

**LEWIS AND CLARK CITY-COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH – MINUTES
1930 9th AVE, HELENA, MONTANA 59601
Zoom Meeting, 1:00 p.m.
October 22, 2020**

Members Present by Zoom

Justin Murgel, chair
Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, vice chair
Mayor Wilmot Collins
Brie McLaurin
Kammy Johnson
Dr. Mikael Bedell
Jenny Eck
Raymond Berg
Tyler Ream

Staff Present by Zoom

Drenda Niemann Heather Parmer
Jolene Helgerson
Jacqueline Isaly
Kathy Moore
Eric Merchant
Damian Boudreau

Guests Present by Zoom

Representative Mary Ann Dunwell

Members Absent

Justin Murgel, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established. Introductions of board members were made.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were made. No public comment was given.

MINUTES

Mr. Murgel asked if there were any corrections or additions to the September 3 and 24, 2020, minutes. There being none, the Board approved the minutes as written. No public comment was given.

BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION

Finance Report: Heather Parmer, Finance Coordinator, referenced the FY21 comparison to budget and cash flow for July 2020 through September 2020 (see Attachment “A”). Ms. Parmer noted that the department is 25% of the way through the fiscal year. Total revenue to date is \$190,188, or 8% of the amount budgeted; actual expenditures are \$366,085 or 14% of the amount budgeted. Revenues are under expenditures by \$175,897; total ending cash is \$788,713. Drenda Niemann, Health Officer, explained that the expenditures are higher this first quarter due to the pandemic. Public Health has received an additional \$218,000 from the CARES ACT, which needs to be spent down by December. No public comment was given. Lewis and Clark County has agreed to allocate some of the county’s CARES ACT funds to the Public Health if needed. In answer to a question from Mr. Murgel, Ms. Parmer explained that the revenues and expenditures for COVID-19 are tracked in a separate fund from what is presented in Attachment “A”. Mr. Murgel requested that staff provide the board with that report.

New Staff Introduction: Ms. Niemann introduced new staff members Vianka Tayler, WIC Administrative Assistant; Jolene Jennings, Behavioral Health Systems Improvement Specialist; Lauren Knudsen, Administrative Receptionist; and Damian Boudreau, Communication Specialist.

PHAB Report: Ms. Niemann discussed the PHAB (Public Health Accreditation Board) report which was submitted on October 21. Ms. Niemann highlighted year's 3 progress, successes and ongoing work. Due to staff's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the ongoing work on the strategic plan has been put on hold. Ms. Niemann said that she and staff will get back to working on our strategic planning dashboard and quality improvement projects.

HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Niemann reported that she has met with Legislative Executive Director Susan Fox and Dr. Greg Holzman with the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to discuss the how the legislative session will comply with COVID-19 restrictions during the session. Until new legislative members are elected, a COVID-19 plan cannot be put into place. A draft plan has been created with several COVID safe options. Public Health has offered to review the plan and provide guidance. Ms. Niemann requested that the Board send a letter in support asking the legislature to follow a plan with protections in place. A request was made by Board members to send a welcome letter from the Board of Health asking legislatures to please be careful and to follow Lewis and Clark County's COVID-19 Phase 2 restrictions. Board members discussed the possibility of having a virtual session. Ms. Niemann said that Ms. Fox has assured her that they are ready for a virtual session if approved by the legislative leadership. Brie MacLaurin asked for talking points for board members when discussing COVID safety precautions and compliance with the public. Mr. Murgel read the comment from Representative Mary Ann Dunwell who supported a remote session with remote public comment. She also recommended a letter to the new legislature from the Board of Health regarding COVID-19 restrictions within the capital.

Ms. Niemann highlighted the COVID-19 Dashboard and the State of Montana COVID-19 map of current numbers of confirmed, active, and recovered cases, and the number of hospitalizations and deaths. Ms. Niemann announced that the department will change step 2 of the enforcement process from law enforcement to in-house. Citations and injunctions will continue to be delivered by law enforcement. Ms. Niemann shared a Georgia Tech webpage that showed COVID-19 risk association with small to large events. Ms. Niemann said that she does not see a need to change her health officer order for events at this time. Staff is reviewing upcoming events and will recommend to keep events under 50 or not at all. There are no approvals for large events at this time. Staff is working on employer messaging on to handle positive employees. In answer to a question from Mayor Collins, Ms. Niemann said that Public Health will continue with the 3-step complaint process for businesses regarding the Governor's mandates, but we do not have the ability to apply that enforcement process to individuals. In answer to a question from Jenny Eck, Ms. Niemann said the county attorney is working with law enforcement to acquire evidence and sworn testimony in order to take the organizer of the Let Freedom Ring Concert to court for not following the plan they submitted to Public Health. Ms. Niemann also shared analysis of community activities 2 weeks before symptoms or a positive case. Ms. Niemann said that she continues to look at infection and compliance data to apply new restrictions to individual businesses not complying with current restrictions rather than additional restrictions on all businesses. Public health is working with partners including business to take the lead on public health messaging to the community. Ms. Niemann shared the Center for Disease Controls (CDC) changes for a close contact. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

No public comment was given.

Ms. Niemann noted that the next board meeting is scheduled for December 3 and that a special session meeting of the Board may be needed before the regularly schedule December meeting. Board agreed to meet in November. Staff will schedule a special session meeting in November.

There being no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 2.39 p.m.

Justin Murgel, Chair

Drenda Niemann, Secretary