

PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS District Health Department

Board of Health

May 20, 2021

Board Members in Attendance:

Dave Bruning Larry Cerny Judy Henning Christy Lucking
Dave Norton Don Schuller

Board Members in Virtual Attendance:

Stephanie Knight Mark Schoenrock

Board Members Absent:

Dr. Josue Gutierrez Janet Henning Dr. Bruce Kennedy Tim Pickering

Staff Members in Attendance:

Kim Buser, Director; Sonya Williamson, Fiscal Administration; Debra L. Wendelin, Office Administrator.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by President Larry Cerny. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by posting required by law.

Approval of Agenda:

Meeting agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda by Judy Henning, seconded by Dave Norton. All ayes, motion #1 carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Previous meeting minutes were emailed before the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes by Dave Norton, seconded by Judy Henning. All ayes, motion #2 carried.

Financial Reports: Acceptance:

Sonya Williamson presented on the Financial Reports. We are about to the end of our fiscal year. Some line items on the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual FY20-21 are over spent due to COVID-19 expenses but overall, we are sitting really good. Program budgets are under spent due to staff hours being dedicated to COVID-19 response. Program managers are working with grantors to see if funds can be carried over or reallocated. Funds paid out for contact tracing have come down considerably. On the flip side, we show a higher expense paid out for contract nurses. We were fortunate that local health care systems and volunteers helped us out. Under the Department Infrastructure line, we made our down payment for the lease on our new office space. Our liability insurance premium went up due to a claim even though we were completely in the right. We are currently looking for a new carrier but specialty insurance carriers are hard to find. Our premium has almost tripled in the last three years from \$5-8,000 to \$13,000. Dave Norton asked for further clarification on why the expense for cell phones is over-budget. We bought phone cards for contact tracers which was reimbursed through COVID-19 funds. The Healthy Families America (HFA) program expanded and purchased new iPads and cell phones for staff which was paid for through the program. This year's budget has been tough. We have received a one-year extension on our indirect cost rate so we can get our regular budget back in line. Motion to approve the Financial Reports by Dave Norton, seconded by Mark Schoenrock. All ayes, motion #3 carried.

Directors Report:

As we review the rough draft of the budget keep in mind that income from COVID-19 funding is getting ready to run out. A main portion expensed to the COVID-19 funding has been program manager salaries who have spent their time on COVID-19 and can't bill the grant for salary expense as they

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aren't working on grant-related activities. The COVID (Per Shot Reimbursement) was through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We have these funds available to use as long as Governor Ricketts maintains an emergency declaration for the state. As we weren't sure we were getting these funds, we did not include as part of our funding sources. Governor Ricketts will likely keep the emergency declaration as it is tied to funding and allows for a Direct Health Measure (DHM) to be issued immediately. Our department receives \$40 for each COVID-19 vaccination. The National Health Emergency Declaration ends December 31, 2021.

Our department is sitting very well as we took advantage of every COVID dollar available. We received \$83,000 last year from the legislature's appropriations fund with an additional \$83,000 added this year and approximately \$43,000 allocated for the next year (will be based on per capita).

State COVID-19 funds will go away at the end of June. We will then need to look to each of our counties for assistance. Going forward, unless we should have a spike in COVID cases and struggle to find funds, we will pay expenses out of our normal budget. The American Relief Act will provide an estimated \$10.5 million dollars within our five counties. We have a two-year epidemiology/surveillance contract that will provide a surveillance specialist. We also have a one-year immunization grant in the amount of \$200,000. We would not ask the counties for a large amount of money and come to you only if there is no other funding source available. Dave Norton shared that counties may want to include this expense as a line item in their budget so they are prepared should the need arise. The amount to budget could be run like our School Kids Immunization Program (SKIP) using the population in the county as a reference on how much to charge per person. Dave Bruning felt in determining that dollar amount we should look at the number of cases in that county versus a per person cost so counties with less residents aren't paying the same as the larger counties.

Moderna and Pfizer are working to receive authorization to vaccinate individuals two years and older. Kim would like to offer the COVID vaccine along with regular back-to-school vaccination clinics. Kim is more concerned at this time with vaccination maintenance rather than the pandemic.

Kim will discuss with the Board at their next meeting in July staff restructuring. One thing the pandemic made us aware of is that had we had key positions in place within our department infrastructure (data/surveillance and a clinical services manager) our job would have been made much easier. Kim is going to take a look at staff reallocation, pay structure, and adding a couple of critical positions (date/surveillance and bilingual staff). Kate Lange has transitioned from our Emergency Response Coordinator and accepted the position of Clinical Services Manager for our department. We lost Johanna Pesante-Daniel as she went to work for a private foundation who can offer a highly competitive salary/benefit package. We are heavy on personnel (total payroll expenses) as that's where we spend most of our money. Kim has found that employees were not so concerned about wages when working more hours during the pandemic as they were with time being spent away from their family. Employees want a more flexible work schedule – we don't always need everyone in the office. We want to make sure we have the right people doing the right job. We have budgeted in for a couple more positions but do not want to add until we can do so effectively. Kim will send out budget changes to Board members in an Excel file.

Dave Norton wanted an explanation in the budget under Equipment-Department Infrastructure, what the \$44,103 was allocated for. This amount is additional funds we could use if we wanted to make upgrades to our equipment, i.e., computers.

COVID has opened our eyes to just how underfunded health departments really are. Dave Bruning commented that the pandemic made people recognize how important public health is and they came to us for information. Kim shared that even though they were forced to come to us they found out we were trustworthy. We were at tables that we had never been at before and came together out of necessity.

The next Board of Health meeting in July will be in our new office! Americom has presented us with an opportunity to upgrade technology in our new conference room. The technology package would include a viewing screen that would be mounted in the ceiling along with an improved sound system. The cost of the full package is \$37,000. We currently have grant funds available that weren't expensed due to COVID response. We are going to see if funders will let us commit to use these dollars for

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technology updates. COVID funds can be used for technology upgrades and paid for a much-needed new telephone system for our office. There is no additional monthly fee for the package. Once we have the funding piece in place, we can have the Executive Committee come together to approve or come back in July at the next Board of Health meeting for a vote to approve at that time. Sonya noted that funds from some programs end June 30 so we may have to have approval before the July meeting. Larry Cerny requested he wants to wait until July so the full Board can vote.

A change in the Open Meeting Act law now allows 50% of regular meetings to be held virtually. Kim suggested to the Board that we utilize this new requirement during the winter months when roads could be bad. Kim will send a copy of the new law to Board members.

Kim would like a Board member to volunteer to represent public health at the State Association of Local Boards of Health (SALBOH) meetings. SALBOH would be a great resource to us as we look into redoing our Board of Health bylaws. All conference and travel fees would be paid for by the department. Anyone interested please talk with or email Kim.

We will be moving to our new location next week. Eakes will be here Monday to move office cubicles, Wednesday Firefighters on the Move will move us, Thursday staff will work getting their offices/computers functioning, and, if everyone gets moved by the end of Thursday, we will take Friday off to make for a four-day weekend over Memorial Day. Kim will be out of the office the following week on PTO. Kim assured Board members that we will have no problem with our current landlord upon our exit.

A “thank you” to Christy Lucking for taking care of getting staff gift cards during National Public Health Week! They were enjoyed by all!

Our department is a member of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS). Sonya has visited with NPERS and requested that they come out to visit with staff on the importance of retirement, how you protect retirement funds during a carryover, and to educate the young workforce on what they need to retire. NPERS is offering a deferred retirement plan that employees could pay into. The plan does not include any additional work on our part, is a straight payroll deduction, and there is no match from PHS. Kim will address the Board again in July on the deferred plan.

We received the Pfizer vaccine last week and it is in Beatrice in their ultra-cold storage unit. FEMA has funds to update vaccine equipment so our department will be receiving an ultra-cold storage freezer and replacing our old cooler. Once we receive the ultra-cold freezer, we will move half of the Pfizer inventory to our department. As of today, we have 44.02% of those 16 and over in our district fully vaccinated. Kim’s personal milestone would be to reach 50%. In order to reach 50%, we would need 2,500 people to be fully vaccinated. Clinic numbers are dwindling down and we have found those due for a second dose have found a second dose elsewhere or just aren’t getting the second shot. Getting the vaccination is a personal choice and it’s sad to see how political people have made it. There has been a huge disservice to people by not providing them with the correct information.

Open Forum:

Dave Bruning wanted to know if Kim had a chance to speak with Reinke Manufacturing regarding providing a COVID vaccination clinic to their employees. Kim has visited with Reinke Manufacturing and most of their employees have received their shot(s) elsewhere.

The pandemic is certainly not over but we are ready to get back to normal!

The next Board of Health Meeting is Thursday, 15, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. in Crete, NE.

Being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned.

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Debra L. Wendelin
Office Administrator

PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Board Members Roll Call & Roll Call Votes

Meeting Date: 05-20-2021

Board Members		Roll Call		MOTIONS															
				1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
		Present	Absent	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay
Dave Bruning		X		X		X		X											
Larry Cerny		X		X		X		X											
Dr. Josue Gutierrez			X																
Janet Henning			X																
Judy Henning		X		X		X		X											
Dr. Bruce Kennedy			X																
Stephanie Knight		X		X		X		X											
Christy Lucking		X		X		X		X											
Dave Norton		X		X		X		X											
Jim Ricketing			X																
Mark Schoenrock		X		X		X		X											
Don Schuller		X		X		X		X											
Totals		8	4	8	0	8	0	8											