



Observed Meeting: Public Health Study Session Date: 11/22/23
 LWV Observer: Maureen McKinney Time: 10:00

	Yes	No	Comments
Members			
All members present?		x	Brett Wachsmith not there
Members attentive & involved?	x		
Members courteous to each other and public?	x		
Any members recuse themselves?		x	
Agenda			
Agenda available prior to and during meeting?	x		
Agenda followed?	x		
Agenda amended?		x	
Non-agenda items discussed?			
Was time given to public input?	x		

Action:

Please provide a brief, impartial summary of the meeting, including key issues discussed, significant actions taken, and other observations:

Following the agenda by item # -

1. Meeting called to order
2. No citizen comments although they said I could be a “citizen” as well as a LWV observer if I wanted ☺ I told them I would abide by LWV rules and stay silent.
 Department Business:
 - 3.1. – Community Health Project Specialist - Chelsey Loeffers spoke. She said they had a job info sheet ready to go to HR for recruitment. The position is based on grant funding and those funds are not always guaranteed, so the position is for one year. If funds continue and the candidate works well, they will be offered an extension. If the funding became permanent, they would be offered a full time position. The person hired would work on Harm Reduction and community health issues such as COVID and any other serious health issues facing the community. They would help with administration and recordkeeping and if they were a Certified Nursing Assistant, they could help with childhood vaccinations as well. They would like to have someone onboard by Jan 1. Chelsey asked if they could begin the recruitment process now as with the holidays it might be harder. The BOCC agreed.
 - 3.2. – Fee Schedule Discussion. Chelsey spoke again. They had done a wage survey/study and initially figured the fees based on the highest salaries. She now feels it would be better if they revised the fees based on COLA only for now, and not consider wage increases in. The reasoning is that if salaries came in lower, then

they may have to issue refunds for “overpayments” of fees based on higher salaries than actuality. She felt it was in the best interest of the community and would help build trust that had eroded in the past by unclear messaging. She said that if the wage increases came in higher, they had enough in their emergency fund to carry the difference for a year in the money lost if fees proved to be too low. Laura Osiadacz agreed and complimented Public Health for their thoughtfulness in considering the community in this process. Jessie from Public Health said he felt the community was split about 50/50 on their feelings about fee increases. Cory Wright felt that PH’s plan was okay, but mentioned that the salary survey needs to be in line with the budget, but felt that competitive wages would help the to attract and retain good staff. PH will present the fee schedule to the Board of Health in December based on COLA increases only.

3.3. – 1/10th of 1% Discussion - Erin from PH wanted to present a “pregame” preview of the proposal. The Advisory Board had met, discussed all that applied for funding and had given PH their recommendations. She provided the BOCC with the entities that the Advisory Board had selected along with the money each would receive. She had drafted a PSA that listed the full amounts shown, but assured the BOCC that this could be adjusted after the formal presentation to the Board of Health next week. Chelsey said after the BOH approved, she would send out award letters explaining that the formal contracts would follow. Laura O said she understood that at this time, the county had about \$1.8 million and wondered if the awards would take all of this amount or would there be sort of back up fund for emergencies? Erin said that at this time about \$.75 million would be awarded at this time. Chelsey said she felt that after seeing the “income” over the last few months, they had a pretty solid idea of how funding will come in going forward. The county had decided before the board was even in place that youth mental health issues would be the biggest/first priority, which is why the CWU entry may not have made the cut – even though their services would be open to all youth in the county. Cory asked about the school district, but Chelsey said none of the schools had applied. After the contentious issues the schools have dealt with lately, such as COVID, he hoped that in the next round they would apply. For now, he felt the project needed to come out strong to assure the community that it is worthwhile and that the funding is being tracked and monitored. Cory said he would remind the BOH to read the extensive file and be ready next week so that they would not get mired down in questions when the

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answers may be in the documents. PH and the BOCC hopes that the timeline won’t need to be adjusted if people are prepared. Cory hoped that more community members of the BOH would be in attendance also.

3.4. – Health Officer Update - Dr. Larson stated that COVID is still an issue, but fewer cases were being seen. Influenza A seems to be the bulk of ER visits right now. Younger people were the bulk of the cases and he felt this might be due to low vaccination rates as compared to the higher vaccination rates for older folks. 50% of a Christian school is out sick – not all from flu. There is some RSV and the jail still has intermittent COVID outbreaks. Also a LTC facility is currently having an influenza outbreak. He also said that youth vaping was once again on the rise.

Even though companies like JUUL stopped luring young kids, others are now picking up the “flavored” vapes. At first vaping was not considered so bad as it kept kids from tobacco, but now they are taking to vaping in large numbers which is not good. He talked with the school board about phone use and the dangers involved. He hoped to promote the schools having cubbies for the kids to leave their phones in during classroom time. Some areas of Kittitas are currently trying that, but it seems the parents are the biggest roadblock to the issue. They worry about not being able to contact their kids, shootings, and such. It was hoped this issue could be addressed in the future as it is understood that so much “phone time” is not good for kids. Cory asked about air quality and stated that even though he lives a ways from the freeway, he smells diesel fumes when he goes out in the morning. Jessie said that inversions are common this time of year, but haven’t risen to the level of burn bans or air quality warnings yet. He said he would pull the data and send it to Cory. Cory also asked if PH could put out a PSA about changing furnace filters? Chelsey said she would get one sent out. Dr. Larson then asked about current job postings and wondered about the requirements for college degrees? He felt that experience and knowledge of subjects was often as important as a degree and that we might be passing up applicants over the degree issue? Chelsey said in the posting, it is recommended, but not required. Dr. K thought perhaps they could work on the wording so they don’t lose the opportunity to provide jobs for very capable people without a college degree.

No other business – meeting concluded.

If minutes were posted online, please provide a link:

<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/boards/boards.aspx?board=health>

If a vote on an ordinance will be taken later, please provide the name or number of the ordinance and the date of the vote: N/A

Do you recommend local League action on any of these issues? No

What action do you recommend, i.e., support, oppose, study, inform the community, other (please specify): I suggested to Cory (in a personal email – not as a LWV member) that the county use their social media sites to promote what they are doing, public service announcements and even job listings as the younger generation does not read newspapers or go noodling on the Kittitas County webpage. They want more community involvement, but random articles in the paper are not enough.



Observed Meeting: Board of Health Date: 10-19-23
 LWV Observer: Maureen McKinney Time: 10:00 am

	Yes	No	Comments
Members		x	Dr. Larsen was unavailable
All members present?	x		
Members attentive & involved?			
Members courteous to each other and public?	x		
Any members recuse themselves?		x	
Agenda			
Agenda available prior to and during meeting?	x		
Agenda followed?	x		
Agenda amended?		x	
Non-agenda items discussed?		x	
Was time given to public input?	x		

Action:

Please provide a brief, impartial summary of the meeting, including key issues discussed, significant actions taken, and other observations: The September meeting minutes were approved. No citizen comments.

Department Updates: Chelsey the PH director talked about staffing. She congratulated Kasey Knudsen for 15 years service. Mattie Strong will be resigning in December. Kelly Bacon will be leading the Flu/COVID clinic next week. This gives them a chance to practice Emergency Response while getting people to vaccinate. The PH department has hired a consultant who has been doing 1 on 1 interviews with staff and is expected to produce a report next week. Chelsey will review it with the consultant, then will present it to the Board of Commissioners. There has been ongoing training for the LEAN program and also some staff attended the Washington Public Health Conference last week. Regarding the Veteran’s program update, they had a roundtable discussion and are working with other departments/agencies to decide what duties are best suited to whom. IT is also assisting so that city and community involvement will be easier. Candy is cross-trained for Timothy (head of the local VA program). Mountain River Trails – the PH department is working to document health issues and working with Public Words and CDS to address them. Kasey Knudsen will be presenting a documentary at Morgan Middle School regarding caregiving. Sarah is working on a Suicide Prevention program and it piloting it with 9th graders to see how it work out. Regarding 1/10 of 1% - proposals are being reviewed, they will be scored and the recommendations will be brought to the Board of Commissioners hopefully next month. James (one of the Board of Health members) is moving and this was the last meeting he will attend. He was thanked for his service and volunteerism. Cory asked about the documentary. The Drug Court expenditure has been approved.

Health Officer: Dr. Larsen was unavailable to attend.

BOHAC recommendations: Chelsey said they had 3 candidates, all very well qualified, but one stood out. Danielle Burchin was chosen. She has worked in community health, with Fire District 6 and has been a first responder. It was felt she was the best qualified and most familiar with our county.

Vacancy recruitment: With James leaving, they will have a new vacancy. This would be for a consumer/county resident for the Public Health seat on the board. Having health related issues or experiences is preferred. There is a process to get this seat filled. With the holidays quickly approaching, Chelsey said they may need more than the 30 days allotted. The board decided to be proactive and approved an additional 30 days for this.

Fees update: Staff wage increases will affect the budget and fees. Preliminary fee schedule may need further adjustment after salary increases are presented and the timeline for completing the updates may need to be revised. A public hearing is scheduled for November with new fees to start January 2021. Cory asked if the fee schedule could be presented 2 ways: with and without the salary increases? It was felt that the work could be completed before 2024. It was asked that stakeholder comments should be brought to the board. And the effect of salaries presented as a "maximum" amount, that could end up lower. The fee increases are expected to be minimal.

CORE services: A draft was presented to the board. Chelsey asked after quickly reviewing the draft if they had questions and stated the report could be revised to meet the Board's needs. The report covers mandated service such as communicable diseases, solid waste and non-mandated services such as indoor air, harm reduction, tobacco use, etc. Other services would include Veterans, child dentistry and more. Cory asked if outdoor air was covered? Chelsey stated that was something Public Health could not impact.

Since Dr. Larson was unavailable, Dede from KVH reported on the current COVID situation. Currently Pacifica, Prestige, Hearthstone and the jail are all in outbreak status. Cory asked what constituted an outbreak and she said more than one case in the facility. Currently each location has 5+ positive cases. They are testing twice a week and waiting 2 weeks with negative testing before it can be considered over. She stated that although the cases are not as severe as in the past, the version is much more communicable. She also stated that the new construction is ongoing at the hospital with will allow for another operating room and an additional MRI machine and an equipment sterilization room along with other things. Construction will hopefully be complete in April 2024. She also said they hosted a meeting with a couple of our state representatives and felt the meeting went well in discussing various issues facing our county such as maternal health and childcare.

Cory from the Board of Commissioners mentioned the upcoming closure of the Ryegrass Landfill. His concern is that the county will lose the lagoons/ponds used to deal with septic tank and porta-potty dumping. He felt that the boards should talk soon

with the existing sewage facility to decide how this sewage will be handled going forward when Ryegrass is closed.

Cory also again thanked James for his service to the county.

Meeting adjourned.

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<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/boards/boards.aspx?board=health>

If a vote on an ordinance will be taken later, please provide the name or number of the ordinance and the date of the vote: N/A

Do you recommend local League action on any of these issues? No

What action do you recommend, i.e., support, oppose, study, inform the community, other (please specify): N/A



Observed Meeting: Board of Health Date: 6/15/23
 LWV Observer: Maureen McKinney Time: 10:00 am

	Yes	No	Comments
Members			
All members present?		X	Brett Wachsmith missing
Members attentive & involved?	X		
Members courteous to each other and public?	X		
Any members recuse themselves?		X	
Agenda			
Agenda available prior to and during meeting?	X		
Agenda followed?	X		
Agenda amended?	X		
Non-agenda items discussed?		X	
Was time given to public input?	X		

Action:

Please provide a brief, impartial summary of the meeting, including key issues discussed, significant actions taken, and other observations:

Changes to the water use regulations have been reviewed and changed – mostly impacting cisterns and class B wells. Most changes were to clean up and simplify the language for clarity and to avoid misinterpretation. Stakeholders have been contacted and given an opportunity for comment, legal has reviewed. Cisterns must still meet state regulations. Those wanting to build, be it single family homes or developments, need to have a water availability assessment done first, but changes make it easier to have a cistern and did away with a 2-year deadline to get a building permit after water availability is established. However, in the case of developments, if building is delayed too long, water supplies can change due to growth on adjoining properties, and may need to be re-evaluated. A special program gives the BOCC authorization to make discretionary exceptions, but this would still involve state regs and inter-department cooperation and must address the drought and AG needs. The city of Kittitas was named as an example as they need to plan for long term needs. The changes exclude driveways from set-back rules. The commissioners asked if there was any comment. Fred Tallerico asked to speak. He has a class B well and is confused by the billing, metering and fees. Instead of explaining this, Cory said they would have staff follow up with him personally about his questions and concerns. A motion was made to accept the changes, they were accepted with the BOCC amendment to better define “road” in 13.03. It was approved as amended and was signed by members.

Presentation of the Public Health Champion Award – there were 9 nominees for this award. KC Fire Protection #6 received the \$500 award for their paramedicine program.

This program is collaborative and empowers the public resulting in fewer transports to KVH. An example was given of a fall patient who was uninjured, but at high risk for repeated falls. He was referred to specialist for fall prevention and they have not gotten a call since from him. There has been a 16% reduction in 911 call volume as a result of the program. Chief Jackson accepted the award and a group picture was taken.

Director/Admin Officer Report - Chelsey Loeffers stated that the BOH meeting for July will be cancelled as they do not have a quorum. Next meeting will be in August. She stated that two staff members will be leaving and they are working to replace them quickly. Both positions were in the Emergency Management group. She stated that the Health Dept was also working on restructuring and workflow issues and will advise a new fee schedule based on these changes. The department has given their annual report to the BOCC. She is hoping that the revised by-laws in regards to the 1/10th of 1% will be accepted by the board so they can be published to the public in September. Several on her staff have attended conferences and courses to improve their skills and give them a chance to network with other PH staff across the state. She praised and thanked her staff for their hard work.

Health Officer Report – Dr. Larson talked about air quality and wildfire smoke. The department uses AQI (Air Quality Index) with a range of 0-301 in their decision making regarding outdoor sports and events. He mentioned the recent smoke event on the East Coast, that due to the sheer number of people impacted may actually help us here on the West Coast as it brings experience and awareness to an issue they haven't dealt with before. Once the air quality is 101 – 150, it is bad for sensitive groups. Once it exceeds 150, it is in the red zone and he felt the health department should “recommend” that sporting events be cancelled or moved to smoke free areas. Kids under 18 are more sensitive to damage and should limit their outside time (even at a lower AQI) to 4 hours. This brings up things like the rodeo? He felt that educating the public of the real risks is important and that we need to balance physical/mental/financial needs with the dangers wildfire smoke can bring. He wants to educate how to build box fan indoor air cleaners for those without A/C. He will forward the State decisions regarding smoke/inversion problems the board. He stated that COVID levels are stable, but not zero. He will be going to a wastewater testing conference next week as the data is not clear on what all this means.

FPHS Update - (Foundational Public Health Services) Rural areas are not equally funded and this program aims to level the funding across the state. This is biennial funding. This report includes a 17 page handout. Current funding is \$1,018,000 and covers communicable disease, environmental health, business capabilities, epidemiology, maternal/child health, access to care, injury prevention, chronic disease prevention. New funding is \$653,000 and covers Public Health Emergency Management infrastructure, Immunization outreach and education, Emergency Health policy and leadership, communication and finance. In the existing and new funding, some of this is to replace COVID relief/emergency funding which has ended. The estimated annual budget for the department is \$3,713,149. The meeting was running overtime, so this was a rushed presentation.

Public Health Workforce Development Presentation – The county workforce has less than 5 years on the job on average. Staff retention is critical to having a successful PH department. They did an employee survey to get a feel for areas that needed

improvement and to see how the department stacked up against National statistics. Communication and physical work environment were two areas of some concern as well as employee burn-out. Organizational and Job satisfaction results were a bit less than the national averages for health departments. Recruiting has been difficult, particularly for Public Health Nurses and Finance staff. Again, due to meeting time restraints, this presentation was cut short.

Board of Health Membership Updates – Dr. Asriel announced he will be stepping down from the board in the fall as he is retiring. A posting will be put up in July to fill his position of Medical Health Professional. The board thanked him for his service.

BOH Member Updates - Dede Utley from KVH said the hospital volume has been busy following records set in May. Construction is ongoing – huge expansion including new operating suite. The hospital plans to open a Rapid Access Clinic, where if you have been a KVH patient in the last 3 years and cannot get an appointment with your primary care doctor, they will see you that same day. It will be open 6 days a week, but does not replace the ER for substantial injuries or acute health issues like heart events.

Meeting was concluded at 12:00 pm

If minutes were posted online, please provide a link: Not posted yet but will be here:
<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/boards/boards.aspx?board=healt>

If a vote on an ordinance will be taken later, please provide the name or number of the ordinance and the date of the vote: N/A

Do you recommend local League action on any of these issues? No

What action do you recommend, i.e., support, oppose, study, inform the community, other (please specify):

PS – If anyone would like to see the multi-page handouts regarding FPHS and Workforce Development, I have a copy.