

LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
BOARD OF HEALTH
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2021

1:30 p.m.

The Board of Health for Lewis County, Washington met in regular session on Monday, April 12, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. **COMMISSIONERS SEAN SWOPE** and **LINDSEY R. POLLOCK, DVM** were in attendance. **COMMISSIONER STAMPER** was excused. **CHAIRMAN POLLOCK** determined a quorum, called the meeting to order, and proceeded with the flag salute. Sandi Andrus read the ZOOM guidelines. There were technical difficulties with the sound for those who joined by ZOOM. Once that was fixed, the BOH continued. Those present in the Hearing Room introduced themselves. Dr. Krager, joining by ZOOM, introduced himself.

ATTENDEES:

County Staff:

JP Anderson
Dr. Steven Krager
Meja Handlen
Sandi Andrus
Alison Puckett
Megan Sibbert

Erik Martin
Katie Conradi
Becky Butler
Lee Grove
Susan Caldwell

Community:

Nic (KELA)
Edna Fund

PUBLIC COMMENT

Former Commissioner, **Edna J. Fund**, commented on the great relationship she sees with the Health Department and United Way and other community partners. Nine hundred twenty people received vaccines yesterday at the Fairgrounds. Bird's Eye was there and it was good to see everyone working together in this endeavor. **Commissioner Pollock** added that they are very appreciative of the coordination between the volunteer crew and all the work that goes around the vaccine events. **JP** added that he appreciates former **Commissioner Fund** volunteering with United Way and that partnership is a testament to the community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Swope made a motion to approve the consent item; **Commissioner Pollock** seconded and stated they would proceed with this then go back to the approval of previous Minutes.

H. Res #041221.1 Approve Amendment #19 to the Consolidated Contract,
#CLH18251, between Lewis County and Washington State Department of Health

JP gave a summary of the amendment. There were changes in three areas:

1. Covid-19 Coordinated Response which added \$1,429,952;
2. Division of Emergency Preparedness & Response COVID-19 extended the period of performance through December 31, 2021 and adds report deliverables and due dates for 2021;
3. Office of Drinking Water Group A Program adds \$21,750 and extends the period of performance through December 31, 2021, provides Sanitary Survey and Technical Assistance funding for 2023, revises special billing requirements and special instructions, and changes DOH Fiscal contact.

JP provided information on the changes within the programs and the reasons for the revisions. With this funding, we are getting some additional requirements and should be able to build longer-term capacity. We will be looking at getting more Communicable Disease staff to help fill some of these requirements.

Commissioner Pollack asked if **JP** foresees any difficulties meeting the deliverables that are currently in the contract. **JP** replied we have some staff already in place using some of the CARES Act funds and we can look at some of these things as we look at bringing on people in project-based positions to do this work.

JP stated the timeline for the Emergency Preparedness & Response-COVID-19 added some deliverables and due dates, as well as extends the period of performance and summarized some of the tasks.

JP stated some of the funding shows up after some of the work has been done for COVID-19 so there is a lot of tracking and figuring out how to pay for it then making sure everything has been done correctly once the funds arrive.

Becky Butler commented that the work performed for the mass vaccination cost is also included in this contract although they are not doing any direct allocation to the Counties; they are covering that cost 100% through FEMA. This information is listed on this amendment but there is no allocation associated to it.

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

Commissioner Swope moved to approve the Minutes from March 8, 2021; **Commissioner Pollock** seconded with one correction being made to her middle initial on the first page. Motion carried 2-0 with noted change.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES (PHSS) ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

JP gave a summary of the last meeting held on April 1, 2021. **JP** stated that the members continue to serve well but if there are additional people the BOH would like to see sitting on that group, especially in any areas connected with COVID, to feel free to let him know. This is a well-represented group from several different areas.

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

JP stated the County needs to work directly with Chehalis, LLC, to contract the Sears building. **Becky** added that it is 37,000 square feet and they are working on the fair market value associated with that square footage. They will bring that amount forward by the end of today. **JP** will forward that information to the Commissioners and discuss it tomorrow at the COVID update. They plan to have the clinic ready to go in about a week or so. More clinics are coming and those 16 years old and over will be eligible for the vaccine. This will include a walk-through clinic at Sears once we get the contracts completed.

JP reported that a press release went out last Friday stating the County has seen an increase in cases. Thursday's report will have the full details. Increases in cases are being seen in Lewis County and around the State. About 25% of our county's citizens have started vaccinations at this time. **Becky** reported Cowlitz, Pierce, and Whitman Counties went back to Phase Two.

Dr. Krager stated that if Governor Inslee had not changed the metrics recently, Lewis County would have also moved back to Phase Two because the hospitalization rate would have been too high. We did not return to Phase Two because we did not fill both metrics being used such as case rates on the State's recorded case count and hospitalization. The State will look at the metrics again in three weeks and if we are above 200 cases and our hospitalization rate is at 5, there is a potential we would move back a phase unless they change the metrics.

Dr. Krager gave a general background on virus variances. Every virus mutates and changes over time. Some are quicker than others are and some do not change hardly at all. The COVID-19 is changing more rapidly than was initially anticipated. A variance is a mutated form of a virus that has changed to a point that it actually causes a difference in how the virus behaves so it may be more infectious or cause a more severe disease. The variants could quickly become the dominant strain in the United States and in Washington. The main one we are worried about is the United Kingdom (UK) variant being about 50% more transmissible. Some additional information shows that it is about 60% more lethal but we are still talking about an overall low risk of deaths from COVID-19 for the public. Their estimates right now is that the UK variance in Washington is about 35% of current cases. It is higher in some other states. **Dr. Krager** spoke on how the variants can cause higher case rates.

Dr. Krager continued adding we have not identified a variance yet in Lewis County but that does not mean it is not here. Variances could possibly be what are contributing to an increase in cases and we are watching this very closely. One concern is if the variants are going to cause a problem with vaccines making them not very effective. There may be a slight diminishing in the success against the variances but it is probably not enough to make a significant difference. The vaccine will continue to prevent severe illness and death. The vaccine is very adaptable and it would be easy to create a new strain of the vaccine to combat the new strains of the variances.

Variants are kind of the dominant strains right now; all of them are a little bit more transmissible. We are not out of the woods yet. As more people get the vaccine, the strains will not have a significant impact. We are trying to get people vaccinated as soon as possible to prevent the infection.

In other counties, there is an increase in cases among unvaccinated people especially in younger age groups. The vaccine is working very well protecting but we still have a large section of the population that is susceptible to the virus.

JP gave the PHSS update presenting how the department would like to set a course out of COVID and after COVID. One move in this process is creating a Deputy Director of Operations and Social Services. Social Services had a lot of work prior to COVID and continues to have as much especially in Behavioral Health. This affects the type of response we want to have for the community in the coming months and years. We are looking at several positions, many of which the Consolidated Contract will fund, and we will bring those forward soon. This will add some positions that could be contract, project, or regular positions. We will also bring forward a working proposal that includes what the Local Health Jurisdiction's role is, what it will be, and where we are headed in the post-COVID world. We are working on the Organization Chart and the funding utilization structure.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at [2:15 p.m.](#), on Monday, [April 12, 2021](#). The next public meeting will be held on Monday, [May 10, 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