

MASON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
August 25, 2009

Attendance: Mason County Board Members: Lynda Ring-Erickson; Ross Gallagher; Tim Sheldon

Ex-Officio Board Members: Scott Hilburn, Hospital District #1; Peggy VanBuskirk, Hospital District #2; Frank Philips, Fire Commissioner; Tim LeClair, Skokomish Tribe -absent

1. Commissioner Gallagher called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.
2. **Cmmr. Ring Erickson/Sheldon moved and seconded to adopt the agenda as published. Motion carried unanimously. RE-aye; G-aye; S-aye.**
3. Correspondence - None
4. **Cmmr. Sheldon/Ring Erickson moved and seconded to adopt the regular meeting minutes of June 23, 2009 as presented. Motion carried unanimously. RE-aye; G-aye; S-aye.**
5. Administrative Issues

- 5.1 Health Officer's Report – Dr. Yu updated the Board on the H1N1 flu. She is working with schools and hospitals to figure out how they will respond to more cases of the influenza in the fall. The most severe cases in Washington State so far have been in people under the age of 50. Anti-viral medication is not working very well in preventing severe complications. The percentage of people getting severely ill is small, but it is noticeable because it is in younger people. So far there have been two deaths in Mason County from H1N1 flu.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson asked if the people in Mason County who have died were in otherwise good health.

Dr. Yu stated that one person did have an underlying condition and the other did not. She explained that the best way to prevent this illness is to get vaccinated when it is available. Seasonal flu shots are now available and the swine flu vaccine will be out in the fall. It will be targeted to high risk groups first. There will also be an effort to vaccinate school children. Pregnant women have a very high mortality rate with this virus so they will be one of the first groups to be targeted. Influenza is very preventable. People just need to stay home when sick and wash their hands. Doctors will not be testing for H1N1 flu this fall so they will not be telling people if they have swine flu or the regular flu.

Cmmr. Gallagher asked if this round of swine flu will be more severe like it has been said on the news.

Dr. Yu stated that was not her opinion, however there will be added capacities to hospitals so they are preparing for the worst. If it is the same as last time they will not be taking extra measures. If the flu gets severe they may employ more drastic measures. There is not evidence that the germ has gotten more severe, however there can be a genetic change at any time. It has not changed in the last 4 months.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated she heard there was an expected infection rate of 50% of the population.

Dr. Yu explained that it depends on the population being discussed. There is no way to tell what will happen. Influenza always comes in waves. The second and third waves generally involve more people. A 40%-50% infection rate would be over the life of the pandemic, not all at once.

Vicki Kirpatrick stated it is the Health Department's goal to be prepared. They are going to have conversations with the community. When the vaccine is available it will be through the Health Department and all of the doses will need to be tracked. During this round there will be money

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coming from the Federal government to help pay for this. They will also be working on doing mass vaccinations at schools.

Dr. Yu stated they will need people to help with shot clinics. They need people to enroll in the Medical Reserve Core. Right now the push is to get the first shot in. They may not need to do a second round.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated the public should know that this vaccine is not made with a new process. It will be created exactly the same as the seasonal flu vaccines.

Lydia Buchheit commented that the seasonal flu is due at the same time as the Swine Flu, which will double the impact. People need to get their regular flu vaccine as well.

- 5.2 Director's Report – Ms. Kirkpatrick stated the Health Department will be bringing forward a professional services contract to bring someone in to train and develop volunteers for the Medical Reserve Core. They will be using Federal money to pay for the contract. The person who they would like to bring on board has done this before.

Ms. Kirkpatrick also noted that the fiscal oversight of the homelessness plan has been shifted to Public Health. She asked Kim Klint to discuss a contract she will be bringing forward regarding the Mason County Shelter.

Ms. Klint explained that the County is mandated to produce a plan to reduce homelessness by 50%. Funding comes in through different fees that are charged by the County and they are required to have a housing coalition in order to receive Federal funds. The coalition recommends to the County Commissioners what to spend the dollars on. There is currently a recommendation to add a housing specialist. It would be more efficient to add this specialist at the Shelter to take care of all of the housing specific activities. There are three grants the specialist would work on, the HGAP program, the rapid housing prevention program, and the housing component of the HIV/AIDS program. There would be 1 full time employee to do all of the housing aspects of these grants.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson asked if all three programs are grants from the Federal government.

Ms. Klint answered that there are two Federal grants and one State grant.

Ms. Kirkpatrick noted that this would help the Health Department because the Shelter originally wanted their department to do all of this work.

Cmmr. Sheldon asked if there is any funding for the County to administer this.

Ms. Klint stated the County is already getting administrative overhead from the grants and funding sources.

Ms. Kirkpatrick explained that their finance person does most of the administrative work and they keep track of those hours separately in order to bill the funding source.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson asked if there are any other assistance programs that Mental Health Fund dollars could be used for.

Ms. Klint stated their organizational capacity is one of their limiting factors. There is a need for case management of mental health, but due to capacity issues they cannot add programs. The need is there but they are over capacity.

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Cmmr. Ring Erickson asked if the funds could be used to increase capacity.

Ms. Klint stated there is a legitimate use for the money. The money can be used and they need to think about how it can be used creatively, but they also need to think about sustainability. They need to have sustainable funds.

- 5.3 2010 Budget – Ms. Kirkpatrick gave a recap of the Health Department’s 2010 budget proposal. They are looking at ways to reduce their 2010 submission or to bring funds to Current Expense. They have an abatement reserve in their line items. The money comes from liens that are paid off. The code states it can be in special reserve or in can go to the general fund. They are transferring \$70,000 from the abatement fund to the general fund this year. They will transfer the money to the general fund again next year.
- The second reduction they are considering would be to eliminate \$81,500 in Current Expense money that they give to the Department of Community Development for the work they do for the Health department. The Health Department will begin taking on the work of answering calls, filing and handling public records requests. That \$81,500 will also go back to the general fund. They would like to break down the budget and talk about the revenues, expenditures and the services the various programs provide to the community. The budget form does not tell that detail. There will be a 7% decrease from their 2009 request.

Cmmr. Sheldon asked if the 7% decrease includes the \$81,500.

Ms. Kirkpatrick answered that it does not. It is a total of about \$121,000.

Mr. Hillburn stated he understands there have been some staff cuts this year. He asked Ms. Kirkpatrick to compare 2008 to 2009.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated from 2008 to 2009 she lost 24% of her staff. She will be losing an additional 2 staff in 2009. It is not all a result of County dollar reductions. It is also State reductions.

Ms. Kirkpatrick reminded the Board that next month is a joint meeting with Thurston County.

6. Community and Family Health Issues

- 6.1 H1N1 Flu Discussion – This item was discussed under item 5.1, Director’s Report.

7. Environmental Health Issues

- 7.1 West Nile Virus Update – Debbie Riley gave an update on the positive West Nile Virus crow found in Mason County. As of earlier today, in the State of Washington there were no humans with West Nile Virus. There are 20 horses and 8 birds that have tested positive for the virus.

Ms. Riley also discussed some environmental health issues on the Skokomish River due to the heavy salmon run. People were toileting on the bank of the creek so there was an emergency closure of the shellfish beds in Annas Bay. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife has been working on providing extra porta-potties. There are currently twelve but that doesn’t appear to be enough. The anglers are creating their own paths to the river, which is creating problems for enforcement. This is the largest fishery in the State right now. Because of the issues, Fish and Wildlife is discussing closing the fishery. The State Department of Health and Fish and Wildlife will go to the area in the morning. It will take time to clean all of this up.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated this problem is immense. Last year there were 1000 fisherman between the mouth of the Skokomish and the Highway 101 Bridge. The problem is masked because you cannot see the volume of people.

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Ms. Riley said one of the shellfish growers affected by the closure brought in a CD with photos from along the river. There are people elbow to elbow on the river.

Cmmr. Sheldon asked when the closure would go into effect.

Ms. Riley stated she believes it will go into effect tomorrow.

7.2 Waivers - Debbie Riley presented the Board with the current Environmental Health Waivers.

8. Public Comment – None.

9. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

ATTEST

BOARD OF HEALTH
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Shannon Goudy, Clerk of the Board

Ross Gallagher, Chair

Tim Sheldon, Commissioner

Lynda Ring Erickson, Commissioner