

Board of Health Meeting MINUTES
Wednesday, April 7, 2021
Via Zoom

Members Present:

Owen Robinson
Matt Martin, DDS
Amanda Ball
Joe Briggs
Terry Barber
Ray Geyer, DO
Tom Moore

Staff/Visitors Present:

Trisha Gardner–Health Officer, Carey Ann Haight–County Attorney, Melanie McKinzie Swartz–Office & Accreditation Coordinator, Albert Grobe, PhD–Environmental Health Division Manager, Joey McDermant–Accountant, Jo-Viviane Jones–Family Health Services Division Manager, Rachel Doran–MT Connect Coordinator, Sandy Johnson–Superfund Site Coordinator, Bowen Trystianson–Deputy Health Officer, Erik Haivala–Preparedness and Community Planner, Jordan Crosby–Ugrin Alexander Zadick, P.C, Lauri Glover, Ben Spencer, Abby Smith, Christy Buttler Nelson, Nicole Girten, Jen Rowell, John Hayes

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. A quorum was present.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Approve Minutes from March 3, 2021, BOH Meeting: Mr. Robinson

Mr. Briggs moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Dr. Geyer seconded the motion. Mr. Robinson opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments. With all board members voting in favor, the motion carried.

2. COVID-19: Trisha Gardner

Mr. Robinson advised the COVID-19 topic has been moved to second position on the agenda due to public and media interest.

Ms. Gardner provided the COVID-19 Report.

- Case Rate – 10.5 per 100,000
 - 54% – 29 years of age or younger (this age group will be targeted for vaccinations)
 - 39% – 20-29 years of age
 - 5% – 60 years of age and older (indicative of the elderly population being vaccinated)
- Hospitalizations – 2
 - These appear to be breakthrough cases, meaning individuals were vaccinated, but were infected with COVID-19.
 - Both individuals are elderly and have several co-morbidities.
 - Samples have been sent to the State for COVID-19 variant testing.
 - The State is closely monitoring COVID-19 variant penetrance within Montana.
 - As of March 30, 2021, Cascade County did not have the b117 COVID-19 variant.
 - The variant has been found in other counties in the State.
- Prevention Services is completing 2020 data clean-up for testing/positive case reports.
- Tomorrow’s reported numbers will reflect 184 old cases. Communications will be released to make the public aware these are not current cases.
- Community Vaccinations

- 37,463 – Vaccine doses provided (as of April 5, 2021)
- 15,006 – Community members fully vaccinated
- 50%+ – Cascade County eligible individuals vaccinated
- Community Clinics at the Fairgrounds
 - Public response to scheduling for April’s Community Clinic was less than anticipated.
 - 2nd doses for vaccine will continue at the Community Clinic through the end of April.
 - This week will be the last for Community Clinic 1st dose shots. 1st doses of the vaccine may be obtained at the hospitals, local clinics, and pharmacies. Individuals can view Vaccinefinder.org to locate vaccine providers and types of vaccine available.
 - The Clinic will open for walk-in traffic. Doses will be provided on a first come first served basis.
 - The CCHD Communications Specialist will contact the news and radio stations to provide communication on the recent changes and confirm the following:
 - Scheduled 2nd dose vaccinations will continue occurring at the Fairgrounds through the end of April 2021.
 - Scheduled 1st dose vaccinations will continue occurring.
 - The Clinic will be opened up to walk-in traffic on a first come first served basis.
 - The Community Clinics ran well and community members were pleased with the process.
- Future Vaccine Clinics
 - CCHD will explore holding a Drive-Thru Clinic in the future.
 - CCHD, Alluvion Health, providers, and pharmacies are scheduling onsite appointments for vaccinations.
 - CCHD is setting up an online scheduling system used by the State. In the interim, a phone line is open for scheduling appointments for vaccinations at CCHD.

3. **Totem Beverages Litigation Update: Ms. Haight**

Ms. Haight introduced Jordan Crosby from The Ugrin Alexander Zadick law firm. Ms. Crosby has been retained by Cascade County to provide legal representation to the Board for the Totem Beverages Litigation. The Ugrin Alexander Zadick law firm previously assisted the BOH with the Clean Indoor Air Act litigation.

- Ms. Crosby and her partner Jim Zadick are making arrangements to receive and review Totem Beverages litigation documents.
- Ms. Crosby spoke with opposing counsel, Mr. Smith, to let him know she is representing the BOH. Mr. Smith indicated he wanted to speak with his partners and clients to confirm their process moving forward.
- Totem Beverages had until March 26, 2021, to amend their pleadings (which means to add other parties or add additional claims). They did not amend their pleadings.
- It appears future litigation will be limited to the selective enforcement allegation. Ms. Crosby will provide a report within the next 30 days or at the next BOH meeting.

4. **Family Health Services Report: Jo-Viviane Jones**

Ms. Jones provided the Family Health Services Update.

- Staffing
 - The Parents as Teachers Home Visitor position has been filled.
 - The Public Health Nurse position has been filled. The position will oversee Buckle Up Montana, The Montana Asthma Program, and assist with Benefis Hospital referrals for high risk children and mothers.
- WIC
 - The division is still working remote per guidance from the State and Federal WIC Office.

- Health Montana Families (HMF) Grant
 - The HMF Grant is a 5-year grant ending June 30, 2021.
 - Family Health Services has been awaiting the release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) which will extend the grant period for another 5 years through 2026.
 - The State has aligned the grant with the federal fiscal year (October – September) which allows the State more time to prepare the RFP as well as time for Family Health Services to respond to the RFP.
 - The HMF Grant provides approximately \$460,000.00 in funding for the Parents as Teachers and SafeCare Home Visiting programs.
- WIC Farmers’ Market
 - WIC is preparing for the official Farmers’ Market which occurs June – September.
 - The division is working to train local farmers online.
- Foster Child Health Program (FCHP)
 - The program provides child and family services to foster parents/biological parents by providing the most up-to-date medical information for each child.
 - The program has served 570 children so far this fiscal year.
 - Family Health Services started providing activity packets to foster parents at the end of November.
 - The packets contain activities foster parents can complete with their children.
 - These new activity packets have provided additional opportunities for the Home Visitors to be in contact with children and foster parents throughout the month.
- Montana CONNECT

Ms. Doran provided an update on MT CONNECT.

 - The Connect System is an electronic referral system to create the largest local, regional, and statewide referral network possible.
 - Ms. Doran continues to work with onboarded agencies.
 - Additional partners being added to CONNECT include Gateway Recovery, The Great Falls Public Schools, Opportunities, Inc., and Benchmark Human Services.
 - Cascade County has 63 local and 296 statewide Montana CONNECT partners.
 - CCHD received 11 CONNECT referrals in March 2021. Referral numbers will continue to increase.
 - Ms. Jones anticipates State funding for the program next year.

5. **Environmental Health Report: Albert Grobe, PhD**

Dr. Grobe, provided the Environmental Health Report.

- A Registered Sanitarian position remains open and posted. The position has been posted by The Montana Department of Health and Human Services.
- Septic Permits
 - “Septic Season” has started.
 - 55 – septic permits have been issued with several in process.
 - The division is on the way to exceeding last year’s record of 170 septic permits.
- Licensed establishments
 - The division has 791 licensed establishments to inspect.
 - The division has inspected 116 (15%) of licensed establishments.
- Dr. Grobe met with Major Palmer, Montana Air National Guard (MANG), to discuss PFAS/PFOA (fire suppression foam additives). MANG wants to partner with CCHD to send out communications regarding testing for PFAS/PFOA’s in well water of owners whose property surrounds the airport. Dr. Grobe will coordinate with Ms. Gardner and Major Palmer to release communications to the target population.
- Plan reviews continue within the division.

6. Superfund Site Report: Ms. Johnson

Ms. Johnson provided the Superfund Site Report.

- Black Eagle Site
 - The County Commissioners held a public meeting via Zoom on March 8, 2021, regarding potential land development proposals for an amphitheater and a ski hill at the old smelter site.
 - The proponents provided a presentation.
 - The meeting was not well attended.
 - A follow-up meeting occurred on March 17, 2021, with stake holders, County Commissioners, and Water and Environmental Technologies (WET). WET is the company secured through grant funding to navigate Superfund Site clean-up and submit proposals to Atlantic Richfield Company and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help guide clean-up.
 - Stakeholders indicated Black Eagle community members wanted an in-person meeting.
 - A final in-person public meeting is scheduled tonight.
 - Final comments regarding proposals are due to WET by April 9, 2021.
 - The County Commissioners will then decide if the additional proposals will be added to the plan submitted by WET.
 - Whether or not proposals are added to the plan does not initiate any immediate action. The plan is a guidance document for the ultimate clean-up Atlantic Richfield Company will complete. They will ultimately decide what will and will not be completed with the clean-up.
 - The County Commissioners are attempting to manage the community's expectations regarding the Superfund process.
 - The Black Eagle TAG meeting is occurring today. The Record of Decision (ROD) for residential yards and the railroad quarter portion of the Superfund Site will be discussed. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is going to explain conditions for approval of the ROD. EPA drafts the ROD; then forward for concurrence from DEQ.
 - A question was posed to Ms. Johnson if the railroad track could be reopened to run from the refinery to Rainbow Dam. Ms. Johnson advised the railroad quarter is contaminated and slated for clean-up. She was unable to speak to reopening of the railroad.
- Neihart
 - The County is anticipating the survey for the potential land exchange to be conducted this spring or summer.
 - The exchange is needed to develop the Carpenter Creek Road and Carpenter Creek Bridge.
 - The bridge and road will be used to haul contaminated soil to the repository site and must be updated/replaced before clean-up can begin.
 - EPA is tentatively planning a public meeting early summer in Neihart. They also have plans to meet with the County Commissioners. EPA meets with stakeholders annually to provide a summary of the year's work.
 - Requests for digging/movement of soil will increase now that the snow is melting.

7. Prevention Services Report: Mr. Trystianson

Mr. Trystianson provided the Prevention Services Report.

- Prevention Services onboarded a new temporary Communicable Disease Nurse who will help with investigations.
- Communicable Disease Report

- There were a handful of enteric illnesses last month including Campylobacter, Giardia, and Salmonella. The cases are under investigation to confirm they are not tied to a common factor.
- Increases in elevated lead levels in the report are occupational related.
- COVID-19 cases have slightly increased. Prevention Services is monitoring closely, completing contact tracing, and quarantining as applicable.
- The Communicable Disease report includes State data through MMWR Week 12.

8. Administration Report: Ms. Gardner

Ms. Gardner provided the Administration Report.

- Finance Report
 - Environmental Health revenue is low due to fewer inspections and training classes.
 - Grants that allowed reallocation of staff to COVID-19 relief are low. Funds will increase in these grants now that full-time staff have been reallocated back to the grants.
 - Grants like WIC, HMF, and HIV which are low in time and revenues are due to billing cycles.
 - CCHD is in process of entering in budgets for next year and reviewing last quarter's budgets.
- The Board discussed resuming in-person meetings.
 - All members were in favor of resuming in-person meetings. Some items for consideration included:
 - Monitoring the case rate in the County.
 - Safety measures such as mask usage and social distancing be in place.
 - The CCHD Large Conference room is not large enough to allow social distancing.
 - Larger meeting spaces such as the NeighborWorks Learning Center, The Cascade County Commission Chamber, and the Great Falls Public School District meeting rooms were discussed.
 - The Cascade County Commission Chambers has been updated to conduct hybrid meetings in-person and via Zoom.
 - Ms. Gardner and Mr. Briggs will coordinate in-person BOH meetings potentially starting in May.
- Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Annual Report
 - Section I of the report was submitted on March 31, 2021, and accepted by PHAB.
 - Section II of the report addresses quality improvement, the strategic action plan, and performance management measures. The report is due May 6, 2021.
- CCHD Annual report
 - The agency is working on the 2019-2020 CCHD Annual report.
 - The report will highlight all programs, successes, and challenges during 2019-2020.
 - The report will be ready in a couple months.
- Alluvion Health Lease
 - The Lease Agreement was approved by the County Commissioners.
 - Alluvion Health has equipment on order and is preparing for the move.
 - Alluvion Health's Women's Health, Pediatrics, and Title 10 Programs will move onsite at CCHD. There will be opportunity for collaboration with CCHD's Family Health Services, WIC, and Communicable Disease programs.
- Staffing
 - 1 – Sanitarian position posted
 - 1 – WIC Nutrition Educator posted
 - 1 – FT Communicable Disease Nurse (a temporary /part-time nurse has been hired)
 - The Communications Planner, Anna Attaway, has submitted her resignation. Her position will be posted with some slight changes to include additional responsibilities.

- Work Force Development (WFD)
 - Division Managers are meeting with their employees quarterly for Reflective Support meetings. Individual Development Plans are completed during these meetings. The meetings allow staff to self-identify goals and developmental areas and create an action plan. The Division Managers/Health Officer provide support and guidance during the process.
 - One trend identified in these meetings and employee engagement surveys is the need to improve our new hire onboarding process.
- Big Sky Billing and Office Management
 - CCHD is continuing work with Big Sky Billing and Office Management to streamline processes.
 - Current discussions include improvements for onsite registration.

9. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

10. Member Comments

There were no member comments.

Adjournment

*Mr. Robinson called for a motion for adjournment. Dr. Martin and Mr. Barber moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at **12:27 p.m.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Owen Robinson – Chair

May 5, 2021

Date