

Whatcom County Council as the Health Board

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

10 AM

Council Chambers / Hybrid Meeting

**JOINT HEALTH BOARD/PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING -
HYBRID MEETING (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Health Board Vice Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call - Health Board

Present: 6 - Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Absent: 1 - Tyler Byrd

Roll Call - PHAB

The following Public Health Advisory Board members were present:

Amy Harley
Ashley Thomasson
Chris Kobdich
Christine Espina
Emily O'Connor
Guy Occhiogrosso
Jon Scanlon, Health Board ex officio
Joni Hensley
Julie Terry
Kelli Carroll
Leah Wainman
Madison Emry
Robyn Phillips-Madson
Shu-Ling Zhao
Sterling Chick
Teri Bryant

Announcements

Public Comment

The following person spoke:

- Natalie Chavez

Hearing no other speakers, Galloway closed the public comment period.

Special Presentation

1. [AB2024-706](#) Update from Public Health Advisory Board Chair
Sterling Chick, Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Chair, stated the subgroup that is working on the matrix that they are going over today met on

Friday.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

2. [AB2024-707](#) Update from Health Director and Health Officer

Erika Lautenbach, Health and Community Services Department, stated they are going to be talking a lot over the next few weeks about the budget so there will be opportunity in that process for the Council to ask questions.

Amy Harley, Co-Health Officer, stated she is available to answer questions.

Lautenbach answered how the resolution affirming food security as a public health priority fits in with PHAB and stated it was a topic of conversation at their retreat. It is a priority for PHAB to try to understand what the Council/Health Board's expectations are of the them because there is nothing specifically outlined for them to address or work on so that is a conversation for the two bodies to have next year.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Discussion

1. [AB2024-708](#) Discussion of Public Health Advisory Board Roles and Responsibilities Matrix

Sterling Chick, Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Chair, read from the "Scope Differentiation for Health Board and PHAB" (on file). He stated when the Legislature passed the requirement for health boards to either join with advisory groups or be separate, each entity was given a set of rules. PHAB was given eight tasks and he read those. After getting those tasks, the advisory group made a matrix (on file as "PHAB Role Matrix 10.25.2024 for 10.29") to help them figure out their roles. It includes the eight tasks plus one more ("Adopt a health equity framework for community health improvement") and he spoke about that and the matrix as a whole.

Donovan asked whether there are other counties with this model and Scanlon stated they are looking to schedule someone from the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) to come and present the differences between different counties and models. Health Board and PHAB members discussed whether it would be more effective if Whatcom County went the route that other counties did (combining public health people with elected officials) and how far they should go with the discussion of the separate roles before they decide on the former.

Scanlon moved to form a work group of the Public Health Advisory Board to analyze and recommend structure of the Health Board, and by end of

Quarter one of 2025, present to the Health Board and Council findings and recommendations.

The motion was seconded by Donovan.

Scanlon clarified that he was making the motion as a Health Board member.

Health Board and PHAB members discussed the motion, that the current model should be one of the options considered, getting feedback on this question from the community as well, the fact that the differentiation of scope would look different if they elected to have a combined board, and that combined boards are often much smaller than the total of the two groups that Whatcom County currently has.

Shu-Ling Zhao, PHAB, asked if the motion is to have the PHAB look at this or whether they are looking at the possibility of a joint task force with some PHAB members and some Health Board members.

Scanlon accepted, as a Friendly amendment to his motion, to allow the work group to be PHAB and Health Board members coming together.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Buchanan, Donovan, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Absent: 1 - Byrd

Elenbaas stated he would like to serve on the work group and Scanlon and Donovan also said they would add their names.

Chick called out to PHAB members for volunteers to also serve on the work group and the following volunteered:

- Christine Espina
- Leah Wainman
- Kelli Carroll
- Joni Hensley
- Sterling Chick

PHAB members discussed whether they should discuss who their representatives would be first at their December meeting or whether they should choose them today.

Donovan moved and Galloway seconded to appoint Donovan, Elenbaas, and

Scanlon, (from the Health Board) to the joint PHAB/Health Board work group.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Byrd

O'Connor stated that the PHAB has five people who have volunteered and asked whether it should be fewer.

Chick removed his name from consideration and stated he likes the idea of having three and three.

Wainman asked if there is a timeline for the original motion and Scanlon stated it would be the end of quarter one of 2025.

O'Connor moved and Hensley seconded to appoint Christine Espina, Leah Wainman, Kelli Carroll, Joni Hensley.

The PHAB motion carried.

Lautenbach asked whether they are intending there to be a vote and one official recommendation or that the group would just present options. If there is going to be a vote, she has a concern about PHAB disproportionately making that recommendation.

Scanlon stated he could see this group making a recommendation to the Health Board and where the Health Board and PHAB vote on a recommendation.

Health Board and PHAB members discussed the process going forward.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved 4-2, with Elenbaas and Stremler opposed and Byrd absent, to form a joint work group of (members of) the Public Health Advisory Board and Health Board to analyze and recommend structure of the Health Board, and, by end of Quarter one of 2025, present to the Health Board and Council findings and recommendations.

Motion approved 6-0 with Byrd absent to appoint Elenbaas, Scanlon, and Donovan from the Health Board.

Motion approved by the PHAB to appoint Christine Espina, Leah Wainman, Joni Hensley, and Kelli Carroll from the Public Health Advisory Board.

2. [AB2024-634](#) Discussion of 2025 Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Work Plan

Sterling Chick, Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Chair, briefed the Health Board members and stated an example of one thing the PHAB would like is to be included in things, such as the drafting of a resolution for a declaration of a public health crisis, from the very beginning so the Health Board can hear from people who have expertise and lived experience. They would also like to know what the PHAB's role should be for big topics in 2025.

PHAB, Health Board members, and Erika Lautenbach, Health and Community Services Department, discussed working internally on the PHAB's scope first, being mindful of areas where the PHAB should make sure they have all the resources needed before moving forward with strategies, getting clarity on whether the PHAB is bringing topics to the Health Board or waiting for the Health Board to tell them what direction they need to move in and focus on, the opinion that the relationship should be bi-directional with either group being able to initiate, having a work plan that says the PHAB will adopt a health equity framework by a certain time, the PHAB being a help to Council by giving feedback on things they might prioritize in the budget and including a fiscal note with that, plans for bringing back the Community Health Assessment and that it should be prioritized, and whether the PHAB should write a letter in support of the Community Health Assessment.

Chick moved that the Public Health Advisory Board draft a letter in support of a 2025 Community Health Assessment.

Chick restated his motion and moved that the Public Health Advisory Board strongly support that Health and Community Services be given the resources that they need in order to be able to carry out this very needed Community Health Assessment.

The motion was seconded by O'Connor.

The motion carried.

Scanlon moved as the Health Board that they recommend to the Executive that the budget for this upcoming biennium include funding and staffing levels necessary to complete the Community Health Assessment.

The motion was seconded by Donovan.

Galloway asked about unfreezing the position for the assessment and Scanlon stated he specifically left his motion vague to allow the Executive and Health and Community Services Department to work out the details of that. He just wants to make sure the Community Health Assessment happens.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, stated if the PHAB and Health Board want to move toward requesting the Executive to have the Health and Community Services Department complete the Community Health Assessment, that would be entirely appropriate and they are happy to accommodate that. They would just ask for some discretion on how they get there.

Lautenbach answered what the assessment involves and how it translates budget-wise, and stated the frozen project manager position is really the key gap.

PHAB members, Health Board members, and Lautenbach discussed a request to the Executive's Office to give an answer to the budget impact, knowing where there is a lack of investment in the county and where they need to invest more, the fact that the Community Health Assessment is a resource for nonprofits and philanthropists to help guide and prioritize grant-making, how long it takes to complete the assessment, that having someone in a project management position would help them utilize resources they receive from the State, the importance of hearing directly from community members with lived experience, why the assessment does not have grant funding from the State and that Health and Community Services is always looking, and that the budget is not looking great at the State level so they will likely not see a lot of increase in State funding as a source of potential revenue for the next biennium.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Buchanan, Donovan, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremler

Absent: 1 - Byrd

Galloway stated the PHAB could strike the word "maybe" ("Declared Public Health Crises [racism, shelter, opioids, maybe food]") and consider food in their work plan.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Motion approved by the PHAB that the Public Health Advisory Board strongly support that Health and Community Services be given the resources that they need in order to be able to carry out this very needed Community Health Assessment.

Motion approved as the Health Board 4-2, with Elenbaas and Stremmler opposed and Byrd absent, that that they recommend to the Executive that the budget for this upcoming biennium include funding and staffing levels necessary to complete the Community Health Assessment.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Health Board Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription