

JEFFERSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
405 Main Street, Hillsboro, MO 63050
July 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Diehl called the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Jefferson County Health Department to order at 3:02 PM.

ROLL CALL

Dennis Diehl, Chairman - Present
Dr. Amber Henry, Vice-Chairman – Present
James Prater, Secretary-Treasurer – Present
Timothy Pigg, Member – Present
Suzy Davis, Member - Present

OTHERS ATTENDING

Kelley Vollmar, Director; Richard Tufts, Assistant Director; Jennifer Pinkley, Administrative Services Manager; Steve Heinle, IT Manager; Jessica Mikale, Wegmann Law Firm, Kevin Carbery, Leader Publications

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Pigg made a motion to amend the agenda and move the COVID-19 Presentation from Mercy Health System before Approval of June 25, 2020 Minutes. Dr. Henry seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

Mr. Pigg made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mr. Prater seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

Chairman Diehl stated as per the agenda the capacity of the Jefferson County Health Department Board room is 11 individuals. Priority for admittance to the business meeting will be given to the Jefferson County Health Department Board of Trustees, JCHD legal counsel, JCHD administrative staff and the JCHD IT staff conducting live stream service provision of the meeting. Any additional seats are available on a first come, first seated basis.

JUNE 25, 2020 MINUTES

Mr. Prater motioned to approve the June 25, 2020 minutes. Dr. Henry seconded. Motion carried and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

JUNE 2020 EXPENDITURES

Mr. Pigg motioned to approve the June 2020 expenditures for \$383,236.40. Mr. Prater seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

JUNE 2020 APPROVAL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

Dr. Henry motioned to approve the electronic payments for June 2020 for \$382,032.57. Mr. Prater seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

AUGUST 2020 PRE-APPROVAL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

The list of vendors for pre-approved electronic payments for August 2020 presented to the board with an estimated amount of \$429,419.00. Mr. Prater motioned to pre-approve the August 2020 Electronic Payments. Mr. Pigg seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.

COVID-19 PRESENTATION

Dr. Starke began his presentation by providing background information about himself. He reported being born and raised in North St. Louis County and attended medical school at St. Louis University. He is an internist has been on staff at St. Anthony's, St. John's, and St. Joe's hospitals during which he took care of a lot of Jefferson County residents over the years. Currently Dr. Starke is the Chief Clinical Officer at Mercy Health Systems and is Co-lead on Mercy's COVID-19 task force. Additionally, he serves on the St. Louis Pandemic Task Force.

Dr. Stark made the following points during his presentation:

- This is a unique virus that has never been encountered before and does not follow the usual patterns despite having similarities to other viruses.
- This does not only affect the elderly. While it is less common there have been reported deaths in children.
- For some people this is a very dangerous virus and the medical community is unable to predict who will be most affected by it.
- While COVID-19 is not quite as contagious as the influenza virus, it is spread as easily as the cold virus.
- It is transmitted from droplets from people's mucus membranes via the mouth nose, eyes, as well as people's hands due to touching the mucus membrane. Typical transmission is through the droplets that are expelled when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- What makes COVID-19 more difficult to contend with is half of the people that have it are asymptomatic. They may be spreading the virus without even knowing they have it.
- While there are treatments available to help with the symptoms of COVID-19, there is no known or scientifically proved cure for this illness.
 - Clarification was provided by Mrs. Vollmar, Chairman Diehl, and Dr. Starke: Dr. Starke is medical doctor, questions will be addressed at the end of his presentation, and there is no cure for COVID-19.
- Currently the best course of action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 is through preventative measures (e.g. handwashing, social distancing, masking) until vaccines and better treatments are available.
- The point of masking is not to protect ourselves, but to protect others by blocking the droplets we expel. "Depending on the quality of the mask, not only did the viral particle transmission decrease to inches to nothing, but also the number of particles decreased."

- It appears there may be a vaccine by the end of the year, and with the research that is currently happening there may be a treatment available in the long term.
- In some countries, such as Sweden, they did not wear masks or practice social distancing because they believed herd immunity would be the solution to COVID-19. However, their current death rate is four times that of other countries that are masking and practicing social distancing.
 - A counterpoint was given, at which time Ms. Mikale requested proper decorum as outlined by Parliamentary Procedures (aka Robert's Rules of Order) be followed and comments and questions be held until the end of Dr. Starke's presentation.
- The health care system is being challenged, which makes it important that the community take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 so that the health care system is not overwhelmed, and patients continue to be treated safely.
- Examples were given illustrating the previous point and how preventative strategies impacted the outcomes:
 - A hospital in Northwest Arkansas had increasing positive cases; however, after the mayor mandated masking the curve started bending and now the cases are declining.
 - In Oklahoma City they are being overwhelmed to the point that in another couple of weeks they will no longer have the means to safely care for their patients.

Following Dr. Starke's presentation, time was allotted for questions, during which the following clarifications were provided, and points were made:

- Rogers, Arkansas is the town in which the hospital was operating at full capacity before the curve started bending.
- Within two and a half weeks of St. Louis closing the city the number of positive COVID-19 cases began to decline. This decision was made before the local health care system was overwhelmed. Had this not occurred St. Louis would have experienced a similar situation as what New York did, and would not have handled it well.
- Clarification was provided that Sweden's curve has nearly flattened; however, their morbidity rate is higher than most other countries. From a public health standpoint W.H.O. deemed this a poor model.

DIRECTORS REPORT – KELLEY VOLLMAR

Old Business

Board Member Responsibility Review

During the last meeting board members were given documents to review. The documents pertained to board member responsibilities, policies and procedures, the Sunshine Law, and how public health works including the Code of Ethics. Board members were asked to sign that they have received these documents. Mrs. Vollmar asked for clarification from the board regarding how many meetings board members are expected to attend.

A discussion ensued pertaining to the frequency and schedule of board meetings per the bylaws. It was determined not all the board members were reviewing the most recently updated bylaws. Chairman Diehl provided clarification that some flexibility in scheduling board meetings is needed to ensure there is a quorum for business to be conducted. Ms. Mikale provided guidance stating that modifying the bylaws was not on the agenda for this meeting, therefore this discussion was moot. A request was made that this be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

An additional discussion ensued regarding setting the expected attendance rate for board members. Mr. Pigg suggested the number of meetings board members are expected to attend be set at ten. After additional discussion it was determined that this would need to be reviewed by the bylaws committee and voted on at another time. As it stands, the statement will continue to state attendance is expected throughout the year. Mrs. Pinkley will set up a bylaws committee meeting so that a recommendation may be made to the board.

New Business

Jefferson County COVID-19 Data Review

Mrs. Vollmar reviewed the current data for COVID-19 in Jefferson County, as well as well as regional data provided by the St. Louis Pandemic Taskforce which was included in a packet for the board members. The following clarifications/points were made:

- The data provided was gathered in response to a request made by board members prior to the meeting.
- Chairman Diehl advised that decisions be made based on objective, measurable data, rather than subjective data.
- An effort is being made to obtain additional data from the hospitals to determine how long the stay is and how severe the symptoms are for those hospitalized for COVID-19.
- A request was made for the number of people that have been hospitalized and/or have died from COVID-19.
 - These numbers are posted daily on JCHD's website and social media.
 - Mrs. Vollmar advised against focusing solely on the hospitalization and death rates for the county when planning and making decisions pertaining to public health.
 - Board members were reminded that as public health workers JCHD's staff and board members are tasked with protecting the health of all citizens regardless of age, health, income, race, etc.
 - It was noted that the guideline that was set to reopen Jefferson County was that the positivity rate be below 5%, and at this time the positivity rate is well about that.
- There is a concern that as the COVID-19 related hospitalization rates continue to rise it will reduce the hospitals' ability to treat/care for those with other life-threatening conditions (e.g. heart failure, strokes, etc.).
 - A counterpoint was made that the average number of people hospitalized was "not bad", which was met by another counterpoint that they would need data regarding how many

people are in the hospital for other reasons as well as for COVID-19 related issues in order to have a full picture of whether or not the hospitals were becoming overwhelmed.

- The data is showing that across the region COVID-19 cases are rising, and that it is across all the counties within the region. There are also hotspots within the region as well.
- The testing capability is there, meaning people have access to testing. However, within the last week people are being told that it could be 8-10 days before they will receive their test results. To adequately track/trace the spread results need to come back within 24 to 72 hours of being tested.
 - Those awaiting test results are advised to quarantine as if they are positive until their results are available.
- It was suggested that since a vaccine is not available that allowing for herd immunity would be a better option than trying to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This was met with the reminder that public health's focus is on protecting residents and preventing the spread of disease.

JCHD COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center Update (Richard Tufts)

Mr. Tufts reported he has the honor to lead the Emergency Operations staff responding to COVID-19. At first JCHD's regular services were being offered in tandem with the emergency response efforts. As the positive COVID-19 cases increased staff were reassigned to emergency response duties only. After closing the county, the number of positive cases began to decline, and staff began returning to their regular duties. However, as of June 20th, the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases began to rise resulting the Emergency Operations portion of JCHD is 100% COVID-19 focused. This means as an agency, 68 out of approximately 80 staff members have been reassigned to COVID-19 related duties only. Mr. Tufts reported that they are "the most energetic and dedicated staff he has worked with" but they are getting exhausted, there is no time for play or relaxation; and it is to the point that they may have to return to a 7 day work week.

The Emergency Response staff are divided into teams which are dedicated to specific duties related to long-term care facilities, medical related issues, and investigations and contact tracing. There are numerous teams involved in the investigations and contact tracing, which involves a lot of phone calls that last any where from 15 minutes to an hour and a half. Over a three-day period JCHD is receiving 75 to 100 new cases that must be contacted and traced. Because of the staffing limitations, clients are contacted at the beginning and the end of their quarantine, at which time a survey is completed with them.

- A request was made to have access to the surveys conducted at the end of quarantine to determine the severity of the illness and the number of people that were admitted to the hospital.
 - Mrs. Vollmar clarified that the surveys are protected under HIPPA since they are part of individuals' medical records. Additionally, the number of hospitalizations is reported daily on JCHD's website and social media.
 - Mr. Tufts clarified that the surveys collect information to help determine whether the person followed the quarantine/isolation

guidelines that were set up for them. If they have and they are fever and symptom-free then the Director can sign a letter releasing them. Staff is not collecting additional information unless the person voluntarily provides it.

- o Mr. Tufts provided further clarification that a person will not be released from isolation if they are not feeling well.

Mr. Tufts ended his update by report how proud he and the other executive team members are of the staff and their willingness to work extended hours including 7 days a week.

COVID-19 COUNTY STATUS

Mrs. Vollmar reviewed the different strategies that have been previously discussed in relation to minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Within the packet provided to the board members is a document that gives guidelines based upon national guidance for COVID reopening. This was the document that was disseminated amongst the state governors, and what was used to help local governments to determine when to reopen their counties. Mrs. Vollmar expressed concern that as the number of positive cases continues to increase so will the capacity limits of the hospitals, which at this time the local hospital is reporting they are at a green level (meaning they are good).

- A question was posed regarding the number of COVID-19 related hospitalizations at Mercy Jefferson.
 - o Mrs. Vollmar provided clarification that the last time she contacted the hospital they had three hospitalized COVID-19 patients.
 - o Mrs. Vollmar made the request that board members not contact the hospitals as a representative of JCHD to collect information. To clarify it was stated board members may contact the hospital as a community member and request information; however, JCHD staff (primarily Mrs. Vollmar as the Director) are required to follow a specific process to obtain information from hospitals.

Key components to consider when looking at the strategic options are

- Shutting down the community is financially and emotionally challenging for people.
- The hospital systems have not recovered from the initial outbreak, meaning personal protective equipment (PPE) stock has not been restored to the level it needs to be; and there continues to be challenges and limitations in obtaining the equipment that is needed.
- Staff within the hospital systems has been overextended and staff within the public health systems is still overextended. There is concern that an increase in cases will eventually take its toll on those on the frontline of COVID-19 and will result in a loss of staff.
- In addition to tracking the impact of COVID-19, it is imperative that planning includes looking at the other health trends and needs of the community, including the upcoming flu season, and how all of these components may impact the hospital and public health systems' abilities to serve the community.
- A counterpoint was made that herd immunity should be considered as one of the options to dealing with COVID-19.

- Mrs. Vollmar provided the reminder that public health is tasked with preventing the spread of disease. Allowing the vulnerable people in the community to die from a preventable disease to create herd immunity does not align with public health's mission.

Chairman Diehl requested for Mrs. Vollmar to provide recommendations for slowing the spread of COVID-19. Her recommendations are in the guidelines within the board packet, which include tightening the restrictions within the community, including:

- Mandated masking in indoor spaces
- Some form of capacity restrictions (e.g. restricting mass gatherings to 250 people)
- Encourage and practice social distancing

Mrs. Vollmar noted, the goal of the strategies is to prevent the community from having to close again.

Board members were reminded that voting on a mask mandate was not on the agenda for today's meeting.

- Mrs. Vollmar clarified that all the strategies that she has discussed were included in the Unite Jeffco Plan and have already been approved. As a result, what the board needs to decide is whether to remain on the level at which the community is currently operating that includes minimal to no restrictive strategies, or if the level should be changed to one that utilizes some restrictive strategies (such as what is recommended).
- A suggestion was made that the board gather and consider more information about the impact of masking, especially with so many people being asymptomatic.
 - Mrs. Vollmar highlighted the point that masking is a strategy that helps prevent asymptomatic people from spreading the virus to others.
- A discussion ensued regarding whether a decision should be made at this meeting regarding changing the level from green to yellow.
 - Mrs. Vollmar stated in the interest of public health she did not want the board to postpone providing approval for moving to the next level. She asked that the board consider how delaying this decision will impact JCHD's ability to help families prepare for school (e.g. immunizations) and how an increase in cases will impact the opening of schools
 - The board members agreed that there was a sense of urgency in implementing strategies to reduce the spread. However, it was decided they would set a special meeting in which a vote will be taken.
 - Mrs. Davis requested to bring a guest speaker to the meeting.
 - A counterpoint was made that it was agreed to bring in Dr. Starke in to provide expert information to the board members.
 - The special meeting was scheduled for 3pm on July 28th.
 - Mrs. Vollmar expressed concerns regarding the impact of protesters being outside of JCHD offices, specifically that it impeded staff's ability to provide services to the public.

- Mrs. Vollmar provided a reminder that JCHD is non-partisan and should not be used as a platform to further board members' personal agenda.
- Chairman Diehl posed a question to Ms. Mikale regarding the proper protocol for establishing the agenda for the special meeting. Ms. Mikale advised doing so via email.

VISITORS AND GUEST REMARKS

Chairman Diehl provided instructions for how the visitors and guests remarks would be conducted:

- Each speaker will come in one at a time and will be given three minutes to address the board and are required to state their name and where they are from.
- Board members were reminded that this was a time for listening to feedback, and were instructed not to engage in dialog, or answer questions.
- Clarification was provided that as stated on the agenda and meeting announcement posted prior to the visitors/guests who chose not to wear a mask may submit their written comments to the board.

Public comment against a mask mandate was provided by the following visitors/guests:

1. Mark Usery, Jefferson County Resident
2. John Bubb, Fenton/Jefferson County Resident
3. Wyatt O'Harver, Festus
4. Lori Bourgeois, Dittmer
5. Douglas Poss, Imperial
6. Tonia Lovelace-Poss, Imperial
7. Kristina Ginn, High Ridge

Public comment in favor of a mask mandate was provided by the following visitors/guests:

1. Jessica Shepherd, Herculaneum

Dr. Henry read the written public comments against a mask mandate submitted by the following visitors/guests:

1. Nancy Brigham, High Ridge
2. Anonymous
3. Anonymous
4. Linda Sue Mouser
5. Marcella Povis
6. Linda Van De Riet
7. Anonymous
8. Anonymous
9. Anonymous
10. Stephanie Sharp, Byrnes Mill
11. Jan Karsten, Jefferson County Resident
12. Suzanne Martin
13. Loren Martin
14. Kayla Martin
15. Dina

16. Tracy McMarus
17. Whitney O'Harver
18. Tony Kalna, Dittmer
19. Linda Bowman
20. Jennifer O'Harver
21. Anonymous
22. Brooke Dennis
23. Stacy Renshaw
24. Whendy Moore
25. Matt Hoyt
26. C. Taylor

There were no written public comments in support of a mask mandate.

Mr. Pigg made a motion to go into a closed session. Mrs. Davis requested to know the topic of the closed session. Mrs. Vollmar provided clarification for when a closed session may be called. Ms. Mikale provided clarity that the closed session was to have communication with the attorney. Dr. Henry seconded Mr. Pigg's motion. Additional clarification was provided regarding what constitutes confidential/privileged information that would require a closed session. Chairman Diehl noted that business in which a vote was taken during a closed session would become public knowledge after three days. However, business that was discussed and did not require a vote is to remain privileged. A rollcall vote was taken for going into a closed session. Mrs. Davis was the only dissent and there were no abstentions. A request for a five-minute break was made. Chairman Diehl stated the motion to go into a closed session passed and clarified that Facebook Live would be closed for the duration of the closed meeting. Once the closed meeting ended Facebook Live would resume. Mrs. Vollmar noted the only item remaining on the agenda was to adjourn.

Mr. Pigg made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to 610.021 (1). Vice Chairman Henry seconded. All in favor, Mrs. Davis opposed. Motion carried and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed.


ROLL CALL

Dennis Diehl, Chairman - Present
Dr. Amber Henry, Vice-Chairman - Present
James Prater, Secretary-Treasurer - Present
Timothy Pigg, Member - Present
Suzy Davis, Member - Present

Nothing to report from Closed Session.

ADJOURN

Mr. Pigg motioned to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chairman Henry seconded. Motion carried unanimously and Chairman Diehl announced the motion had passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:42 PM.


Secretary-Treasurer