determinations were made.

Commissioner Heath motioned for Logan Worley and NETCHD to move forward with negotiations in regards to the issue discussed during the executive session, and Commissioner Dean seconded the motion. Motion carries.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Wes McCart adjourned the meeting at 11:03 AM. The next regular meeting of the Board of Health of Northeast Tri County Health District will be on May 24, 2023 by remote participation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Samuel A. Artzis, M.D., Health Officer

By DocuSigned by:  


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Jeanie Beegle, Admin. Office Manager

DocuSigned by:  


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Wes McCart, Chair