

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

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



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

1:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 2:30 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT
311 GRAND AVENUE SUITE 101, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Barry Buchanan
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Barry Buchanan, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Also Present: Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Carol Frazey

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2022-537](#) Report from the Health Department on COVID Response, Recovery, and Beyond

The following people presented:

- Dr. Greg Thompson, Co-Health Officer, presented about the strain on our healthcare systems because of a surge in respiratory infections (especially in kids), and where we have been in terms of COVID-19 in Whatcom County and how that compares to the state and the nation
- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, presented an overview of effort and support throughout the course of the pandemic thus far
- Kathleen Roy, Financial and Administrative Services Manager, presented on the support and funding resources the Health Department was able to provide for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years
- Cindy Hollinsworth, Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Manager, presented on the transition from response to recovery and routine COVID work as well as what the department anticipates moving forward

Kershner stated there is a two-year report on the County Health Department's website that goes through February 2022 and provides information on the data that was being shared while we were in the thick of the pandemic.

The presenters answered whether the data presented for COVID-19 outcomes is just for 2022, whether we have the capacity to pick back up

with the sexually transmitted infections (STI) and hepatitis outreach services which were temporarily set aside during the pandemic; whether we have any data on why children are being hospitalized right now at a rate of four times higher than the last five years, why respiratory illnesses are at the highest rates ever seen before, and the shortage of child fever medications; whether there are any medical providers, hospitals, pharmacies, or other healthcare providers that are receiving any incentives for administering vaccines and where that information might be available; whether there is any local connection for reporting and receiving support in Whatcom County for adverse reactions to a vaccine; whether the Health Department is keeping track of people who might have adverse events; whether the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issues guidance based on information that is coming through the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) and whether the Health Department follows the guidance of the CDC and does not make determinations based on local information or information from Peace Health; whether there is a service the County could provide to submit to VAERS on behalf of people; whether raw data from VAERS is available to the public and whether it can be aggregated by geography; whether the Health Department can put resources on the website for how to report adverse events; and whether there are any questions the Council should ask the Medical Examiner from the Health Department at an upcoming report from the Medical Examiner regarding whether there are increased death rates or sudden deaths in Whatcom County.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription