



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

MEETING MINUTES

December 15th, 2021

**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

IN ATTENDANCE

Benton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner McKay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jason Zaccaria, Administrator & BOH Executive Secretary
	<input 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 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"/>	Bonnie Hall, Contracts, Billing & Vital Records Manager
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annie Goodwin, Nutrition & Injury Prevention Supervisor
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Peyton Jones, Admin. Temp.
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barbara Johnson, WSNA Union Rep
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lars Richins, PTE Local 17 Union Rep
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annette Cary, Editor, Tri-City Herald
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shelly Burt, Member of the Public
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dena Peterson, Member of the Public
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LaWanda Hatch, Member of the Public			

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McKay moved to approve meeting minutes for October 20th, 2021.
Commissioner Mullen seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC/STAFF

There was one written comment provided to the Board of Health (BOH) ahead of the meeting. Janae Parent read the comment aloud to the BOH during the meeting.

1. The first comment read by J. Parent was from Jerrod Sessler requesting an end to the mandated Covid-19 vaccinations.
2. The second comment was from Dena Peterson. D. Peterson wanted to know the reasoning for no in-person meetings.



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

3. The third comment was from Shelly Burt regarding the effect masks are having on the mental health of children.
4. The fourth comment was from LaWanda Hatch via live public comment in Zoom requesting studies that show masks prevent the spread of Covid-19.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Cyanobacteria in the Columbia River Update – Rick Dawson

- a. Rick Dawson mentioned that due to low levels of toxins being found in the river, testing was stopped at the beginning of December. However, it has been recommended that there are at least eight months of sampling being done for any early detection of the bacteria.
- b. Commissioner Small asked where the cyanobacteria comes from and what it does. R. Dawson replied that cyanobacteria is typically found in lakes since it is rare to find these blooms in a flowing river. Sampling should be done so the Health District is prepared because the cyanobacteria can be deadly to both humans and animals.
- c. Vice Chairman Peck asked whether the cyanobacteria dies off in the cold or degrades over time. R. Dawson responded that the blooms die off over time however they are also temperature related. Typically, in the heat the bacteria will begin to bloom and once it is cold it will begin to die.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. COVID-19 Updates – Dr. Amy Person

- a. Dr. Person mentioned that since the previous meeting in October, there has been a steady decline in Covid-19 activity in both Benton and Franklin Counties. Currently there are 159 cases per 100,000 over a 14-day period in Benton County and 166 cases per 100,000 in Franklin County. These cases rates are one fourth of the case rates in October.
- b. Across the state there has been a recent uptick in cases. There have been early signs of that within Benton County. At this time, it is too early to tell if this is just a temporary upshift in cases due to the Thanksgiving holiday or whether it is an early sign of a true increase in disease activity relating to the new variant.
- c. At the end of November, the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designated Omicron as a variant of concern. In Washington State, Omicron was first reported on December 3rd based on cases and samples that were produced at the end of November. Dr. Person noted that because this is a new variant the time for sequencing from when samples are collected can be anywhere from seven to fourteen days. At this time there have been ten cases reported across five or six Counties.



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

- d. Dr. Person noted that 62% of people 12 and older within Benton County have been fully vaccinated and 58% of people 12 and older within Franklin County have been vaccinated at this time.
- e. R. Dawson mentioned that the Health District has partnered with National Institutes of Health (NIH) and CDC to provide access to free at-home rapid antigen tests. These are available through [SayYes!Covidhometest.org](https://www.sayyes-covidhometest.org). Any member of the Benton or Franklin Counties can be sent eight test kits directly to their home.
- f. Commissioner McKay expressed frustration with having children continuing to have to mask up at schools even though there is a low death rate for children. Commissioner McKay then asked if it is possible for Benton and Franklin Counties to make a stand against Governor Inslee's mandates. Vice Chairman Peck mentioned that there are others on the Board and within the community that have similar concerns. It was recommended that these issues be put on the agenda for discussion during the next meeting.
- g. Commissioner Didier mentioned the email that was sent to the board containing studies done in Israel about how the variants are getting weaker and not as deadly. Another study was done on natural immunities that are better than getting a vaccine. Commissioner Didier added that these topics should be added to the agenda of the next meeting. Copies of the materials Commissioner Didier provided have been kept with master Board of Health records for this meeting.
- h. Vice Chairman Peck noted that there are three topics to be discussed at the next meeting. Those topics are to include immunity, masking, and legal options relating to those. Commissioner Didier mentioned that in terms of the masking topic, there needs to be mention of the studies that are being used for the mask mandates.

2. Review and Approval of 2022 Budget – Jeff Jones

- a. Jeff Jones mentioned that the Board of Health Finance Committee met on December 1st, 2021, to review and discuss the Health Districts Operating Budget request for 2022. Like the budget from 2021, it was noted that this year's budget was significantly influenced by the COVID-19 Pandemic. J Jones then noted that the Health District will continue to work on containing COVID-19 infections within the community. The extent of those efforts will be determined by the course of disease as well as the funding that is made available.
- b. J. Jones noted that the proposed budget for 2022 is \$14,185,000 which is a 2% increase of about \$221,000 from the 2021 budget. Additionally, there was no cash used to balance the budget which will cause the projection of the cash balance to remain flat.
- c. The budgeted revenues for the 2022 budget consisted of license and permits contributing about 10% of the total budget. It has been predicted that there will be



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

a slight increase in the liquid waste permits due to new construction. Jones also mentioned that after reviewing the fee schedules, there have been no proposed fee increases for 2022.

- d. About 52% of the total budget will come from the State and Federal grants which is an overall decrease of \$780,000. This includes an increase of \$86,000 to Immunization grants and \$45,000 to Solid Waste. It also includes a decrease of \$771,000 from COVID-19 funding, \$80,000 from the Mental Health Promotion grant, and \$50,000 from the Youth Tobacco and Vapor prevention.
- e. Revenues from the State and Local Discretionary funds account for about 29% of the total budget which is an increase of \$1,280,000 or 46%. This includes \$1,270,000 in State Foundational Public Health Services funding.
- f. It was also noted by J. Jones that there will be no increases in County Public Health contributions for 2022. About 9% of the total budget will come from the charges for goods and services which has decreased by about \$280,000. This decrease is primarily due to the loss of the Benton Franklin Juvenile Justice Center Medical Services contract from the ability to acquire the necessary insurance.
- g. The budgeted expenditures for the 2022 budget consisted of an overall increase of about 13% within the salaries which is about \$729,000. This includes a net Full Time Equivalent (FTE) increase of 9.82 FTEs. There will be an 8% increase in the benefits which is about \$171,000. This is due to the increase of about \$10,000 for the Unemployment Compensation that will include decreasing the temporary positions created by COVID-19 as needed.
- h. It also includes a 2.75% decrease in the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) employer's contribution rate. There will be a 5% increase within the supplies and equipment expenses with is about \$27,000. This includes office supplies, building supplies, operating equipment primarily due to COVID-19 Supply purchases and workstation replacements.
- i. Lastly there is about a 14% decrease in the services and other charges which equates to about \$696,000. This includes Medical and Professional Services, Information Technology (IT) projects and installations, advertising, insurance, maintenance and support, and capital items.
- j. Vice Chairman Peck asked for additional information regarding the large changes that have been made compared to the previous years budget. J. Jones responded that the Foundational Public Health Services funds have increased by about \$1,300,000 each year. This is expected to be ongoing and is projected to increase within the next couple of years. The new funding is supporting the FTE's that have been created. As the COVID-19 funding starts to go away, there will be fewer temporary employees being utilized.
- k. Commissioner Small moved to approve the 2022 Budget. Commissioner McKay seconded. Motion carried.



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

3. Election of Officer Positions for 2022 – Brad Peck

- a. Jason Zaccaria went over how long the Chair and Vice Chair are allowed to stay in each position as well as who was currently in each position. Vice Chairman Peck mentioned that the bylaws required that the Board alternates the positions between the two Counties. J. Zaccaria confirmed that that still applies unless the current Chair and Vice Chair run for a second term.
- b. Commissioner Small nominated Vice Chairman Peck for the position of Chairman and Commissioner McKay for the position of Vice Chairman.
 - Commissioner Small mentioned that with this combination of Commissioners, it would allow Commissioner McKay to learn more about what it takes to run the Board and it would be a good steppingstone for Commissioner McKay.
 - Commissioner McKay accepted the nomination for the position of Vice Chairman.
 - Vice Chairman Peck declined due to serving as the Eastern Washington Chair for the Legislative Steering Committee for Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC).
 - Commissioner Small withdrew his nomination for Vice Chairman Peck to serve and the Chair and Commissioner McKay to serve as the Vice Chair.
- c. Vice Chairman Peck made the nomination for Chairman Delvin to remain the chairman and Vice Chairman Peck to remain the Vice Chairman for a second term.
- d. Commissioner Mullen asked if it would be possible to nominate Commissioner McKay as the Chair and Vice Chairman Peck can remain as the Vice Chair. J. Parent responded that the bylaws state that, with the consecutive session, if Commissioner Delvin were to not be reelected as the Chair, then that position would automatically go to Franklin County. Benton County would not be able to retain the seat if Commissioner Delvin was not elected.
- e. After reopening the nomination period, Commissioner McKay nominated Commissioner Mullen as Chairman and Commissioner McKay as Vice Chairman. Commissioner Mullen accepted the nomination as Chair.
- f. When taking a vote to nominate Commissioner Mullen as Chair and Commissioner McKay as Vice Chair, there were four I's which was the majority vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Negotiations with the Washington State Nursing Association – Jason Zaccaria

J. Zaccaria mentioned that leadership has been bargaining with the Washington State Nursing Association (WSNA) since early October of 2021. Negotiations are continuing to be made primarily due to the new labor council as well as a new bargaining team that has been set up within the WSNA. Leadership will be working on further clarification of



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 15th, 2021**

the fiscal limitations of the Health District. The Health District is also in the process of scheduling one or two more collective bargaining sessions with WSNA to come to a tentative agreement.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Commissioner Small moved to approve vouchers 95-2021 through 112-2021 in the amount of \$1,449,789.72 with the Chairman to sign the vouchers on behalf of the Board of Health. Commissioner McKay seconded. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not needed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting will be January 19th, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Peck adjourned the meeting at 2:51p.m.

Signature on file

Commissioner Rocky Mullen
Chairman of the Board

Signature on file

Jason Zaccaria
Executive Secretary

