BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, May 20, 2020

THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pete Daggett, Don Dashiell, Johnna Exner, Howard Hambleton, Steve Parker, John Ridlington, Karen Skoog

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Kiss, Elbert Koontz

STAFF PRESENT: Sam Artzis, M.D., Dale House, Bethany Laird, Kelly LeCaire, Jon Ness, Matt Schanz, Logan Worley

GUESTS: Karene Balcom, Northport Mayor; Andrew Englert, Cathy McMorris Rodgers Office; Ralph Lane, Colville Mayor; Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner; Elaine Snouwaert, Washington Department of Ecology

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Chair Johnna Exner called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS: Introductions were made by all.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2020: Karen Skoog moved, and John Ridlington seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2020. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2020: Karen Skoog moved, and Pete Daggett seconded the motion to approve the minutes of April 24, 2020. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2020: John Ridlington moved, and Pete Daggett seconded the motion to approve the minutes of May 4, 2020. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION: Thank you notes from customers to Doris Hoffman in the Republic office and Laura Kirkpatrick in the Newport office.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES: No public appearances were pre-registered.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO AGENDA: Johnna would like to add a new business item to discuss a request to move our counties into Phase 3 in a unified manner.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.
COVID-19 UPDATE: Matt Schanz talked about the expectation that Ferry and Pend Oreille Counties could be eligible to advance into Phase 3 on May 29, 2020 and Stevens County on June 1st. The following counties are still seeing a fair number of cases—Snohomish, King, Pierce, and most notably Yakima, extending into Benton, Franklin, Chelan, and Douglas. Currently, Ferry County still has one case from early on; Pend Oreille has two cases; Stevens has 10 that includes one new case on May 18th. Matt said he will not be surprised if we see more positive cases with increased testing in our three counties. Elective surgery has resumed with the contingency that providers are requiring testing. As our three counties gained approval to advance to Phase 2, the announcements were challenging for a few weeks waiting for the guidance documents to be released. Those guidance documents are complete and posted on the Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) website so that businesses can readily get that information. NETCHD staff have done an admirable job in getting that information to those who need it in the business sector and chambers of commerce, etc.

Matt is trying to obtain what will be required to advance to Phase 3 as it is not available at this time. We do know that advancing into the next phase is not automatic and requires approval from Department of Health (DOH) Secretary John Wiesman. Matt assumes the requirements will be comparable to what we had previously submitted when applying for advancement to Phase 2. Those requirements included:

- A signed recommendation from the local health officer to the local board of health
- A vote from the local board of health to move forward with the variance request
- A letter from local hospital(s) certifying they have adequate bed capacity to serve their community and adequate PPE supplies to keep their workers safe
- Request from county commissioners to advance to the next Phase

Case and contact investigations are a hinge point of success of how well we can do this. We have been very quick in response to investigate positive cases, identify close contacts within hours and sometimes minutes of receiving those positive cases. Matt feels we are ready to advance to Phase 3, provided we do not have increased case counts that would put a pause on our advancement. Matt noted that a sporadic case will not affect our moving to Phase 3. Our message to the governor’s office and DOH will be that we need the criteria or application necessary to demonstrate continued readiness of our counties to advance into Phase 3 and the industry specific guidelines be ready when we receive the approval for Phase 3.

There was discussion about faith-based organizations with reasonable measures implemented to resume some form of assemblance for them to congregate like restaurants using a sensible and cautious approach. Dr. Artzis compiled information including a document he obtained from a church on the westside about their guidance. He sent that information to the state in hopes they will accept his recommended guidelines. Steve Parker has been advocating for this and appreciates it. Dr. Artzis is hopeful the state will agree to the recommended guidelines. Karen Skoog asked Dr. Artzis to send those guidelines to Board of Health (BOH) members.

Matt said Dr. Artzis did an admirable job on a call with Governor Inslee on May 15th identifying gaps, what needs addressed and resolved. Dr. Artzis said the state is appreciative of our input and he has not had any negative feedback. There are many things the state did not think about that will need to be worked through. Matt appreciates the state for their response and trying to make things work.
Matt Schanz talked about Phase 4 that would allow us to resume normal social life. The question was raised to Secretary Wiesman about when we may expect to move into Phase 4. His response was that they cannot answer that right now and asked that we wait for direction, depending on how things go. It is not expected that after 3 weeks in Phase 3 we would automatically advance to Phase 4. Matt feels that it is doubtful that we will move to Phase 4 by end of this year. He would be surprised if we were in Phase 4 this summer. Fairs, concerts, summer activity, etc. should not count on it. Time will tell and he hopes to be wrong. Wes McCart asked if it were possible for communities to hold parades on July 4th in Phase 3? Dr. Artzis said the parade itself is not the issue. The challenge is with the gathering before and after the parade to assemble and disassemble. This is another guidance to work out. This uncertainty makes planning hard as we cannot predict the future. He feels that Phase 4 will have to be statewide. He agrees with Matt that we will not see Phase 4 this summer and would need to be larger regional approach. Matt said we are trying to advocate for sensible approaches and solutions as we bring those to the state. We have been struggling with messaging about travel with Phase 2 to include hunting, fishing, businesses, etc. that are supposed to be for local citizens that are in Phase 2 counties. He talked about the risks involved from people in Phase 1 areas that travel to our counties. What message do we give to campgrounds booking for a person that is from a Phase 1 county and the thousands that travel to Lake Roosevelt each year? We are trying to find a reasonable position and communicate with our outreach and with the state, as they develop their guidance documents, so they are aware of our recommendations.

Dr. Artzis talked about the negative feedback from people directed to provide their name and phone number when dining in at restaurants and the National Guard being recruited for contact tracing. The Governor changed the sign-in sheets to voluntary and asked that they be destroyed after 30 days. With our local contact tracing, we are trying to get the message out that this is business as usual for us and we do not share information, so people are not nervous or fearful. Matt appreciates feedback from local elected officials, and he is trying to be responsive to that feedback.

**MOVING TO PHASE 3:** Johnna Exner asked BOH members if they would prefer submitting individual letters requesting approval to advance to Phase 3 and submit everything together as we did previously, prior to the date of eligibility in hopes that our counties can open as soon as permission is granted. Johnna also asked if we want to develop the Phase 3 guidelines. Steve Parker indicated that the way we presented the previous request was excellent and he is in favor of sending this request the same way. He went on to say that our success is a great measure with credit due to health professionals, with leadership shown by Matt, Dr. Artzis and NETCHD staff. The BOH and county commissioners have a good working relationship with each other and support NETCHD and their mission.

Steve P. credits NETCHD in their ability to perform contact tracing, etc. without assistance. He added that he would help in any way if needed. He would like to know what information NETCHD is providing to businesses including what county confines are needed for safety so we can have answers ready to show decision makers our plans to demonstrate that we are making concrete steps within all of our counties.
Karen Skoog agrees that we should request the state have the guidelines completed at the time of approval. She appreciates the involvement from Matt Schanz and Dr. Arztis and feels that should continue. Karen asked if NETCHD was prepared to develop the guidelines? Matt does not feel that we are prepared to develop and implement guidelines. We will continue to provide the state with suggestions when something needs modified or when they need to address a group like we did with faith-based organizations. It is absolutely within our scope to listen to the citizens and BOH and give that feedback to the state. Matt does not feel that it is realistic for us to write guidelines that we would be following. The state could be going in a totally different direction and the best we can do is provide input. Karen agrees that providing input to the state on specific topics comes best from NETCHD and balanced through the BOH with what commissioners and mayors hear from community members. Karen asked about the timeline to submit our request to advance to Phase 3. Matt said this Friday we will need a clear indication for us to be ready with what is required to advance to Phase 3. In the application process we will include a message that will impress upon the need for guidelines at the earliest possible time, so we have those at the time we advance to Phase 3.

Johnna Exner said we have a lot of good ideas. Johnna asked the BOH if they wanted to write separate letters to send together, and if so, would they be completed by the end of the week? Karen suggests having NETCHD write a letter and all three counties write letters that references the NETCHD letter. Matt and Dr. Arztis will work on a letter stressing the importance of the guidance documents. In the interest of time Matt and Dr. Arztis will sign the NETCHD letter and each county can send their own letters. Matt will send a copy of the letter to all local elected officials and state representatives. Karen recommends including wording in the letter that we will be sending suggestions as they come up and we appreciate their willingness to be receptive to those suggestions. Johnna agrees that Matt and Dr. Arztis have expertise and knowledge to write the letter. Steve Parker agrees that NETCHD should take the lead and encourages each city and county to also write a letter as it helps at the state level if they are getting ideas and assurances.

Steve P. asked about hydroxychloroquine and if restrictions are put on physicians attempting to prescribe it for its customary usage for lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, etc. Dr. Arztis said a shortage has happened with the reason being it was used inappropriately, resulting in a shortage for the people that needed it.

**STAFF UPDATES:** Matt reported that Public Health Nurse Jan Steinbach retired after 41 years. Bethany Laird was hired as a Community Health Specialist. Bethany has a bachelor’s degree from Whitworth University, has done international internships overseas and is completing a master’s in public health. Bethany is happy to be here and plans to move with her family to Newport to invest in the community and do their part to help people.

**POLLUTION PREVENTION ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP, ELAINE SNOUWAERT, STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY:** Elaine Snouwaert, Partnership Coordinator for Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program for the Washington State Department of Ecology in Spokane provided a presentation on the Pollution Prevention Assistance program.
The Pollution Prevention Assistance program is a statewide partnership providing technical assistance and incentives to small businesses to prevent pollution to include dangerous/hazardous waste – the pollutants; and stormwater – the pathway. The program is voluntary and non-regulatory, however, if something is very high risk, it would be referred to Ecology. The Local Source Control (LSC) Partnership is made up of Ecology and 21 local partner agencies including counties, cities, public works departments, public health departments, and utilities. Ecology receives state and federal funding to coordinate the LSC Partnership and passes money through to the local partners through interagency agreements. Ecology retains some of the funding to provide coordination of the partnership, contract management, training, database, and communications. Approximately 2.5 FTEs are dedicated to LSC at Ecology. Elaine Snouwaert provided a map showing the distribution of the 21 partners centered around Puget Sound, the Spokane River, and the Columbia River at Clark County. The current counties involved in the partnership are Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Whatcom.

The primary goal is to provide free, on-site technical assistance to help small businesses identify and resolve possible causes of pollution and includes funding for unique program elements such as work or special projects. Typically, smaller businesses but even large businesses may qualify if they do not generate large quantities of hazardous/dangerous waste. Common business sectors visited include auto related; health care; dental; property management (apartments, care facilities, shopping centers); food establishments (restaurants, mobile); gas stations; retail stores; landscapers/yard care.

Outreach to other jurisdictions is being done to determine interest in joining the partnership. The response will help Ecology determine their budget requests for the funding year 2021-23 biennium. They are interested in increasing coverage east of the Cascades. Since the program began in 2008, there have been more than 35,000 completed visits, more than 38,000 problems found, and 90% problems resolved. The most common problems documented from July 2017 – June 2019 were inadequate spill response procedures; inadequate spill response materials/preparedness; improper maintenance of storm drains; need to implement proper housekeeping; universal waste management issues; other stormwater related issues; improper storage of products/wastes; wastes not properly labeled. About 28% of the issues had to do with inadequate spill response procedures or materials. Spill kits are provided to businesses who develop a spill prevention plan and are provided to local partners from a centralized pot of money.

Elaine explained the health connection for citizen health through workplace safety and exposure and by reduced exposure to contaminates in communities, environmental health through reduced contaminants in surface and ground water, water safety, solid waste management, on-site sewage systems, and food safety.

There are opportunities to build relationships with businesses through non-regulatory technical assistance, which is often times the only opportunity to work with businesses not being inspected for other permits and regulations; offer services as an ongoing resource for future incidences and questions; building relationships with cities and other county programs through collaboration and referrals. Elaine provided a detailed pollution prevention visit checklist highlighting some items closely tied to health risks and exposures.
Ecology contracts with local governments to prevent hazardous waste and stormwater technical assistance through interagency agreements, only public entities who have legal authority to conduct this type of work are eligible. Contract amounts from $70,000 to $500,000 are dependent on legislative budget allocation; are scaled based on partner capacity and number of businesses within the jurisdiction; the average is 295 visits per 2 years (range 75-700 visits). They operated by 2-year biennia contracts with costs of conducting work reimbursed on a quarterly basis. Goals for the future include continued successes already underway by continuing to fund existing partners and increase the number and types of businesses visited; grow the partnership by increasing the level of funding for the partnership, recruit additional partners, focus growth east of the Cascades; implement a product replacement program by removing/replacing sources of chemicals of concern, and pay part or all of the cost incurred by the business to change the product or process.

Matt Schanz noted that this was previously discussed at a BOH meeting about a year ago. We will continue to evaluate its applicability in NETCHD and would like to present this again to the BOH at a later date for consideration and more discussion.

Karen Skoog asked about the program process – do businesses request assistance or is there a campaign to market or going to businesses? There is a similar program through Labor and Industries (L&I) where they will do a review for safety concerns. Elaine Snouwaert is familiar with the L&I program and it is very much aligned with the LSC Partnership program. The focus of the L&I program is on worker safety. Karen asked Elaine about her statement that the program is non-regulatory, but if something is high risk, it would be referred to Ecology. Elaine said if there was a problem that cannot be resolved, there is a possibility that it would be referred to Ecology, but it is not common. Elaine indicated that most partners decide to provide outreach and may want to focus on certain businesses, depending on what is most appropriate in the area. Program partners say they want to change the program so that businesses realize this is a service for them, instead of most time spent by the LHJ.
Matt talked about other grants NETCHD has had with Ecology that were very successful partnerships until funding was lost.

**ANNUAL REPORT:** Matt is proud to present the NETCHD 2019 Annual Report that is comprised of the work that NETCHD staff collectively do in the multitude of programs to benefit public health in our area. It contains a tremendous amount of information on the work that we do and services we provide in our three counties. An electronic version has been sent out and is also posted on our NETCHD web page.

**STATE HONORS BEST OF BEST IN DRINKING WATER:** Matt said each year the state celebrates National Drinking Water Week. This year Jon Ness received the Eastern Region Friend of Drinking Water award, nominated by Office of Drinking Water (ODW) staff for his outstanding enthusiasm to advance the interests of sustainable drinking water and emphasize its critical importance to healthy communities. Jon is dedicated and tireless in his efforts to maintain safe drinking water standards. He is an excellent mentor to many staff and coworkers, and takes special care advancing ODW programs and standards for providing safe, clean, reliable drinking water. Jon joined NETCHD after 20 years with Grant County Health District. Matt is thankful Jon is with us at NETCHD and congratulated him on his award. Jon said he is excited to be here. There are very knowledgeable staff here at NETCHD and Grant County.
CHAIRMAN REPORT: Chair Johanna Exner had no report.

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS REPORTS: Karen Skoog heard that L&I are not doing electrical inspections due to COVID-19 and wondered if that will affect NETCHD with septic systems. Jon Ness said he did not realize that. Some septic systems do require wiring for the pump etc. NETCHD is still inspecting septic systems. Karen suggested finding out for sure. Matt Schanz said the L&I offices that perform the inspections are in Spokane and presently at Phase 1, and we will investigate.

HEALTH OFFICER REPORT: Dr. Artzis reported that the letter is done.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Matt indicated that through the COVID-19 response, NETCHD staff in all three offices have, for the most part, came to work every single day and did not work from home. We continue to do work in programs in addition to working in response to COVID-19. Matt is proud of the group, including Dr. Artzis who has invested himself within this response to ensure that it is as successful as it can be. He extends his thanks to the BOH members as well. None of the staff have been taking annual leave and some will cap-out. He would like to give allowances to carryover to next year to move the cap from 225 hours to 300. He would also like to look at other ways to recognize those efforts. He would like to suggest as a benefit to add an additional holiday of Christmas Eve. Matt would like to present this formally at the July BOH meeting. He would appreciate any other suggestions from BOH members.

COMMUNITY HEALTH REPORT: There was no community health report.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT: Jon Ness has spent much of his time in COVID-19 response. Jon recognizes and appreciates his team that have reached out to businesses, hair salons, barbers, etc. They made over 70 phone calls to offer their assistance. He thanked the counties for their flexible dollars through county contributions.

Jon received a call from a pumper asking where he could dispose of septage in Stevens County, because he was told that the Stevens County Public Utility District (PUD) discharge site was having issues and could not accept septage. Stevens County PUD coordinated with Ecology to resolve the issue. It is becoming more difficult for disposal of septage, and apparently this is an issue occurring across the state. More wastewater treatment facilities are not accepting porta potty waste which further causes problems when the facility is having issues. Matt would like to have an in-depth conversation about sustainability for septage waste at the July BOH meeting. We need to find solutions within our own counties. There is a multitude of aspects. Matt noted that people raise questions about a land application site. He thanked Wes McCart for bringing this to our attention.

PAYROLL AND VOUCHERS: Attached to these minutes are benefits and payroll amounts from April 3, 2020 through May 5, 2020; and voucher amounts from March 11, 2020 through May 13, 2020.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Karen wanted to acknowledge Johanna Exner’s birthday today.
Wes McCart asked if all three counties were receiving funding through the CARES Act for impacts from COVID-19 as he is wondering if the NETCHD budget needs reviewed and possibly provide those funds to NETCHD? Matt Schanz reported that NETCHD received $140,000 from the Washington State Legislature with a combined $160,000 in response dollars. If you look at our ability to work with other grants and other reductions in most programs such as food permits, food worker cards, septic permits, we are still trying to ascertain those amounts. In July 2020, we may need some of those CARES Act dollars. Currently, the cost to NETCHD for COVID-19 response is between $45,000-$60,000 per month. Wes said it cannot be used to recoup loss in expected revenues. It would be helpful to know.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Johnna Exner adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board of Health of Northeast Tri County Health District will be on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 in Ferry County or by remote participation.

Respectfully submitted,

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

By
Kelly D. LeCaire, Executive Secretary

Johnna Exner, Chair
Northeast Tri County Health District

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

2020

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