

LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
BOARD OF HEALTH
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 8, 2021
1:30 p.m.

The Board of Health for Lewis County, Washington met in regular session on Monday, February 8, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. **COMMISSIONERS SEAN SWOPE, LINDSEY M. POLLOCK, DVM, and GARY STAMPER** were in attendance. **CHAIRMAN POLLOCK** determined a quorum, called the meeting to order, and proceeded with the flag salute. Sandi Andrus read the ZOOM guidelines. Those in attendance introduced themselves and Sandi noted who were joining by ZOOM. **COMMISSIONER STAMPER** moved to approve the Minutes from January 11, 2021, **COMMISSIONER SWOPE** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

ATTENDEES:

County Staff:

JP Anderson
Dr. Rachel Wood
John Abplanalp
Vanessa Ruelas

Bill Teitzel
Alison Puckett
Sandi Andrus

Community:

Edna Fund
Frank Corbin
Nancy Keaton

Nic
Dr. Steve Krager
Chronicle Reporter

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

H. Res #020821.1 Approve Amendment #18 to the Consolidated Contract #CLH18251, between Lewis County and WA State Department of Health (DOH)

H. Res #020821.2 Approve Agreement between Lewis County and Clark County for Health Officer Services

JP gave a summary of Amendment 18 to the Consolidated Contract with the Washington State Department of Health. This will increase the contract by \$691,627 for a maximum consideration of \$5,968,425. There are six areas impacted by this amendment: 1) COVID-19 Coordinated Response for \$214,883; 2) Division of Emergency Preparedness & Response COVID-19 to extend dates of funding; 3) ELC COVID-19 to extend dates of

funding and update; 4) Emergency Preparedness & Response COVID-19 Local CARES to extend dates of funding; 5) Foundational Public Health Services to extend dates of funding; 5) WIC Nutrition Program for \$476,744 and to extend funding dates for one year through 2021.

JP gave a summary of the agreement with Clark County for Health Officer Services. This will be effective from March 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 with an option to extend. Alan Melnick is the Health Officer and Steve Krager is the Deputy Health Officer for Clark County and will be our primary Health Officer for eight (8) hours per week. Until things open up more due to the pandemic, most of his work will be on the computer and over the phone. **Steve Krager** joined by ZOOM, introduced himself and explained how he and Dr. Melnick cover the Counties for which they provide services. He graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Colorado.

Commissioner Swope inquired as to the reason we are not considering Dr. Krager as our Health Officer. **JP** explained that since he works 32 hours with Clark County, contracting through that county right now benefits us. Commissioner Swope asked why we did not open the application process to see if there was anyone locally who could serve Lewis County directly. He was concerned that Dr. Melnick and Dr. Krager serving more than one county could almost be considered regionalizing. **JP** replied that this is the manner in which we were able to secure a Health Officer without a lapse in coverage. In maintaining a Health Officer in partnership with another county provides benefits we would not have if we were without a Health Officer and opened the application process. **JP** also explained the benefits of having the ability to call on these Health Officers in navigating the situation we find ourselves in currently. Last summer the decision to contract with Clark County rather than going with the application process was made by the Board of County Commissioners who were in office at that time.

Dr. Wood gave examples of where it has taken a long time to locate and hire a Health Officer. Thurston County did not have a Health Officer for seven months after Dr. Wood left there. The position was covered by other County Health Officers until a retired Health Officer filled it. Mason County's Health Officer gave notice the end of May 2020, and they still have not hired one to fill that position. **Commissioner Swope** expressed his concern that we are about to have to fight legislation about regionalized health and we are hiring someone who is sitting in that position. His issue is that we have not opened up the application process and would like to hire someone who focuses completely on Lewis County.

JP responded that he would be happy to take direction from the BOH or County Manager on whether or not to open the application process. At the time when the County knew we would have this position open, the plan went forward to look for and identify a potential Health Officer to ensure we had someone and started the process with Clark County. If we do not have a County Health Officer, the State assumes that responsibility and becomes our Health Officer until we fill the position.

Commissioner Stamper commented that at the time of Dr. Wood's resignation, the decision was made and there was not clear direction given by the previous Board of Health to **JP** to go out and recruit. Commissioner Stamper stated that if we do not move forward on this resolution, the State will come in and assume the Health Officer position.

Commissioner Swope made it clear that he wants to make sure we have an opportunity for people to apply for the position who are qualified that might live in Lewis County. **JP** strongly encouraged the BOH to consider unintended consequences of ending a contract with a qualifying Health Officer in the time of a pandemic.

Commissioner Pollock thanked Dr. Krager for their stand on Home Rule. She stated the schools would like to continue the work they are doing in each school district with their own unique decisions. **Dr. Krager** stated that the decision regarding in-person school is up to the local school board and administrators to make. He and Dr. Melnick will support them in whatever decision they make. They provide the most up-to-date guidance then the decision is made by the school administrators.

Commissioner Stamper asked if Dr. Krager felt he could be spreading himself too thin to cover this county. **Dr. Krager** replied they are all working a lot during this pandemic and felt after the pandemic, things will slow down a bit and won't be a huge concern. Having that partnership with Dr. Melnick helps a lot and they provide each other back up and flexibility. Staff will have access to him 24/7. **JP** stated Health Officers stay abreast of what is occurring right now and even though they are only contracted for 8 hours per week, they bring knowledge and what they learn by attending meetings, etc., during other times. They bring a level of engagement with them when they are working the other 32 hours.

Commissioner Swope recommended they allow an opportunity for an application process to happen once they sign this contract. **Commissioner Stamper** agreed that it gives them the opportunity to make sure they don't have the State to step in.

Commissioner Pollock added that after the pandemic, they need to keep in consideration how long it will take to actually evaluate what has happened and what needs to be done going forward so they can appropriately put together the scope of the job and the person they are looking for in Lewis County. She is fully in support of the most local control we can get. Commissioner Stamper added that there have been two Health Officers in the State who have given resignation in the last couple months.

Dr. Wood stated that Dr. Melnick and Dr. Krager have both taken calls for her when she has been on vacation so they also have some experience with Lewis County.

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

PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES (PHSS) ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

Nancy Keaton, member of the Public Health & Social Services Advisory Board, gave a summary of the last meeting held on [February 4, 2021](#). At that meeting, Sara Sons informed them about an RFP (Request for Proposal) for \$75,000 for individuals with developmental disabilities through the millage fund. Sara also informed them about an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for child development services.

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

JP asked if the BOH had any questions regarding COVID as he has been giving updates to them at other meetings. **Commissioner Pollock** stated she learned at the WSAC meeting that there are organizations using PrepMod through DOH which is HIPAA compliant to manage paperwork and asked if we are involved in that. **John Abplanalp** replied that we have been working with our providers who are enrolled in the vaccine program to make sure they are aware of that free service which saves hours of time doing data entry. Many of the providers participated in a training provided by DOH using PrepMod.

Commissioner Swope asked if our numbers are still trending down in our region. **JP** replied that the information provided on Fridays are 2 weeks back. There are some areas we can see it went up slightly but it will go down in the next 2 weeks. We are meeting three of the four metrics. Hopefully, we will be looking at a bit of a crest over the next two weeks. Our county is 17% of the overall population for our region. We have benefited from the prevention methods being taken in Thurston County which has a lower infection rate.

JP added he will meet with Twin Transit, United Way, and Bird's Eye, to discuss setting up the next phases in the vaccine administration to include mobile vaccination clinics. They will also be setting up the hotline telephone number for people to call. They will determine the age group that will be given the vaccine and begin to make appointments for their mobile locations. A press release will go out Wednesday with the number and information for the mobile location. Bird's Eye was allocated 300 vaccines for this week which will go first to 1A recipients such as adult family homes that have not yet been vaccinated and Sheriff Officers working in the jail who are going into medical units. Then move to the B1 recipients which is a subset of the statewide prioritization.

JP shared a printout of three possible options for receiving 2021 food establishment permit fees (attached) and reminded that the food establishment permit fees for 2021 was extended to the end of February. **JP's** recommended Option 3 which was to establish a grace period that extends through April 30, 2021. The most consistent feedback from owners was asking when the fees would be due to make appropriate plans to pay for them. The County continues to do the required work with some of it virtual and some onsite. **Commissioner Stamper** asked about a payment plan. **JP** stated that could be difficult especially if someone pays a partial fee. In order to reduce the fee, the BOCC would need to change the Fee Schedule. **Bill** added that one other option some Counties have done is to accept a different due date on an individual basis. **Commissioner Stamper** stated he would like to come up with something that provides some incentive to make sure those businesses want to reopen.

Commissioner Swope suggested setting each business's fee to be a percentage off determined by how much business was reduced from non-COVID to COVID comparison. It was discussed as to how that might impact accounting in figuring this. Currently, everything is based on the Fee Schedule and it would need to be amended before any fees are changed. A fourth option would be to allow businesses to contact the Health Department on an individual basis if they are still not open for business.

JP informed the BOH that he is getting questions from the food establishment owners as to what and when a decision will be made. Another month of indecision would probably be

frustrating for them. **Commissioner Swope** stated he liked using the April 30 deadline and if there are issues with that, they could petition or call the health department to discuss it. JP added they would need to get legal involved to be clear with any announcement and petitioning.

The BOH directed JP to go forward with Option 3, establishing a “grace period” that would extend the current 2020 permit until April 30, 2021 and continue to discuss. As stated, “This option would retain the existing fee schedule but would allow the establishment owners to have more time to pay their 2021 permit fees. BOH can also consider language to extend the deadline as needed based on State reopening restrictions and/or guidelines.”

JP reminded the BOH that Dr. Rachel Wood is retiring after 13 years and 8 months. He spoke of her abilities and positive personable bedside manner as our Health Officer and during this past year of the pandemic. **Dr. Wood** expressed how much she appreciated working at PHSS and how everyone shared the common goal of the best for the people of Lewis County. **Commissioner Stamper** added his appreciation for all the work that Dr. Wood has accomplished. Former Commissioner **Edna Fund** who joined by ZOOM, thanked Dr. Wood for being with the County through the thick and thin of 2020 which was a difficult time. **Commissioner Pollock** added that she was in practice when Dr. Wood came to Lewis County and she really appreciated her reaching out to the veterinarian community and her example to all the citizens of Lewis County. Dr. Wood thanked everyone for their comments. **Commissioner Swope** stated it was amazing at what she and JP were able to accomplish in getting the schools opened and being a leader in the State.

Commissioner Swope moved to adjourn. **Commissioner Stamper** seconded, **Commissioner Pollock** adjourned.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m., on Monday, February 8, 2021. The next public meeting will be held on Monday, March 8, 2021 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**

Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM, Chair

ATTEST:

Sean D. Swope, Vice Chair

Sandi Andrus, Clerk of the BOH

Gary Stamper, Member