

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

Thursday, September 20, 2018

Jefferson County Public Health, 615 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend WA 98368

Board Members

Kate Dean, County Commissioner District #1
David Sullivan, County Commissioner, District #2
Kathleen Kler, County Commissioner, District #3
Ariel Speser, Vice-Chair, Port Townsend City Council
Sheila Westerman, Citizen at large
Kees Kolff, Hospital Commissioner, District #2
John Austin, Chair, Citizen at large

Staff Members

Thomas Locke, Health Officer
Vicki Kirkpatrick, Public Health Dir
Stuart Whitford, Env. Health Dir
Veronica Shaw, Public Health Deputy Dir
Michael Dawson, WQ Manager
Pinky Mingo, EH Manager
Jenny Matter, Clerk of the Board

Vice-chair Ariel Speser called the September 20, 2018 meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Health to order at 2:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

Members Present: David Sullivan, Kathleen Kler, Ariel Speser, Sheila Westerman, Kate Dean

Members Excused: Kees Kolff, John Austin

Staff Present: Thomas Locke, Vicki Kirkpatrick, Stuart Whitford, Michael Dawson, Pinky Mingo, Jenny Matter

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-chair Speser asked for approval of the agenda of the September 20, 2018.

Member Kathleen Kler motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Kate Dean. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-chair Speser asked for approval of the minutes of the July 19, 2018 meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Health.

Member David Sullivan motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Member Sheila Westerman. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-chair Speser opened the public comment period.

John Tevis of Port Hadlock commented on how Jefferson County is too accustomed to lawsuits and recounted the details of communications he had with Environmental Public Health and the Jefferson County Sheriff from January through April of this year.

David Parisi of Port Hadlock said he believes the system for code compliance in Jefferson County is flawed and community members should not have to regularly attend public meetings to get the county to take action.

Brian Peterson of Chimacum said a man has been living in his RV on a county right-of-way and that, by doing nothing, the county is making the problem bigger. He has made complaints over the last five years.

Robin Middleton of Chimacum said she has made complaints over the last 15 years about the property behind hers, in which there are six adults and three children living in a very old mobile home without a permitted septic system. She said her dog has come home twice covered in human feces from their property and the excessive garbage has attracted rats that have done damage to her home.

Vice-chair Speser closed the public comment period.

Stuart Whitford, Environmental Public Health Director, shared details of the complex issues surrounding each parcel of concern commented on by the public. He explained the abatement process and noted they do not have enough legal help to process abatement orders and there is inadequate funding to clean-up the properties on the abatement list.

The Board and Mr. Whitford discussed factors contributing to solid waste infractions including insufficient affordable housing, mental health and drug abuse issues, and chronic poverty. They also discussed the current code enforcement process, including triaging complaint cases and the importance of taking a measured approach when there are not enough resources available to deal with all the solid waste violations in the county.

The Board had questions and comments about how other counties address people illegally living on county right-of-ways, what other resources are needed in addition to a code enforcement officer (including additional time with the Civil Prosecuting Attorney and protection in the field), leveraging community capacity and working with volunteers to help clean up parcels, the importance of compassion when working with those in intractable poverty, and the need to create physical space to legally have one's body when homeless.

OLD BUSINESS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. **Jefferson Healthcare (JHC) Update**

Jill Buhler reported that: 1) JHC will open the first rural health dental clinic in the Spring of 2019 and will host an open house for the proposed dental clinic on Monday, October 15, 2018 from 1pm - 3pm, 2) the Port Ludlow clinic is being remodeled to incorporate a new retail pharmacy, 3) JHC has hired ten new providers, and 4) the CEO, CFO and three commissioners of JHC will be meeting with congressional representatives next week to advocate for rural healthcare.

2. **HEALTH ADVISORY: E. Coli Cases in Clallam and Island Counties Linked to Raw Milk Consumption**

Dr. Tom Locke, Health Officer, said it is very difficult to keep raw milk free from bacteria such as E. Coli because it naturally occurs in the intestinal tracts of cows. From a public health perspective, raw milk is unsafe and offers no additional nutritional value as compared with pasteurized milk. Although it is not legal in all states, it is legal in Washington State.

Stuart Whitford told the Board that, once he received the draft press release from DOH, he informed the stores in Jefferson County that carry milk from the suspected dairy about the reported cases.

Dr. Locke explained how milk is tested for E. Coli and how epidemiologic methods are used to identify small outbreaks. Raw milk is only recalled if bacteria are detected in milk samples, which was not the case with the most recent outbreak.

3. **King County Medical Society Resolution re: Gun Violence Prevention**

Dr. Locke said the King County Medical Society has proposed a resolution for the State Medical Association to adopt at their next meeting in mid-October. The resolution includes eight specific proposals to reduce gun violence, including establishing an Office of Washington State Gun Violence within DOH.

4. **Weaponized Health Communications: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate**

Dr. Locke told the Board that according to a study published in the American Public Health Journal, Russian Trolls are promoting pro-vaccination and anti-vaccination social media messages in order to cause conflict and mistrust, which works against the mission of Public Health.

5. **Amended Bylaws of the Jefferson County Board of Health**

Dr. Locke and the Board discussed residential requirements for Board of Health membership and how to word Article 3 representation in the bylaws.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Environmental Health Policy Regarding Enforcement of Basic Sanitation Regulations in Non-Permitted Living Conditions**

Stuart Whitford reviewed the intent of the proposed policy and areas where it would temporarily violate various sections of county code. Mr. Whitford said that while the policy would provide flexibility and a framework to help people move towards compliance, it would also be in conflict with development regulations. Given the current homeless situation, Mr. Whitford said DCD is comfortable with providing temporary allowances. The prosecuting attorney has yet to review the policy.

Mr. Whitford and the Board discussed the importance of fair and equal treatment (along with proper documentation), temporarily exceeding the design capacity of on-site sewage systems, considering RV's as living units, prioritizing public health over land use, and broader social issues, such as homelessness, affordable housing, income adequacy, and comprehensive services for those with mental health issues. They also discussed fee structure barriers and long-term consequences based on current regulations (i.e. vacating owners or issuing notice to title). Mr. Whitford will meet with DCD to address the Board's concerns and provide a revised policy for the Board to review.

2. **Environmental Health Policy Regarding Minimum Land Area Required for On-Site Sewage Systems**

Linda Atkins, Environmental Health Specialist, informed the Board about plots of land in Jefferson County that, due to size, cannot meet current septic standards. These "legacy plats" were originally designed for seasonal use and developed before the current standards for septic systems were established. They are often located near flood plains, shorelines, or streams, and too small to meet minimum land area requirements for septic systems and wells.

Anna Bachmann, Environmental Health Specialist, provided information on septic systems in Brinnon and gave examples of cases that are in violation of the code but can't come into compliance due to minimum land area requirements.

Options to safeguard the water supply and public health, such as community septic systems, local utility districts, and step systems were discussed. In addition, the Board and staff discussed surrounding shellfish areas closed due to increased fecal coliforms, potential housing pressure from the Brinnon Master Planned Resort, recertification of the Dosewallips sewer system, and the capacity of communities and individuals to financially support alternatives.

The Board agreed to have Environmental Public Health start engaging with local communities in order to find potential solutions.

3. **2017 Communicable Disease Program Report**

Dr. Tom Locke suggested this agenda item be discussed at next month's meeting.

4. 2018-2019 Influenza Season Preparations

Dr. Tom Locke said one theory to explain why there has been low efficacy rates for the flu vaccine is because much of it is grown in eggs causing the virus to change and become less like what will circulate in human populations during seasonal outbreaks. This year some vaccines will be available that were produced from alternate means so the efficacy rates can be compared.

5. Olympic Community of Health Update – Memorandum of Understanding between Olympic Community of Health and the Arcora Foundation

Dr. Tom Locke said the MOU between the OCH and the Arcora Foundation is for the three county oral health impact plan, which will be discussed more at a later time.

ACTIVITY UPDATE

Kate Dean requested to consider (as an agenda item) a larger venue to accommodate the public.

Kathleen Kler said there is no pathway forward for the SBHO pilot project, which was presented from Jefferson, Kitsap and Clallam counties to Sue Birch, HCA Health Director. Ms. Kler said the counties need for local control and concerns about therapeutic court were stated.

Stuart Whitford introduced Pinky Mingo, who is the new Environmental Public Health Manager for JCPH.

Stuart Whitford said a press release will be issued on Monday to change the name from Environmental Health to Environmental Public Health, re-open on Fridays from 9am – 1pm, and extend staff time from 9-10am to 9-10:30am.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Jackal, past president of Olympic Canal Tracts said residents are feeling pressure to comply with septic regulations, but don't have the financial resources to take action. Many are living on severely limited incomes and can't even afford subsidized loans. He asked for leniency and compassion.

Larry Hartley, resident of Olympic Canal Tracts, said he has lived there for over forty years and questioned why pump tanks can't be used since there is not enough square footage for septic systems. He said, although Olympic Canal Tract was originally intended for recreational use when it was established in 1962, people are now living there year around due to affordability.

Robin Middleton of Chimacum said she is frustrated because she feels like the person who lives on the parcel next to hers is taking advantage of the many chances the county has given to comply with septic regulations.

AGENDA PLANNING CALENDAR

Vice-chair Speser requested that, due to time constraints, any new agenda items be emailed to Jenny.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next Board of Health meeting will be held on Thursday, October 18, 2018 from 2:30 – 4:30p.m. at Jefferson County Public Health, 615 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend, WA.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-chair Speser adjourned the September 20, 2018 Jefferson County Board of Health meeting at 4:34 p.m.

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

Excused

John Austin, Chair

Excused

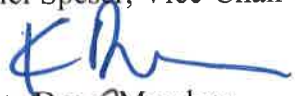
Kees Kolff, Member


Kathleen Kler, Member


Sheila Westerman, Member




Ariel Speser, Vice-Chair


Kate Dean, Member


David Sullivan, Member

Respectfully submitted
J. Matter