

# **Whatcom County Council as the Health Board**

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



## **Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

**10 AM**

**Virtual Meeting**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Rud Browne  
Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Todd Donovan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Carol Frazey  
Kathy Kershner

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

**Call To Order**

Health Board Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

**Roll Call**

**Present:** 7 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas, and Kathy Kershner

**Absent:** None

**Public Comment**

Buchanan opened the public comment period and hearing no one, closed the public comment period.

**Director and Health Officer Report**

The following people presented:

- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Greg Thompson, Co-Health Officer
- Amy Harley, Co-Health Officer

Lautenbach reported on the Health Department.

Thompson and Harley gave a brief epidemiology update and spoke about the Omicron COVID-19 variant.

The speakers answered questions about the primary COVID-19 variant in Whatcom County at the time of the meeting and the 60 added positions in the Health Department during the pandemic.

Lautenbach gave a summary of recent flood response by the Health Department.

Councilmembers and the speakers discussed whether the Health Department responded to staffing needs as requested by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) due to the floods, concerns about short staffing in the EOC, whether they are seeing COVID-19 cases in emergency shelters and what is in place there to help with the spread of the virus, when updates on new COVID-19 variants will come to an end with an acceptance that this is part of our life in light of the new Omicron variant, the use of volunteers for emergency response, and public perception of the initial coordination and response of the County to the flood event.

**Update on Racial Equity Meeting with Boards/Commissions**

[AB2021-718](#) Update on Racial Equity Meeting with Boards/Commissions

The following people presented:

- Steve Bennett, Public Health Advisory Board
- Leah Wainman, Public Health Advisory Board
- Astrid Newell, Health Department

The speakers answered questions about taking the model used by groups associated with the Health Department or the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) to look at policies and procedures as it concerns racial equity and expanding that to other advisory committees, ensuring that there is training and establishing a process to take when the training is not followed, whether there has been discussion about what the barriers are to increasing diversity in board membership, and looking at barriers that keep people from effectively accessing the County website.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

**Update on Way Station Planning**

[AB2021-720](#) Update on Way Station Planning

The following people presented:

- Chris Kobdich, Unity Care Northwest
- Teri Bryant, Whatcom Homeless Service Center and Opportunity Council
- Rob Ney, Administrative Services Department Facilities

They answered how many people can stay at the respite care area at one time and when that will come online.

**This agenda item was PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.**

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

The County Council approved these minutes on January 11, 2022.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Barry Buchanan, Health Board Chair

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Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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