



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

**MEETING MINUTES**

**September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

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**IN ATTENDANCE**

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|                 |                                     |                     |                                     |   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Benton</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Commissioner McKay  | <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 type="checkbox"/>            | Lisa Wight, Sr. Human Resources Manager                 |
| <b>Franklin</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Commissioner Didier | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Jeff Jones, Sr. Finance Manager                         |
|                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Commissioner Mullen | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rick Dawson, Sr. Surveillance & Investigation Manager   |
|                 | <input checked="" 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"/> | Eric Elsethagen, Information Systems & Security Manager |
|                 |                                     |                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Peyton Jones, Administrative Assistant                  |
|                 |                                     |                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Diane Medick, Administrative Assistant                  |
|                 |                                     |                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Visitor – Lars Richins, PTE Local 17 Union Rep          |
|                 |                                     |                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Visitor – Leslie Rivera, WSNA Union Rep                 |

**CALL TO ORDER**

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Chairman Delvin called the meeting to order at 1:31p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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Commissioner Small moved to approve meeting minutes for July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.  
Commissioner Peck seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Small moved to approve meeting minutes for August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
Commissioner Peck seconded. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC/STAFF**

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There were no public comments provided to the Board of Health (BOH).

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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1. Continued discussion on proposal to establish policy on annual reviews – Jerome Delvin
  - a. Jason Zaccaria explained the employee performance review policies for the Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD). Chairman Delvin asked Commissioner Peck what the expectations were for the evaluations for J. Zaccaria and Dr. Amy Person.



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- b. Commissioner Peck suggested that a relatively complete review be provided to the District Administrator and on the Health Officer, further adding that the Board should identify one or two people to do the evaluations and bring it back to the full Board for ratification. Then for the executive leadership, J. Zaccaria should follow a similar process with key senior managers.
- c. Commissioner Peck then added that some of Dr. Person's duties and actions are derived directly from statute, not from the authority of the board. It wouldn't be appropriate to do an evaluation on what is statutorily laid out or come from the State Department of Health (DOH). Everything under J. Zaccaria's authority is under the purview of the Board. However, not everything under Dr. Person's authority is under the purview of the board.
- d. Commissioner McKay asked if this will be the first time Dr. Person will have a performance review. J. Zaccaria answered that this will be the first time and it will be conducted yearly.
- e. Commissioner Didier asked if there would be an objection to the Commissioners being in attendance with the Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioner Peck noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair are the two members who would do the appraisals or bring it to the full board for ratification. The employees that are being reviewed are entitled to some measure of predictability on the evaluations. If it's coming back to the board for ratification.
- f. Chairman Delvin further added that there could be an issue with having additional Commissioners present due to requirements under the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). Commissioner Didier motioned to have employee performance reviews on or before the employee's anniversary of date-of-hire. Commissioner Small seconded. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

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**1. COVID-19 Updates – Dr. Person, Rick Dawson**

- a. Dr. Person mentioned Benton County has had 967 cases per 100,000 over the last fourteen days while Franklin County has 1,191 cases. Currently, there are still over 100 COVID-19 patients in the hospitals per day, ranging from 1/4 to 1/3 of all patients who are hospitalized have COVID-19.
- b. Currently, there has been no outbreaks at the schools. However, before the school year started there were about 300 new cases. It's been known there have been many kids that have had COVID-19, the schools report there have been more than 100 kids who have had COVID-19. The schools have protocols in place to keep the students masked and keep the schools clean to prevent any spread.
- c. Vaccination continues to be the safest and most effective way to keep enough of the community protected. In Benton County, 43.7% of the total population has



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been fully vaccinated, which is an increase of about 2.5% from the previous Board of Health meeting. In Franklin County, 37.1% of the total population has been fully vaccinated, which is an increase of about 3%.

- d. Chairman Delvin asked for clarification on if there has been anything from the fair or Labor Day weekend. Dr. Person responded that there has been a link to the fair. This has continued to be investigated and at this time so there are no exact numbers to be shared. Since the Delta variant has shown up, there has been an increase in the number of outbreaks and the number of cases associated with outbreaks.
- e. Commissioner Didier asked why no one has talked about natural immunity. Dr. Person responded that the body does provide some natural immunity. Studies have shown that people who have had COVID-19 and get vaccinated have the best protection. The challenge is that COVID-19 has been in the community for a year and a half, and the number of people needing protection has not reached nearly as high as it needs to be.
- f. Commissioner Didier then mentioned a study that referenced two types of immunity – natural and from vaccines. If someone gets vaccinated, they can still be a carrier within their nasal passages and airways. Dr. Person clarified that if people are vaccinated, they are less likely to get COVID-19. It is known that those who are vaccinated are five to eight times less likely to get sick with the virus.
- g. Commissioner Didier mentioned when talking with Raul Garcia at Lourdes hospital in Pasco, there were several points made as to why there is a problem with the hospitals. The first was the fatigue of the nurses that are there after 18 months the pandemic. The second was the mandate on vaccinations for the employees. Dr. Person mentioned that there were several people that were afraid to go to hospitals because they may risk getting COVID-19 and because of underlining health conditions.
- h. Chairman Delvin asked what the percentage of the population has tested positive based on the recent census that was released. Dr. Person responded that about 42,000 out of the 300,000 in the community have tested positive which is about 10% of the population.
- i. Commissioner Peck mentioned that the percentage of people that have tested positive for COVID in our populations is around 14%. There seems to be some variety of opinion as to the longevity of natural immunity as a result of COVID-19 infections. It had been suggested that if someone contracts COVID-19 then they now have the antibodies. The protection provided by the antibody's wanes over time, just as it has for some of the vaccines. Commissioner Peck then asked about the longevity of antibodies from natural infection and from vaccination.



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- j. Dr. Person noted that neither natural infection nor vaccination provides permanent antibodies. It is estimated to last six to eight months.
- k. Commissioner Peck then asked for clarification on the fact that if someone is vaccinated and comes in contact with COVID-19 the viral load in people who are vaccinated is substantially less than it is in those who are unvaccinated, and as a result, people who are vaccinated are less likely to transmit the virus to others. Dr. Person responded that there have been studies that have shown that those who are vaccinated are less likely to transmit the virus while there have been others that have not supported that claim.
- l. Commissioner Peck asked for clarification on the earlier comment about schools and hundreds of school kids who are COVID positive. It doesn't appear that transmission is happening between students, so it would be understood that those hundreds of students who have shown up at school brought the virus with them as opposed to contracting it in the schools. Dr. Person responded, correct.
- m. Commissioner Small asked what the total fatalities over the last two months were due to COVID-19. Dr. Person responded that in September there have been 19 deaths as of the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 23 deaths in August, and 10 deaths in July.

**2. Cyanobacteria in the Columbia River – Rick Dawson**

- a. Rick Dawson mentioned that cyanobacteria which is a toxic alga has been found in the Columbia River. There have been several reports of illness as well as death appearing in animals who had ventured into the Columbia River. Warning signs have been posted along the river shore as well as at the boat launches to warn people about the potential for cyanobacteria. Samples have been collected and the Health District is working with some veterinarians trying to collect some samples from the ill animals to see if tracing can be done that way.
- b. Typically, there have been toxic algae blooms in some lakes both in the mid-Columbia but also Moses Lake and other places where there is known toxicity problems in the Summer. This is the first time it has been seen here. Since the water is always moving, rivers are hard to sample for cyanobacteria. Spokane had a similar issue in July where they had dogs passing away, having had symptoms of contact with cyanobacteria. The toxins from that were unable to be validated through sampling of the Spokane rivers.
- c. Commissioner Peck asked if there has been any information on the level of risk for threat to humans from contact. R. Dawson responded that there are recommended recreational standards based on toxins levels. At this point, only a warning can be sent out knowing that the smaller the animal, the more susceptible they are. Until the results come back from the samples it's difficult to quantify the risk.



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- d. Commissioner Peck then asked if there are solid numbers on the number of animal fatalities. R. Dawson responded that at this time, there have been four dogs that have been reported as deceased. Three of those were reported by veterinarian offices. One was reported by a member of the public on their own dog. Also, there were two other dogs that were reported by veterinarian offices and have recovered.
- e. Commissioner Peck then asked if the reports from the veterinarians confirmed that it was the toxin from cyanobacteria. R. Dawson responded that is what is suspected based on symptomology contact with the water and the speed with which the animals had symptoms.

**3. The Finance Committee update – Jeff Jones**

Jeff Jones mentioned that the Board of Health Finance Committee met on September 8th to review revenues and expenses from July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The revenue from July was \$10 million which is 72% of the annual budget. The licenses and permits were slightly under budget at 52%. However, the food service permits generally pick up around the fourth quarter. J. Jones then continued to discuss the budget from July and how it compares to the annual budget.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**1. Overdose Data Dashboard – Carla Prock**

Carla Prock shared updates on the Overdose Data Dashboard as well as showing the Board where that is located on the Health District's website.

**2. Washington State Nurses Association – Jason Zaccaria**

J. Zaccaria stated that the Health District has received notice of an intent to bargain by the Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA). This is one of two labor unions that are at the Health District. The other is Local 17 which is the Professional and Technical Employees Union. The first invitation is coming up in the next week.

**APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

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Commissioner Small moved to approve vouchers 68-2021 through 83-2021 in the amount of \$2,084,422.55 with the Chairman to sign the vouchers on behalf of the Board of Health. Commissioner Delvin seconded. Motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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Not needed

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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Date of next meeting will be October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



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**ADJOURNMENT**

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Chairman Delvin adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

*Signature on file*

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Commissioner Brad Peck  
Acting Chairman of the Board

*Signature on file*

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Jason Zaccaria  
Executive Secretary

