



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH**

MEETING MINUTES

August 19th, 2020

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IN ATTENDANCE

Benton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Beaver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jason Zaccaria, Administrator & BOH Executive Secretary
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Delvin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dr. Amy Person, Health Officer
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Small	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lisa Wight, Sr. Human Resources Manager
Franklin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Didier	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Jones, Sr. Finance Manager
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Koch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rick Dawson, Sr. Surveillance & Investigation Manager
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner Peck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carla Prock, Sr. Healthy People & Communities Manager
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Janae Parent, Administrative Services Manager
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mike Paoli, BFHD Public Relations Consultant

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Koch called the meeting to order at 1:32p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Delvin moved to approve meeting minutes for July 15th, 2020.
Commissioner Small seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC/STAFF

There were two written comments provided to the Board of Health (BOH) ahead of the meeting. Janae Parent read both comments aloud to the BOH during the meeting.

- a. The first comment read was from Marisol Lister who is a Philanthropy Officer with Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and North Idaho, and is a resident of Franklin County. M. Lister expressed concern with language disparities in accessing local health related information for non-English speakers in Benton and Franklin counties, and why the Health District does not have certified staff members fluent in languages spoken by local residents. M. Lister also expressed concern with laboratory data reporting guidance, and ensuring that large local agricultural employers are consistently adhering to preventative measures.
- b. The second comment read was from Justin Carey from Pasco. J. Carey expressed concern on several COVID related issues including accuracy in testing, transparency of hospital funding for COVID positive patients, as well as transparency in death reports.
- c. Commissioner Delvin asked Dr. Person to address how COVID patients are paid for and how COVID deaths are reported. Dr. Person stated that hospitals are not incentivized to label patients as COVID. In addition, all deaths in Benton and Franklin Counties attributed to COVID are deaths where COVID-19 is listed as a



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cause of death on the death certificate, and patients are lab confirmed positive for COVID-19. The death count does not include anyone with a different cause of death.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None to report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Health Officer/COVID-19 Update – Dr. Amy Person

- a. Dr. Person stated that with mandatory masking in place and more recent, successful efforts to increase testing, Benton and Franklin counties is now seeing a reduction in disease activity. Cases per 100k, over the last 14 days, are now down to 144 cases per 100k over the last 14 days for Benton County, and 387.6 cases per 100k over the last 14 days for Franklin County. This is an over 50% drop in disease activity over the last month and speaks to the work that the Health District, City, County, and Community Partners, and the Community themselves have been doing to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Dr. Person added that if both counties continue on this path, there could be a point this fall where kids could be back in school in some fashion.
- b. In the state of Washington, there have been over a million tests run, and so the State is changing how it is collecting data, so that it can begin reporting all the negative tests that have been run. This will more accurately reflect how much testing is being performed across the state and in the local communities. In Benton County, there has been a total of 24,370 tests run and in Franklin County there have been 17,038 tests run.
- c. There have been concerns expressed in the past regarding where increasing testing will thereby increase positive rates. However, when there is adequate testing being performed in the community it allows the Health District to identify cases early. It is important to identify cases early because staff can help individuals to successfully isolate to keep from spreading the infection to others outside of the home. Identifying positive cases early also helps the Health District notify close contacts early, to help those individuals quarantine, should symptoms develop. Dr. Person stated that testing does not increase disease, but in fact allows staff to identify disease earlier to reduce transmission when people are infected. In addition, since the pandemic started, data shows that counties who achieved higher testing levels earlier, have actually seen much lower disease rates than what is being seen here, even though those populations are much larger.
- d. Dr. Person also addressed a rumor in the community that persons had filled out paperwork at a National Guard site, left before being tested, but received positive results in the mail. While the Health District cannot speak to how testing is



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handled at other private testing sites, this is a situation that would not happen at the Health District's community testing sites. The process is set up so that there is not delay between when personal information is collected and when testing is done. Health District staff have reached out to those individuals who claim this happened to them, to get more information as staff are committed to transparency and quality improvement. The Health District has not heard back from any individuals whom this directly happened to.

- e. Commissioner Didier asked how many National Guard testing sites are in Washington state, county by county. Dr. Person stated there are five. Commissioner Didier expressed concern with media coverage indicating downward trends in disease rates and the addition of another lane for testing being put in at the HAPO Center. Dr. Person stated that the Health District wants to ensure that rates continue to go down, and the way to ensure that is to make sure there is plenty of access to testing for anyone who may want or need to get tested.
- f. Commissioner Didier asked if individuals get tested multiple times over a series of dates, if they are counted once or multiple times. Dr. Person stated, not if they test positive, as positives are only counted one time. Dr. Person further added it's important to count every negative test, as it is relevant to know how many times someone tested negative before they tested positive. Commissioner Didier expressed further concern regarding perceived higher rates of influenza deaths by comparison to COVID-19 deaths and the psychological effects this pandemic has had on the community including suicide and domestic violence.
- g. Dr. Person thanked Commissioner Didier for expressing those concerns, and further noted that the comparison in death rates is not entirely accurate, where the COVID-19 death count that Benton and Franklin Counties is currently seeing, is much higher than what has been seen in the past from influenza. Dr. Person concurred that the psychological impact does need to be considered, and that it is something that the Health District has been working with community partners on, as well as the State to move both counties forward.
- h. Commissioner Delvin encouraged Commissioner Didier to reach out to the Governor's office and the Secretary of Health's office directly, to share his concerns and make the points about increases in suicides, drunk driving, and domestic violence as other Commissioners have been doing.

2. Food Rule Update – Rick Dawson

- a. The Food Rule has been filed for moving forward and the State is accepting public comments again on the draft rule through September 29th, 2020. A public hearing has been scheduled with the Washington State Board of Health for October 13th, 2020.



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- b. The Health District has a couple of concerns in the draft language including the requirement for having a certified food program protection manager certification for atleast one person in all establishments. This is a concern for local, smaller food and limited menu establishments, and a potential overreach making it difficult for them to comply even with a one year extension. The second concern is regarding the date marking for ready to eat, refrigerated food that could result in a larger quantity of food being discarded if it was not properly date marked.
- c. Overall, the Food Rule change aligns with the 2017 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code, which will bring the state of Washington forward with new changes in technology and terminology. With implementation, the State is expecting this rule to go for full implementation in June 2021.

3. Financial Audit Update – Jeff Jones

- a. The Audit report was published last week and a copy was sent to Board of Health members yesterday for review. The audit included the Financial Statement Audit and the Federal Single Audit for January 1st, through December 31st, 2019. This was a clean audit with no findings or management letters issued.
- b. The Federal Single audit has been filed with the Federal Clearinghouse as required. The cost of this audit was approximately \$21,000.
- c. The 2020 audit will occur next summer and will include an Accountability Audit. Since Benton-Franklin Health District is considered low risk, the accountability audit only occurs every other year. The estimated cost of that audit is \$31,000.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming PTE Local 17 Bargaining – Jason Zaccaria

Leadership will be entering into collective bargaining with Professional and Technical Employees (PTE) Local 17. The first collective bargaining date is set for September 24th, 2020.

Roadmap to Recovery – Jason Zaccaria

From the call with the Department of Health (DOH) on August 13th, 2020, there was good movement made in negotiation on the Roadmap to Recovery and the Health District hopes to have some additional movement towards reopening confirmed by the end of the week.

Public Relations Consultant – Mike Paoli

M. Paoli introduced himself to the Board, noting a start date of two weeks ago. M. Paoli is assisting the Health District with communication efforts and brings 30 years of public relations experience to this response. M. Paoli initially started with fine-tuning of press conference, and working to make messages clear and consistent, tying health messages directly to the goals of the community, to get the economy back online. M.



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Paoli is also beginning work in other areas including making the website friendlier for the public to engage on and working with stakeholders such as Visit Tri-Cities, to make sure messages align with moving the community forward.

Commissioner Delvin asked M. Paoli to assist with tracking down myths like how hospitals get paid, death reporting, testing, ventilators, and put the facts to those myths on the website.

Commissioner Small expressed support for Commissioner Delvin’s suggestion for putting facts out on the website to counter myths, and added that the Health District should provide accolades to the community, in that their efforts are making a difference.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Commissioner Small moved to approve vouchers 63-2020 through 73-2020 in the amount of \$1,297,535.38 with the Chairman to sign the vouchers on behalf of the Board of Health. Commissioner Delvin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting will be September 16th, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Koch adjourned the meeting at 2:17p.m.

Signature on file

Commissioner Bob Koch
Chairman of the Board

Signature on file

Jason Zaccaria
Executive Secretary

