

LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 30, 2020
2:00 p.m.

The Board of Health for Lewis County, Washington met in special session on Thursday, April 30, 2020, at 2:00 pm. **COMMISSIONERS EDNA J. FUND** and **ROBERT C. JACKSON** were in attendance. **CHAIRMAN FUND** determined a quorum, called the meeting to order, and proceeded with the flag salute.

ATTENDEES:

County Staff:

JP Anderson
Dr. Rachel Wood
Sandi Andrus

Erik Martin
John Abplanalp

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Jackson made a motion to approve the consent item, **Commissioner Fund** seconded.

H. Res #043020.1 Approve Consolidated Contract Amendment #13 between Lewis County and Washington State Department of Health

JP summarized the resolution for the BOH. This is for \$250,000 from the Washington State Department of Health for Emergency Preparedness & Response – COVID-19 and is effective January 20, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Some of our response will be funded through this amendment. Time specifically for COVID-19 and some increased Health Officer time will also be funded through this.

Commissioner Fund asked to approve the consent items. Motion approved 2-0.

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

JP explained that PHSS prepared a power point (attached) to discuss the Public Health's role in Economic Recovery Planning and the COVID-19 disease update.

John provided some data of overall testing done on Lewis County residents. Over 1,000 tests have been done to date which shows a decline in the last few weeks with fewer tests done on the weekends. We have had 29 positive cases with no particular trend at this time. Positive cases by age groups show Lewis County has more people confirmed in the 60-79 age group but our county also has a higher percentage of residents in that age group compared to the State. Nine of the 29 who tested positive required hospitalization at some point during their illness.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the people being tested are those with symptoms and automatically being tested due to those symptoms. **John** explained that varies to some degree by practitioner but predominantly they are having to present with COVID-defined symptoms in order to be eligible to be tested. Of those tested overall, we are at 2.8% positivity. John added that of the 29 who tested positive, only 16 are eligible to be considered as recovered because we are waiting the full 28 days after symptom onset before classifying them as either recovered or not recovered.

Commissioner Fund asked if these charts are going to be available for people to look at and **John** replied that we can get these posted on the website. **JP** added that there is a lot of information posted on the Department of Health website which includes information on other counties and the state as well.

Dr. Wood continued with the power point stressing there is still a lot of uncertainty. Dr. Wood reviewed a slide showing King County's numbers beginning to level out but it could still increase with policies and behavior changing. She pointed out that we need to have our healthcare system ready. This includes having our hospitals, long-term-care facilities, and other healthcare settings ready with beds, ICU capacity, PPEs, and ventilators available for all who may have need of them.

Dr. Wood continued that testing capacity and availability is needed for everyone with COVID-19 symptoms and those with high-risk exposures to be tested immediately and rapidly and receive the test results. Another readiness is the case and contact investigations. This would be a partnership with many different people. Lewis County currently has one person working with the DOH at any one time to identify, quarantine, and provide case management services. These people need to be trained to perform this investigation. Lastly, the County needs to have the ability to protect high-risk populations and respond to an outbreak within 24 hours.

Commissioner Fund inquired into how many ventilators we have, whether we have enough, and what our PPE supplies are. **Dr. Wood** responded there are several data sources and modeling groups where we could check on this. **JP** added that the

Department will get the Commissioners information on the status of ventilators in the County. Dr. Wood added that patients who need a level of care that the local hospitals do not have, may be moved to a different hospital that does. WaTRAC is a resource that tracks hospital bed capacity and ventilators. RC3 (Regional COVID Coordinating Center) operates out of the NW HealthCare Response Network to process movement of patients that need ICU beds and ventilators and to get on studies of what medications might help. JP added "DIAL" shared by the Governor goes from low risk to high risk regarding supplies for hospitals.

Commissioner Jackson asked what the turn around on the test is. **Dr. Wood** replied that it varies and could be as long as seven days and as quickly as 12 hours. There are over 20 laboratories running those tests now. Commissioner Jackson asked if ventilators were actually helping as he heard information recently stating they rob blood cells of oxygen. Dr. Wood stated she did not have a specific comment about that as there is still a lot of information coming out.

Commissioner Fund asked if there are tests available and if we are getting more. **Dr. Wood** stated that there is the self-obtained nasal swab where the physician observes the patient obtain their own sample and the doctor does not have to use new PPE's for each patient.

Commissioner Jackson asked if there is a test and option for people to do a blood test to see if they have the antibodies to be able to fight this. **Dr. Wood** stated she would hate to base public health activity on the results of those tests because we do not know how to interpret them yet. It could show up as antibodies from a different coronavirus and we do not know which virus it is picking up. We do not know what the results would actually mean for the patient.

Commissioner Fund stated there was a suggestion by a community member to allow businesses who are opening their doors to have all of their employees tested to show they are not COVID positive. **Dr. Wood** replied the problem with testing is that you can have false positives and false negatives and that is a point-in-time test and could test different four hours later. There are still so many unknowns at this time.

Erik Martin asked what their thoughts were regarding using modeling versus empirical data to make decisions. **Dr. Wood** stated that modeling is useful since we do not know a lot about this virus. The more empirical data we get, the more useful that will be.

JP continued with the power point and the County's next steps. He shared how difficult it was to get the test for COVID-19 which took 12 hours for his results. He added that we should increase testing availability for anyone who wants it. We can expect our testing supplies to quadruple in the next week or two by the DOH. He has a meeting with the Lewis County medical providers next week where they will discuss long-term testing strategy. We should see increased positive cases as more testing is done. We need to increase capacity for case and contact investigations within our department as well as the

State. We are currently able to handle case and contact investigation with our existing 1.0 FTE staff. John Abplanalp has also added that to his duties but we need to find additional resources to be ready in the event we start to see a rise in cases as we go forward with opening. Case management needs will be part of that in seeing that their physical needs are being addressed if quarantined. We will be working with community partners to develop those services and building those capacities.

JP added more steps will include increasing capacity for providing education and information to keep the community up to date in any changes or requirements. This includes the tool kit for reopening. Also, we will be exploring new partnerships.

Commissioner Jackson stated that when he talks to businesses he is asking that they send him their plan and what it looks like to reopen their business taking in consideration social distancing. It is important that each business weigh in on the requirements to open and present their plan to safely open their doors when the time comes. This is a critical piece as we move forward. **Dr. Wood** added that people still need to follow social distancing and consider how people in businesses stay six feet apart when shopping and paying for purchases, etc. We will have to be very thoughtful about it. Commissioner Jackson stated Home Depot is a good example of keeping people six feet apart and limiting the number of customers they allow in the store at a time. They are laying the groundwork for other businesses.

JP informed the Commissioners that he is working to get Lewis County representatives on the State work groups to make rules and implement them. **Commissioner Fund** expressed concerns about what is being done regarding requirements by the State to open up construction, parks, etc., so that when other industries open up, they have considered standards for them to open. **JP** stated the County is working with the Chehalis Renaissance, Centralia Downtown Association, and other local organizations to put together information at this time and keep that going out so people can begin building a readiness plan.

JP added the County has developed isolation and quarantine facilities and is waiting on more information from FEMA. We have a congruent/non-congruent shelter which has gone well. Meja Handlen, Social Services Manager, has done a great job getting that put together. This is a county-wide preparation and preparing policies for staff returning to work and offices opening to the public needs to be done by all businesses.

Commissioner Jackson asked if we are in a holding pattern to see what the Governor will announce regarding people going back to work and if there is a plan to bring people back. **Erik Martin** replied he would like to hear the Governor's plan before more local plans are made. Lee Napier and Steve Wohld have put out information and are looking at what our employees need through direction and policy when they return to work and what we need to direct the public when we open our doors so they are safe coming into our buildings. We are continuing to plan and hope to get more information from the Governor's office tomorrow.

JP added that we need to support existing community efforts and continue to organize response efforts. We need to encourage people to continue to stay home and stay healthy.

Commissioner Fund reminded people to pay their taxes as today is the deadline. We cannot over-communicate. People need to be reminded and not everyone knows!

JP shared a text that he just received from Ed Mund, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Ed texted that we have 13 ventilators in Lewis County, a good supply of M-95 masks, gowns, and gloves.

Dr. Wood suggested people notice the things that bring them joy and not to take anything for granted. We are not in control so appreciate each moment. Nightly, try to think of three things you are glad about from the day.

Commissioner Fund stated people in the community are accustomed to socialization and their support groups and electronic means is not working for them. We need to get out those strategies about how you can stay healthy when the social part of your life is gone because of this situation.

Commissioner Jackson moved to adjourn. **Commissioner Fund** seconded and adjourned the Special Board of Health meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 pm, on Thursday, April 30, 2020. The next public meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2020 at 1:30 pm.

Please note that minutes from the Board of Health meetings are not verbatim. A tape of this meeting is available.

**BOARD OF HEALTH
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Edna J. Fund, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Stamper, Vice Chair

Sandi Andrus
Clerk of the Board of Health

Robert C. Jackson, Member