



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

MEETING MINUTES

January 19th, 2022

**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022**

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"/>	Peyton Jones, Admin. Temp.
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diane Medick, Administrative Assistant
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annette Cary, Editor, Tri-City Herald
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LaWanda Hatch, Member of the Public
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vanessa Graves, Member of the Public
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Noah Graves, Member of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mullen called the meeting to order at 1:30p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McKay moved to approve meeting minutes for December 15th, 2021. Commissioner Didier seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC/STAFF

There were five written comments (four from the same individual) provided to the Board of Health (BOH) ahead of the meeting. Janae Parent read the comments aloud to the BOH during the meeting.

Commissioner Small requested that the public comment section of the meeting be kept to the agreed-upon three-minute timeframe. This includes written and in-person comments.

Commissioner Peck pointed out that those who are elected Commissioners and are sitting on the Board of Health (BOH) are not Commissioners but members of the BOH. Despite some claims, there are no executive or legislative powers as members of the



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022**

BOH. There are legislative and executive powers as County Commissioners, but when on the BOH, the members are not in the County Commissioner role.

1. The first written comment read by J. Parent was from D M9276 regarding the board using law enforcement to forcefully place citizens in quarantine.
2. The second written comment, provided in 4 separate emails from Tina Gregory was read by J. Parent. T. Gregory expressed concern regarding mask-wearing and the use of PCR testing, provided a statement that no Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved vaccination in America is being produced, provided an attachment of Jim Meehan MD's article on reasons masks are not needed, and lastly requested research be done on the data that was found from other sources.
3. La Wanda Hatch requested that the Commissioners stand up to the State and vote against the mandates that have been put in place if there is any voting power.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. E2SHB 1152 Update – Jason Zaccaria

- a. Jason Zaccaria went over the Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1152 (E2SHB 1152) presentation which includes what the bill will entail for the local BOH's. This bill will go into effect on July 25th, 2022.
- b. Vice Chairman McKay asked what the reasoning is for this bill when the board has no local control. J. Zaccaria replied that the State Board of Health as well as the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) felt there needed to be more diversity in board members on the local boards of health.
- c. Commissioner Didier asked what the number of tribes that would be involved in the health in this area was. J. Zaccaria replied he did not think there is tribal representation in the Benton and Franklin area with regard to the BOH. Commissioner Didier mentioned that when meeting with the Yakima Tribe, the designated area went over to the Tri-Cities. Dr. Person mentioned that the definitions are broad, but it was recommended to defer to what the Commissioners have been hearing. The understanding though is that if there are multiple tribes involved in an area there is to be a single representative that would be designated or put forward by the tribes to the American Indian Health Council.



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022**

- d. Commissioner Peck clarified that the requirements for having tribes on the board include that there are federally recognized tribal entities with an interest, which is still undefined, in a given area. Commissioner Peck then added that the Yakima's, Colville, Umatilla's, and several other tribes have historical interest in this area. The distinction being that the law requires that the tribal interest be a federally recognized tribal entity. That will shorten the list from a possible eight to ten tribes down to two or three tribes.

2. COVID-19 Immunity & Masking: Effectiveness of vaccination/natural immunity in reducing morbidity and mortality and the effectiveness of masking to reduce transmission – Dr. Person

- a. Dr. Person went over the presentation regarding masking and immunity. This presentation included many sources of research to support vaccinations and natural immunity, reducing the morbidity and mortality rates, as well as masking reducing the rates of transmission.
- b. Commissioner Didier asked if Dr. Person was looking at any data from the World Council of Health. Dr. Person claimed to not be familiar with the World Council of Health.
- c. Commissioner Didier mentioned an article from the World Council of Health that talks about how Japan has spoken out against mandatory vaccination and discrimination against those who choose not to participate in the vaccination. Commissioner Didier then asked which Arizona study was being used. Dr. Person responded that the study used was a population study and there were other peer reviewed studies included in the presentation. Commissioner Didier then stated that the Arizona study had been refuted and is not reliable information to use.
- d. Vice Chair McKay asked if everyone would get the Omicron variant whether vaccinated or not. Dr. Person responded that it is true that everyone will likely be exposed to Omicron but not necessarily everyone will get the virus. Vice Chairman McKay then pointed out that infection does not guarantee immunity and neither does the vaccine. Dr. Person responded that the vaccine does provide immunity. What is not clear is the duration of the immunity. The vaccine studies were conducted to demonstrate that the vaccine would provide immunity. That is where the challenge lies with post infection, there are no existing study trials where there is a following of those individuals.
- e. Vice Chairman McKay commented that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, from the ages of 0 to 18, there have been 862 deaths which is 0.001% of the youth that have died of Covid-19. Vice Chairman McKay claimed that there should be no mandates, and that parents should decide whether to vaccinate their children or whether masks need to be worn. Vice Chairman McKay then asked whether Dr. Person is for or against



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022**

mask mandates. Dr. Person responded that it depends on what the stress on the healthcare system is. If in a time where the healthcare system is stressed, all measures necessary need to be taken to reduce the number of people that are infected and hospitalized from COVID-19. When in low transmission, then mask mandates are not necessary.

- f. Vice Chairman McKay mentioned the information that came out the week prior that states Dr. Person has control of having people quarantined in houses by using law enforcement. It was asked by Vice Chairman McKay if Dr. Person will be utilizing that law within Benton and Franklin Counties. Dr. Person responded that that has not been used at any point for control of COVID-19, adding further that this authority has not been exercised at any point for any infection that has been present.

3. COVID-19: Legal Options & Governor's Mandates – Rocky Mullen

- a. J. Zaccaria recapped (from the last BOH meeting) the discussion of mask mandates, particularly in schools, along with what Benton and Franklin Counties could do to take a stand against the Governor's mandates. Upon request, the Benton-Franklin Health District's general council, Chris Mertens, has provided what legal options can be taken.
- b. Chairman Mullen recommended that this discussion be tabled for the next meeting to allow all commissioners the chance to read the interoffice memorandum, since it was just received by BFHD.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Additional COVID-19 Updates – Rick Dawson

- a. Rick Dawson mentioned that there has been a rapid rise in the case rate which was not unexpected due to how Omicron has behaved in other countries. The current case rate is around 2,300 cases per 100,000 over a 14-day period. In the Tri-Cities, that equates to about 9,000 cases every two weeks. The concern is that roughly 5,000 of those cases have been declared in the last seven days. It is most concerning that the case rate for those in the age group of 15- to 19-year-old and 20- to 39-year-old is well above 3,000 per 100,000 over a 14-day period.
- b. R. Dawson mentioned that the current positivity rates at the two community-based test sites have increased. The positivity rate at Columbia Basin College (CBC) West site, for the last 14-days, was 44%. The positivity rate at the Richland site, for the last 14-days, was about 40%. Both sites have also been operating at capacity. It was also noted that these sites are to be used when there has been exposure or illness and not for travel or workplace testing.
- c. R. Dawson pointed out that there have been many slowdowns in test results coming back due to the labs burden. The University of Washington lab, which services both community-based test sites, asked the test sites to close on



**BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022**

Sundays to work through the backload of tests. This same trend has been seen through many other labs.

- d. The federal government did however open the portal for free COVID-19 antigen tests for the public. These tests can be delivered straight to the homes of public, each address can receive four tests. Tests can be ordered through covidtests.gov. Along with that, DOH will have a program online soon that will allow free test kits to be delivered to the homes of the public.
- e. Commissioner Didier asked how many people are in the hospital due to Omicron or are in the hospital with other medical needs and are testing positive for Omicron. R. Dawson replied that there is not a specific test on individuals for Omicron, there are sequence-sum samples that take almost 2-weeks to get the results back to tell what variant is circulating. The most recent report from the test sites showed that about 97% of the positive samples that were taken, resulted in the Omicron variant. It is unknown currently how many patients are in the hospital and testing positive. However, if there are COVID-19 symptoms as well as testing positive, that is what is being reported of the 80 patients currently in the hospital, which is about 19% of the hospital population in this area.
- f. Commissioner Didier asked about the effectiveness of the current tests. R. Dawson responded that the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests are effective at well over 90%. The most recent information on the antigen tests is that they are about 75% effective at picking up active illness and are more likely to provide a false negative than a false positive.
- g. Chairman Mullen asked if the tests could tell the difference between the Omicron and the general flu. R. Dawson responded that COVID-19, SARS-CoV2, is a different virus than the flu virus. The tests being done are testing specifically for the Covid-19 virus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WSNA Collective Bargaining Update – Jason Zaccaria

J. Zaccaria mentioned that BFHD leaders continue to bargain with the Washington State Nursing Association (WSNA). BFHD leadership has provided further clarification of its fiscal limitations, to which the BFHD has been offered a best, and final, off the record proposal. Currently the labor attorney for the WSNA is taking said proposal back to the team for, hopefully, ratification. If the proposal does get ratified, BFHD leaders will bring the economics to the full board for potential ratification. If WSNA does not ratify, mediation will likely be needed.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Commissioner Small moved to approve vouchers 113-2021 through 121-2021 and 01-2022 through 02-2022 in the amount of \$1,622,426.40 with the Chairman to sign the



BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
January 19th, 2022

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 February 16th, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mullen adjourned the meeting at 2:43p.m.

Signature on file

Commissioner Rocky Mullen
Chairman of the Board

Signature on file

Jason Zaccaria
Executive Secretary

