

LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

March 9, 2020

1:30 p.m.

The Board of Health for Lewis County, Washington met in regular session on Monday, March 9, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. **COMMISSIONERS EDNA J. FUND, ROBERT C. JACKSON, and GARY STAMPER** were in attendance. **CHAIRMAN FUND** determined a quorum, called the meeting to order, and proceeded with the flag salute. **COMMISSIONER JACKSON** moved to approve the Minutes from February 10, 2020, **COMMISSIONER STAMPER** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**ATTENDEES:**

**County Staff:**

JP Anderson  
Dr. Rachel Wood  
John Abplanalp  
Sandi Andrus

Erik Martin  
Andy Caldwell  
Steve Mansfield  
Ed Mund

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Commissioner Jackson** made a motion to approve the consent items, **Commissioner Stamper** seconded.

H. Res #031020.1 Approve Consolidated Contract Amendment #12 between Lewis County and Washington State Department of Health

**JP** stated that there was no funding change to this amendment of the Consolidated Contract. **John Abplanalp** stated the only change was a removal of a previous requirement that DOH had for geotagging locations of Group A water systems in the County.

**Commissioner Fund** asked to approve the consent items. Motion approved 3-0.

**PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

**JP** prefaced the power point on COVID-19 which he and Ed Mund prepared for the BOH. **Ed Mund** began by explaining an Incident Command was activated on February 11, 2020 and

showed the ICS (Incident Command System) chart listing all positions, who is filling those positions, and what their duties are.

**JP** continued with the power point. Since this is a new disease, the information keeps changing. Lewis County has had nine people approved for testing. So far, four results have come back with negative results. We still have five results we are waiting on.

**Commissioner Stamper** asked why we have had so few tests done. **JP** replied that our testing capacity has been a limiting factor in this. The nine tests we have had done are all going to the Department of Health lab in Shoreline. **Dr. Wood** added that until February 28, the only place we could test was at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The DOH lab was able to test only 28 per day at the beginning but now can test in the hundreds. The University of Washington is now able to test and our hope is that commercial labs will also be able to test soon. Once we have testing more available and begin testing more people, the number of people dying from Coronavirus will not be as high a percentage as we currently see since we have been testing only the sickest of the sick.

**JP** added that with 123 cases and 19 deaths in Washington, that is a concerning ratio. We have minimal testing with minimal information currently. **JP** presented two scenarios; the first one has the virus moving through the County more broadly than our numbers would indicate which would show more positives as the testing increases. We would not be able to contain the spread completely but would work to minimize it.

**Commissioner Jackson** asked how this virus is comparable to the flu that kills many people yearly especially the elderly and immune compromised. **Dr. Wood** replied that we don't have all the information on the outcome of this virus since it is new. What we do know is that 80% of the people that we are aware of who have had it, had a sniffle and did not feel well to others who have been quite sick with it to people who have died.

**Commissioner Jackson** stated that coronavirus has been around for a long time and questioned what makes this particular strain so different. **JP** answered that it is the role of Public Health to protect human health. **Ed** added that until December 2019, we thought there were six coronaviruses that could affect humans and now we know there are seven. We have never seen this strain before, people have no immunity to it, and there is no vaccine or cure for it.

**Commissioner Jackson** asked if there is any kind of matrix or information that would give us an idea of how serious this is. **Dr. Wood** responded that there have been a couple coronaviruses that were scary such as SARS (2003) and MERS (2012). We are waiting to see if COVID19 is going to act like these two or if it is going to act like the run of the mill coronaviruses. **Commissioner Fund** added that in a document the Washington DOH put out, there was a Question and Answer section that asked, "Don't more people die from the flu than COVID19?" The answer was yes if you look at the totals but we haven't finished with this one yet or the flu.

**JP** continued with scenario two. We learn with this that we have none or very few cases. We would operate in containment mode to protect vulnerable people. We would do rapid communicable disease investigation and be prepared to act quickly to stop the spread. We are prepared with seven stations ready to go and do that work. We are ready to serve the community and go through those CD investigations in a containment mode.

**JP** explained why this is not yet an emergency in our county. He spoke on the things our County has going for us such as geographic location, how we come together, our strong response, and that we have a team dedicated to protecting people in our County. JP had the PHSS staff in attendance stand and all in attendance applauded them and their efforts.

**John Abplanalp**, Operation Chief, spoke about Operations. It is his job to come up with strategies to get things accomplished. Many are working together in a system that will follow ICS which allows the department to bring together staff from other teams in the County to help with this event that could last months. They will be doing basic standard communicable disease investigation which includes contacting people who have been diagnosed with this condition. They will elicit from them lists of events they have participated in and close contacts they may have had. Then the team will contact people who have been in contact with the person they are investigating to make sure they are following proper guidance as far as quarantining themselves if they are not sick or isolating if they do develop symptoms. It will be important to provide actionable information for people to help reduce panic.

**Dr. Wood** summarized her role as the Safety Officer. She has been in contact with other Health Officers, the Washington Department of Health, and clinical colleagues. She explained the difference between a recommendation and a Health Officer Order and the relationship between the Health Officer and the Board of Health in a public health emergency. She stated that those who are most at risk from COVID-19 are the same as those who are most at risk from seasonal influenza.

**Andy Caldwell** answered a question Commissioner Jackson had posed earlier requesting an explanation as to what "Level 1" means. This is the activation level of the EOC with minimal staffing. The State has a current incidence which includes all cities and communities that are currently taking an active role in fighting COVID-19 virus. When we activate, we join in with everyone else. This gives us access to all the information the other communities have and gives us access to resources which would come through DEM. In Lewis County, we have three levels: one is the lowest, two starts staffing up the EOC on a daily basis, and level three is where we actually call in outside resources to help staff and facilitate whatever assistance public health would need. Right now, we are planning what we need to do to go forward and reduce the impact to our community. Non-pharmaceutical intervention is the tool we need to use.

**Ed Mund**, PIO (Public Information Officer) and Planning Chief, explained how all this will happen. Going into ICS we create a structure by giving people certain assignments to prepare for the problem at hand but still serve the citizens of Lewis County with normal everyday services. Risk communication is trying to get the word out to the public that is complete, timely, truthful, honest, and coming from a source they can trust. Ed related how the fire service always prepares for the worst and can be pleasantly surprised if it does not occur. That is what we have been doing since activating ICS on February 11. We have been putting all the pieces in place so if needed, we can hit the ground running at the drop of a hat and if not needed, this will be a really, really good training exercise for the next thing that comes around.

**JP** stated the County will be doing press releases with credible, accurate, and complete information. Andy will make sure we are getting messages out through Lewis County Alert.

We need to maintain situational awareness and give just the facts. We will begin to see signs on doors as businesses make sure people are informed. If we are communicating well enough and giving enough information, people can make their own informed decisions. Panic is a variable we do not want to see during this so we are working to be the best communicators we can be. **Commissioner Fund** asked how someone who wanted to receive press releases and notices, would go about getting those. **Ed Mund** replied that the best way is to follow our twitter feed. Every press release we send out and all information posted to our website, has information on how to follow us on Twitter. Commissioner Fund stated they have Mail Chimp in the Commissioners' Office so maybe people could sign up that way too.

**Commissioner Jackson** asked how our response is similar to other counties. **JP** replied that he has been talking to some other local rural partners and has had table top exercises to prepare for emergencies. They are obviously much more ramped up north of here but every community will have to figure out what level of response they have. Our level of response has only been communication preparation but we are poised and ready for whatever could come our way. We have a response we can be very proud of.

**Commissioner Jackson** asked when the normal flu season occurs. **Dr. Wood** replied that CDC measures the normal flu season starting on the 40<sup>th</sup> week of the year, around Halloween, and goes through the next Halloween. We look at it for a year. Cases start going up October, November, December, and January and can be fairly high up through early May in some years, and then it drops off remarkably as people get outside and about. We will know a lot more by the end of June if it will fall off. Once we get outside and enjoy recreation, she is hopeful that it will go down but it is a new virus so we will have to see.

**Commissioner Fund** stated that at the Washington Association of Counties they talked about all of the counties looking at this and taking it seriously but not getting into chaos. The Senate and the House passed \$100,000,000 to combat this and the governor is signing it. We are also receiving funds through the Federal Government.

**JP** completed his power point presentation. He reminded us all to be kind to each other and make reasonable preparations. We need to consider the high risk population and how we can assist those who are nervous about going into the community. **JP** showed a sign he had made for Erik Martin, stating "THE BUG STOPS HERE!!"

**Commissioner Stamper** asked how we have been communicating with the Electeds' offices and county staff. **JP** responded he has shared his number to those who might need it and reached out to the judges. **Andy Caldwell** added that he is trying to keep people as updated as they can through county users email and through our partner email lists. It is his goal to reach out and start talking to various departments within the county and city contacts to see what information they need and give them information to give them the comfort they need.

**Dr. Wood** stated she appreciated people being thoughtful about the impact to the people that they work with. Part of the problem is we are learning as we go. Everything we do that keeps people safe and delays the arrival of this virus helps to protect all of us and gets us more prepared. She gave an example from H1N1 when she told all superintendents if any child in their school tested positive, they would have to close their school. Over the weekend new information came out so that Monday the information to give to schools had changed.

She reminded everyone to be kind to themselves. Everyone is doing the best with the information they have. We all want the same thing, a safe and healthy Lewis County.

**JP** asked Steve Mansfield to present to the BOH. **Steve** stated the Commissioners have a good team and as time moves on it will become stronger with possibly some changes in roles and they will handle it well. In every incident we have faced, communication is the key. In communicating with our public, if we give misinformation, we correct that as quickly as possible. We won't fix this as government; the people who really hold the key are the individuals out there by doing the things we are trying to teach them to do to keep them and their families safe. He told them they need to look at what their county leadership roles are, their employees, and the citizens they serve. He asked them what they want this to look like when it is through. All of the other business doesn't stop. There is a good amount of stress on the people who are tasked in running the ICS and the programs.

**Erik** informed JP that he has his support and the Board agreed that he also has their support to make those quick decisions that are going to have to be made from time to time. JP committed to keep the Board informed up to the minute as much as possible.

**Commissioner Stamper** moved to adjourn. **Commissioner Jackson** seconded, **Commissioner Fund** adjourned.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at [2:42 p.m.](#), on Monday, [March 9, 2020](#). The next public meeting will be held on Monday, [April 13, 2020](#) at 1:30 p.m.

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