

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Regular Meeting  
November 2, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Commissioner Charlotte Garrido at 12:31 p.m.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Mayor Rob Putaansuu moved, and Commissioner Ed Wolfe seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the September 28, 2021, special meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Putaansuu moved, and Commissioner Rob Gelder seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the October 5, 2021, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The November consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2205, *Kitsap County, Clean Water Kitsap*
- 2206, *Olympic Educational Service District, Head Start*

Commissioner Gelder moved, and Mayor Becky Erickson seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda, including the Contracts Update and Warrant and Electronic Funds Transfer Registers. The motion was approved unanimously.

**CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Garrido spoke said everyone is living in unusual times and 2021 has introduced many complex pandemic issues to the Health District. She shared her thanks and appreciation to the Health District's capable personnel for their work and knowledge supporting the community.

**HEALTH OFFICER AND ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, called the board's attention to a report in the Kitsap Sun that legionella has been found in the drinking water systems on the Washington State Ferries. He reminded anyone returning to a building where water systems have been turned off to follow the Washington State guidance for making sure their water is clean and bacteria free.

There was no further comment.

Administrator Update:

Mr. Keith Grellner, Administrator, noted appreciation for Chair Garrido's comments on behalf of the district. He said everyone associated with public health COVID-19 response are trying to do their best for the community and perform their responsibilities under the law. He explained that the Health District is doing their best and expressed that he is hopeful that we are getting towards the end of the pandemic. Mr. Grellner said the Health District appreciates the board's support.

Mr. Grellner provided an update on 2022 budget preparation. He said that the budget remains balanced at \$18.4 million with the use of reserve funds and includes an investment in the COVID-19 pandemic response, which covers 32 new full-time employees at the Health District. This also includes \$1 million dollars in pass-through funds for the Emergency Operations Center. At this time there is no use of American Rescue Plan money, although there may be some available to the Health District. He said the draft budget does not include jurisdiction contributions or environmental health fees at this time. Mr. Grellner let the board know that the budget will need to be revised once the labor agreement is finalized with the union. The 2022 workload remains uncertain at this time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is difficult to predict. He said, while the Health District has \$3.8 million in COVID related federal funding secured, they will monitor the situation as needed to sustain response efforts. Mr. Grellner will present the final budget for review and approval at the December 2021 meeting.

Mr. Grellner said there were several awards given at the Washington State Public Health Association conference last month that Mr. Grellner would like to bring to the Health Board's attention:

- Senator Rolfes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> legislative district, and Representative Schmick of the 9<sup>th</sup> district received the June Robinson Public Health Funding Award for work on the foundational of public health services.
- Senator Randall of the 26<sup>th</sup> district and Representative Taylor of the 30<sup>th</sup> district received the Laurie Jenkins Public Health Champion Award for leadership work in public health.
- Local and Tribal Public Health agencies were given an award by Washington State Secretary of Health, Dr. Shah for their perseverance during the pandemic.
- Dr. Scott Lindquist, former Kitsap Public Health District Health Officer, was given a public health leadership award for his work as state epidemiologist and acting chief science officer.

Mr. Grellner sent notes of congratulations to Senator Rolfes and Randall on behalf of the Health District.

Mr. Grellner pointed out a memo from Ms. Kushner in the board packet regarding COVID-19 assessment results for the Health District staff and the public. The assessment highlighted the things that the District did well as well as things that needed improvement on. The next steps to this assessment will be a discussion with the executive leadership team and epidemiology program to address areas of improvement. Mr. Grellner will report back the conclusions at a future meeting.

Mr. Grellner shared a letter from the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials to the Washington State Board of Health concerning the local public health system's recommendations to put COVID-19 vaccination on the list of required immunizations for the K-12 entry. The health districts involved strongly recommended that the Department of Health follow the established procedures to put the COVID-19 vaccine on the mandatory list which includes the required research for mandatory vaccines. Mr. Grellner anticipates with the pending announcement from Pfizer for 5–12-year-old vaccinations, this topic will be starting to gather steam in areas.

Mr. Grellner reminded the board that on November 4 at 1:00 p.m. there will be a closed executive session to discuss contract negotiations with the Health District's labor union. Mr. Grellner let the board know that he was unable schedule the executive session for this meeting because the District's employment law attorney was not available today.

Mr. Grellner let the board know that all public comment emails received from the October meeting through Tuesday October 26<sup>th</sup> are posted on the Kitsap Public Health website. New emails will be added to the website as they come in. Mr. Grellner informed the board that most comments were regarding vaccine mandates in Kitsap County.

Lastly, Mr. Grellner shared that the State Board of Health has a first draft of the new rule to implement board member requirements of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1152. The new WAC, 246-90, is still in draft form and accepting reviews and comments until November 19, 2021.

Commissioner Garrido thanked Mr. Grellner for his report and let him know that she appreciated the announcement of the senators being recognized for their public health work.

There was no further comment.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Garrido decided to give each speaker 2 minutes to provide public comment and said she looks forward to hearing these comments.

Kelly Donalson of Port Orchard addressed the board regarding the concept and acceptance of natural immunity. She said God gave bodies the ability to have natural immunities and she is held by God. She said natural immunity dates to 400BC and said this was real science with long term studies. She said God doesn't make mistakes, but the parroting of government rhetoric does.

Janelle Hulst said she would like she would like to correct her statement from the October 5 minutes that she didn't understand why the public could mass gather at Home Depot but not in schools, to reflect that she meant to say restaurants (rather than schools.) She said her intention was to emphasize the importance of sharing science and research to allow the public and decision makers to make informed decisions. She said she feels this is a control issue. She said

not a single healthy child has died from COVID-19. She quoted doctors and CDC officials with statements denouncing the need for vaccine mandates. She also noted that Mayor Erickson requested a forum to hear all the facts. Ms. Hulst agrees with that.

Melissa Kittrell inquired about consideration of the alarming adverse reaction reports on the VAERS database. She said there are many adverse reports that are unreported along with many who don't know this database is available. Ms. Kittrell asked how anyone can discount the obvious risk when the official numbers are undoubtably reported.

Ted Rice of Kitsap County stated he is adamantly opposed to mandates and restrictions on businesses. He stressed that small businesses are hurt the most during the lockdown and that small businesses need no restrictions. He said the vaccination does not prevent transmission and said the viral loads are identical between vaccinated and unvaccinated. He said, since everyone can spread the virus, vaccine passports are the government inserting themselves into controlling the freedom to choose. He said, according to the Health District's dashboard, everything is based on cases per 100,000 residents, majority of deaths are in individuals over 80 and nobody under the age of 30 has died from COVID-19 in Kitsap.

John G. compared public health mandates to bullying and said individuals experiencing this can be certain that what they are being asked to participate in is not in their best interest. When the government and super national corporate interests claims to have the people's best at heart you need to think again. He stressed that nobody should ever take anything the government tells you at face value and always question the government for ulterior motives and ask who benefits. He let the board know that he vehemently opposes any restrictions within the county, state, or country based on their vaccination status.

Kevin Lea said he wrote the board and the Health District on October 8<sup>th</sup>, agreeing with Mayor Erickson that there should be a debate on this topic. He said Dr. Morrow responded to him that he would be willing to debate the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines at any time. He said he sent Dr. Morrow a letter offering a million dollars for winning the debate and Dr. Morrow did not respond. Mr. Lea said Dr. Morrow and Mr. Grellner are lying to the Health Board and to the population about vaccines. He added that everyone getting the shot, including children, will be a tragedy that all the board will have to answer to God for. He provided an example of pharmaceutical commercials on TV advertising all the reasons why you need to give them money, but it also explains the number of things that can go wrong, because it's required by law. He said Dr. Morrow provides no warnings, which are required by law, for an experimental jab.

Charles Michel said he has two friends that work at St. Michael Medical Center who are telling him that the hospital is full of COVID-19 patients, even in the ER. He said we are in an emergency; we know mandates and vaccines work. He said we should have standards regarding mandates, passports as high as we see in the counties that surround us. He believes that the responders today are a very vocal minority, and most of the population supports this. He explained that he is perplexed by some facts that he is hearing and said researchers and medical doctors don't publish their findings on YouTube and the number of likes isn't by peer review. As far as the businesses go, he said it will be a burden with mandates, but he let the board know that

he won't be going into restaurants until he knows they're vaccinated and masked. There is an opportunity cost of not going to those sources.

Erika Schmidt of Bremerton would like to state that she is not the minority of people who don't approve of the vaccine mandates. She is watching small businesses across the globe be decimated by mandates which go against Amendment 8 in the United States Constitution. She stated that this is cruel and unusual punishment being inflicted on our community. She also stated that this was asinine and would like to invoke the board to calmly and rationalize that many people are against the mandate.

### **RESOLUTION 2021-02, APPROVING ROLL OVER OF 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION SERVICE FEES FOR 2022**

Mr. John Kiess, Environmental Health Director, approached the Board regarding the environmental health division service fees for 2022. He referred to the memo and draft resolution in the board packet. He explained in late 2017 the board passed a fee schedule that included automatic escalators from 2020 – 2026. Based on this year's analysis and automatic fee schedule, the fee increase this year, based on CPI, would be 3.4%. However, based on impacts of COVID-19 on the community, and at the board's finance committee recommendation, the resolution prepared maintains the same fees as the 2021 fee schedule. Mr. Kiess will be available to address any questions and assured the board that they have not prepared a budget that includes these fees.

Commissioner Wolfe moved, and Mayor Putaansuu seconded the motion, to approve 2021-02, Approving the Rollover of 2021 Environmental Health Division Service Fees for 2022.

There was no further discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **RESOLUTION 2021-03, APPROVING REVISION TO HEALTH DISTRICT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND RELATED REVISION TO PERSONNEL MANUAL**

Mr. Grellner introduced Ms. Jessica Guidry, Equity Manager, to the Board to discuss resolution 2021-03.

The Health District recommends to the Board that we revise the wording of our "equity" guiding principle as follows: "We believe all Kitsap residents should have an ~~equal~~ equitable opportunity to live healthy and safe lives."

Ms. Guidry said this recommendation is made because there is a difference between believing in equal opportunity and equitable opportunity. She noted equitable better fits the culture of and the culture we want for Kitsap County Residents moving forward. She said the word "equal" means "same", which means providing equal resources and attention to all areas of the county. However, she said this does not address barriers, including poverty or racism that are being experienced by our community members. She said the word "equitable" means "fair", which means providing focused resources and assistance to areas of the community that have barriers.

Ms. Guidry stressed that words matter and this reflects our vision and mission as the Public Health District.

Mayor Erickson let Kitsap Public Health know that she would like to see a definition of equity on the Public Health Website, so the community can understand what Kitsap Public Health means by equity versus equality. Chairman Garrido agreed with being clear regarding our definition.

Mayor Erickson moved, and Commissioner Gelder seconded the motion, to approve Resolution 2021-03, Approving Revision to Health District Guiding Principles and Related Revision to Personnel Manual.

There was no future discussion, motion passed unanimously.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Dr. Morrow and Ms. Siri Kushner, Community Health Division Assistant Director, shared a COVID-19 update with the board.

Dr. Morrow informed the board, that while federal and state mandates may apply to certain residents in Kitsap County, no local governmental mandates have been enacted for members of the public. He said the Kitsap Public Health District implemented a vaccination mandate for its employees and are proud of staff for following that mandate. Dr. Morrow also shared with the board that he signed a letter to the Washington State Department of Health asking them not to mandate vaccines for minors until those vaccines are fully approved and no longer under emergency use authorization. This letter is available publicly for anyone who is interested in reading it.

Dr. Morrow shared that while rates are still high, cases are decreasing. He said hospitalizations, deaths, and outbreaks are tapering off, but still in high levels. He shared that 75% of Kitsap residents 12 or older have received at least one dose of vaccine. He said booster and third doses are available. Dr. Morrow said that you could get a different type of vaccine with the booster doses than what you received for your initial series. He said there is an algorithm on the health District website to help you decide if you are eligible for a booster.

Dr. Morrow shared local, evidence-based facts that show being unvaccinated increases your risk of hospitalization by 10 times if you're under age 60, it increases your risk of dying 13 times if you are under 70 years old. Dr. Morrow said pediatric vaccinations are coming soon. The advisory committees have met and authorized the vaccine, but he noted there are still a handful of hoops to jump through, but we should be able to vaccinate kids this week or the next. He said there have been 700 or more childhood deaths related to COVID-19, and emphasized that kids are able to spread the disease to other family members and put them at risk. Dr. Morrow stressed that kids have been through a long couple of years and vaccination allows them to get back to life safely. Kitsap will receive 7,000 pediatric doses in this distribution and a few thousand each following week.

Dr. Morrow concluded by discussing Public Health's current challenge which is misleading or false information. Social media and internet provide a wide range of information that is inadvertently inaccurate or intentionally deceptive. The VAERS data, collected through the CDC can be collected by any source. He said 8,000 deaths have been reported, but this system isn't designed to determine if the vaccine contributed to the reported vaccine death. Dr. Morrow shared that if a person driving home from their vaccination appointment died in a car accident, it could go into that system as a vaccine death, however we all know that vaccines can't prevent car accidents. He explained, this misleads people who don't have the time to understand the inaccurate conclusions that can be generated this way. Dr. Morrow encouraged everyone to visit the CDC Website to understand the misinformation and disinformation and provide accurate, clear and easy to understand messages.

Ms. Kushner gave a brief update on the Health District's vaccine work with a focus on the key informant interviews that the District is starting. Ms. Kushner discussed the equity approach across all vaccine delivery models to make vaccine available and accessible across the entire population. She explained that an equity approach is imperative and compared the rates of vaccine initiation rates as of March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Kushner explained that there is a three-prong approach to the equity work, registration support, community collaborative and outreach. The Key Informant Interview Project is an opportunity to understand barriers, motivators, and reasons why there is hesitancy with the vaccine. Ms. Kushner explained that the World Health Organization has a model regarding what people think and feel along with social processes and practicality with vaccines. The Health District will conduct 30 interviews focusing on those with lower vaccination rates. She explained that there are multiple sections to this interview which will be helpful to the Health District. Interviews will be conducted in the next couple weeks along with Washington State and Village Reach. Ms. Kushner shared that the Health District hopes to put together listening system to help reach those who are hesitant.

Commissioner Gelder asked what methods were being used for finding focus populations. Ms. Kushner replied that the information has come out of the Kitsap Public Health data trends over time as well as input from the vaccine collaborative members.

Commissioner Garrido let Ms. Kushner know that she is interested in what comes out of the vaccine collaborative updates. She also let the board know that she liked the one-page information sheets that she's seen and is excited to see this come to the Olympic Peninsula.

Dr. Morrow asked the board for direction moving forward related to Mayor Wheeler's previous Motion acknowledging the importance of vaccinating people. Mayor Wheeler let the board know that the motion is still ready to go if the board is interested in putting to rest the idea that we might mandate vaccinations. He stressed that it's important for the community to have closure from the board.

Mayor Wheeler made the motion to accept the proposal in his previous motion regarding vaccination and vaccine mandates in Kitsap County. There was no second to this motion.

Commissioner Wolfe let the board know that we are waiting for the federal government to determine some of these policies. Once OSHA publishes a rule, states that have their own plans in place have thirty days to adopt a rule that is at least as effective as the OSHA rule. He stressed that there are too many moving parts right now.

Mayor Erickson agreed with Commissioner Wolfe regarding the mandates from the government regarding work rules that dictate how to keep people safe. This is premature until we find out what those rules are going to be. Mayor Erickson stressed that we would have better information from the federal government and state. She said we should have more information by the next health board meeting in December.

Councilmember Hytopoulos asked Dr. Morrow and Mr. Grellner what direction they are looking for. Dr. Morrow replied that he wanted an unequivocal endorsement from every single person on this board regarding the importance of vaccination against COVID-19 for all Kitsap citizens and that the health board strongly supports vaccinations as an effective public health tool.

Mayor Putaansuu reiterated Commissioner Wolfe and Mayor Erickson's comments. He restated that his position is that he can not support vaccine passports and mandates in Kitsap County. He is choosing to wait for the rules from the state and federal government. This needs to go through a proper process.

Mayor Wheeler said the board knows that state and federal mandates superseded local mandates. This would be a gesture from the board to provide local certainty but noted when the state and federal government passes new rules, this could change.

Commissioner Garrido let the board know she will continue this conversation with the Health District and Dr. Morrow before the next board meeting.

Mayor Erickson told people that this conversation wasn't going to happen today, and it wasn't on our agenda. She let the board know that she does not like that the board is having this conversation today and felt like the board is not being transparent with their constituents.

Mr. Grellner wanted to be very clear that there was no action item on the agenda today because there was no action agenda item. The comments and motion proposed by Mayor Wheeler were started in September, this was a continual discussion. He wants to be clear that there is no motion on the table for vaccine management. He stressed that there will not be time at the December meeting to continue this discussion since we have budget, union contracts and the 2022 meeting schedule to go through. He advised the board that if they want to continue this discussion, they need to set up a separate meeting outside of the regular December meeting. Mr. Grellner wants a clear message to the audience that there is no action item pending regarding mandates in Kitsap County.

Commissioner Wolfe believes we need a separate meeting where this will be the agenda. He would like the board and public to know that he believes the board has legal authority for these vaccine mandates.



Councilperson Hytopoulos thinks we need a separate meeting to discuss mandates but noted Dr. Morrow is asking the board to fully endorse the vaccines and encourage businesses to do their own vaccine endorsement. She let the board know the board could back up the vaccine as the most effective tool easily at the next meeting.

Commissioner Gelder confirmed there is consensus that there is no need for a separate meeting, any mandate is off the table right now and the board is looking at endorsing vaccines as a tool for combating the COVID-19 pandemic. That statement that the board endorses should be available in print with transparency to what is coming forward.

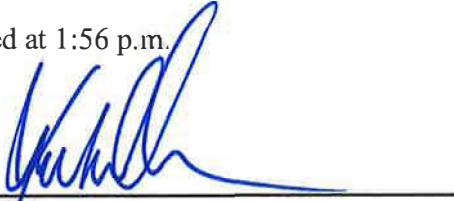
There was no further comment.

### ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.



**Charlotte Garrido**  
Kitsap Public Health Board



**Keith Grellner**  
Administrator

**Board Members Present:** *Mayor* Becky Erickson; *Commissioner* Charlotte Garrido; *Commissioner* Robert Gelder; *Councilperson* Kirsten Hytopoulos, *Mayor* Robert Putaansuu; *Mayor* Greg Wheeler; *Commissioner* Ed Wolfe.

**Board Members Absent:** *None.*

**Community Members Present:** *See Attached*

**Staff Present:** Ornela Abazi, *Disease Intervention Specialist, COVID-19*; Jami Armstrong, *Disease Intervention Specialist, COVID-19*; Kandice Atismé-Bevins, *Program Manager, Case and Contact Investigation, COVID-19*; Angie Berger, *Administrative Assistant, Administration*; Holly Bolstad, *COVID-19 Community Outreach Specialist, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Stephanie Byrd, *Confidential Secretary, COVID-19*; Margo Chang, *COVID-19 Data Secretary Clerk 4, COVID-19*; Laura Ciulla, *Public Health Nurse, Parent Child Health*; Elizabeth Davis, *COVID Vaccine Public Health Nurse, COVID-19*; Deanna Eakes, *Secretary Clerk 3, Support Services*; April Fisk, *Program Coordinator, Contracts Manager, Public Records & Safety Officer, MAC, Administration*; Yolanda Fong, *Director, Community Health Division*; Keith Grellner, *Administrator, Administration*; Callie Ford, *Secretary Clerk 2, Environmental Health Permitting*; Keith Grellner, *Administrator, Administration*; Jessica Guidry; *Program Manager, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Grant Holdcroft, *Program Manager, Pollution Identification and Correction*; Karen Holt, *Program Manager, Human Resources*; Dayna Katula, *Manager, Food and Living Environment*; Sarah Kinnear, *Disease Intervention Specialist, COVID-19*; Siri Kushner, *Assistant Director, Community Health Division*; Melissa Laird, *Manager, Accounting and Finance*; Victoria Lehto,

Kitsap Public Health Board  
Regular Meeting  
November 2, 2021  
Page 10 of 10

*Environmental Health Specialist 1, Pollution Identification & Correction; Nicole McNamara, Community Liaison, Chronic Disease Prevention; Alex Moore, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems; Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, Administration; Tameka Phelps, Public Health Nurse, COVID-19; Ally Power, Epidemiologist 1, Assessment & Epidemiology; Tatiana Tubberville, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Food & Living Environment; Kate Wagner, Secretary Clerk 2, Parent Child Health.*