



To Protect and Promote the Health and the Environment of the People of Kittitas County

**KITTITAS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)  
Meeting Minutes  
December 21, 2023  
Commissioners' Auditorium  
10:00 am**

**Present**

**Board of Health (BOH):** Brett Wachsmith, Laura Osiadacz, Cory Wright, Danielle Bertschi

**Absent:** Dede Utley

**Public Health:** Candi Blackford, Chelsey Loeffers, Jesse Cox, Dan Suggs, Lucy Garcia, Cambron Walker, Kate Johnson, Mackenzie Carter, Whitney Wheelock, Mark Larson M.D., Katie Odiaga, Kasey Knutson

**Others:** Ruby Collins, Kittitas County Health Network

*BOH meeting called to order at 10:14am.*

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve November 28, 2023, Board of Health meeting minutes as presented.

**Motion 12.01: Motion to approve the November 28, 2023, Board of Health meeting minutes as presented. Brett Wachsmith moved to approve the November 28, 2023, Board of Health meeting minutes as presented. Danielle Bertschi second. All approved. Motion carried to approve the November 23, 2023, Board of Health meeting minutes as presented.**

Public comment open at 10:15 am

Public comment closed at 10:15 am

**Department Updates**

**Director/Administrative Officer Report**

**Staffing Updates**

- Steph Mifflin accepted tech position and starts January 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- CH project specialist closes on December 25 with five applicants to date.

**Departmental Updates**

- The department had a very productive archiving day on December 8. The staff focused on records retention, destruction of records per retention schedules, and prepping for 2024. The shred bins are full.
- The Community Health Assessment (CHA) is almost ready for release. BOH will have a presentation on the final document in January.
- The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is almost done. The draft content is being finalized, and then will go to the designers for formatting. Planning for final presentation to BOH when completed.

- The department has been asked by the Board of County Commissioners to take over clerking for the Kittitas County Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee. Candi Blackford is stepping in temporarily until we establish that work as a permanent element to a position.
- The initial recommendations from our organizational consultant have been received. We are working through them as a management team and hope to have a presentation for the board next month.
- The department is partnering with regional Local Health Jurisdictions to bring in a regional wildfire smoke/air quality expert to work with the region in 2024 on developing emergency response plans, structuring internal programs, and providing technical support.
- Kelly Bacon has worked with the department and completed the flu/COVID clinic After Action Report. A lot of great ideas, opportunities to improve, and recognition of successes was discussed at the meeting prior to completion hosted by Darren Higashiyama.

#### Program Updates

- Erin Moore is working with legal and funding recipients to finalize contracts for 1/10<sup>th</sup> awards.
- Timothy Paxton, County Veteran Service Officer (VSO), completed a first round of county-wide outreach for VSO services.
- Kelly Bacon was selected as an awardee to attend the National Preparedness Summit.
- Ms. Loeffers thanked Mackenzie Carter for her assistance with the county employee survey.

Next month is the Board of Health Orientation.

#### Health Officer Update

Mark Larson M.D. discussed the new COVID variant JN.1 and that this variant will be the dominant strain by the end of year. Dr. Larson presented information and data about the variant in other countries around the world and discussed wastewater treatment information that is being gathered. Dr. Larson also reported on local respiratory illness rates and new recommendations for masking that may be coming for health care facilities.

#### **Other Business**

##### Board of Health new member appointment recommendation by the Board of Health Advisory Committee (BOHAC)

Chelsey Loeffers presented the letter of recommendation to the Board of Health. Unfortunately, no BOHAC member was able to attend today. The BOHAC Special Committee interviewed the only applicant, Linda Navarre, on December 7, 2023. Ms. Navarre is an Upper County resident, former public health nurse, has significant lived experience with public health services through supporting family members, and would bring a unique perspective to the Board of Health. The committee is recommending the appointment of Linda Navarre to the current open position on the Board of Health.

**Motion 12.02: Motion 12.02 to recommend Linda Navarre for the Board of Health vacant position. Brett Wachsmith moved to recommend Linda Navarre for the Board of Health vacant position. Danielle Bertschi second. All approved. Motion 12.02 carried to recommend Linda Navarre for the Board of Health vacant position.**

##### Board and Committees position discussion

Chesley Loeffers read a staff report asking the board for guidance on the possible creation of a new position that would provide admin support to Kittitas County human-services related boards and committees. Currently the health department provides staff to clerk two Kittitas County boards/committees:

- The Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

- 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% Mental Health and Substance use Advisory Board

On December 6, 2023 the health department was assigned a third, the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee. Ms. Loeffers discussed the benefits of creating a position for the admin functions of these committees and could incorporate the Veterans Advisory Committee and the RFP and contracting for the Opioid Settlement funds, as these would fit into the scope of this position. The majority of funding for this position would come from most of the committees themselves. The group discussed potential funding options. The Commissioners did note that general fund would not be an approved source of funding for this position.

#### 2024 Budget Presentation

Chelsey Loeffers presented the following on the Kittitas County Public Health 2024 Budget:

- 2024 Preliminary Budget Breakdown
- 2024 Final Budget Breakdown
- Estimated Total Revenue
- Estimated Total Expenses
- Admissions Tax Breakdown
- Fund Balance
- Staffing updates
- Budget Approved New Positions
- Proposed Positions for 2024

There were no questions from the board at this time.

#### Board of Health Member Updates

Cory Wright discussed quorum issues and would like to have the group revisit the bylaws at a future meeting. Ms. Loeffers will add it to an agenda in the next month or two.

Meeting concluded at 11:14 a.m.



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Brett Wachsmith, Commissioner, Chair



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Chelsey Loeffers, Director  
Kittitas County Public Health



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Candi Blackford, Clerk of the Board of Health