

KITTITAS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 20, 2023  
Commissioners' Auditorium  
10:00am

**Present**

**Board of Health (BOH):** Brett Wachsmith, Cory Wright, Laura Osiadacz, Dede Utley, Dr. John Asriel, James Donaldson

**Public Health:** Candi Blackford, Jesse Cox, Chelsey Loeffers, Marie Marchand, Kasey Knutson, Erin Moore, Cambron Walker, MacKenzie Carter, Lianne Bradshaw, Katie Odiaga

**Others:** Greg Aubol, Comprehensive Healthcare; Jodi Bailey, CEO/Director of Comprehensive Healthcare; Pat Gigstead, Probation; Clay Myers, Kittitas County Sheriff's office; Steve Panattoni, Kittitas County Sheriff's office; Jim Weed, City of Ellensburg Police Department; Judge Paul Sanders, Kittitas County Lower District Court; Emily Brown, Kittitas County Lower District Court; Barb Demory, Lower District Court; Eileen Murphy, Kittitas County Public Defense Department Director

*Meeting called to order at 10:01am*

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 16, 2023, Board of Health meeting minutes as presented.

**Motion 04-01:** Motion to approve the March 16, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Brett Wachsmith moved to approve the March 16, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Dede Utley second. All approved. Motion 04.01 carried to approve the March 16, 2023, meeting minutes as presented.

Public comment open at 10:02 am

Mike Karraker, Kittitas County resident, stepped to the microphone and discussed his past experience with mental health and some difficult situations he dealt with when he was younger. Schools should be a safe place for kids, but he feels that currently they are not. Kids today are using social media to bully other kids, more specifically the social media fight clubs. It's time to get the community involved and be a part of the solution to mental health.

Jessica Karraker, Kittitas County resident, stepped to the microphone and noted that there was an Instagram page called "MM Fights 2023" and was not pleased with how the schools have handled this situation. Ms., Karraker has attended previous BOH meetings and noted that while she is pleased with the mental health conversations, talking once a month about mental health issues is not enough. Ms. Karraker would like the county to think outside the box and involve the community in making a change. Ms. Karraker noted that she would like to see leaders and the community having discussions about how we can all work together to help bridge the gap to the silent mental health crisis.

Public Comment done at 10:06 am

**Department Updates**

**Director/Administrative Officer Report**

Chelsey Loeffers reported on the following:

Staff Updates:

- Holly Erdman has been with the county for 35 years.

Department Updates:

APPROVED

6-6-23

- Opioid funds are now in the county's possession and public health will help with the administration of the county funds of approximately \$60,000. Ms. Loeffers noted that these funds were the county funds not public health funds.
- The department is still waiting to see the amount of funding that will be passed down to local health jurisdictions. Ms. Loeffers is hoping to update the board by the next Board of Health regular meeting with an amount after the steering committee meets to decide on distribution amounts.
- Kittitas County Prosecuting Attorney's office has decided that the Board of Health board is unable to have one alternate position that covers all three community member board positions.
- April 21, 2023 was the department's first day having a Licensed Mental Health Counselor on site.
- The department performed four staff surveys and is working on gathering information.
- Ms. Loeffers has found a potential consultant to perform the department's organizational assessment to help with the restructuring of the department.

#### Program Updates:

- Environmental Health had a successful stakeholder meeting regarding on-site sewage with over 20 attendees from the community.
- Working on finalizing water code updates and will be requesting a public hearing tentatively for June.
- Air Quality meeting with EPA and networking for rebuilding the local Air Quality Committee.
- The Children with Special Health Care Needs program is starting a new Early Intervention Network.
- The department is working on getting initial wastewater data testing and working with the Department of Health to set up internal and public dashboards and sharing data with Kittitas Valley Healthcare on a regular basis.

#### Financial Update

Katie Odiaga gave the board a quick financial update for the department and reviewed the following:

- Budget vs. Actuals 2023 Income
- Budget vs. Actuals 2023 Expenses

#### Other Business

##### Update on Mental Health Programs:

##### Behavioral Health Court

Eileen Murphy, Kittitas County Public Defense Department Director, has been practicing for 24 years. Ms. Murphy discussed how the Behavioral Health Court came about and discussed funding that was awarded to make Behavioral Health Court available in Kittitas County. Ms. Murphy informed the board of the process for someone who enters Behavioral Court. A person must apply and be accepted to the 12-month minimum court program, meet the requirements of the program, make progress, and complete the program. There are two tracks based on participant needs: substance use disorder or mental health. General program requirements:

- Participation in prescribed treatment
- Attendance at regular court appearance
- Secure and maintain appropriate housing
- Attendance at all scheduled appointments and groups
- Abstain from alcohol and drug use
- Obey laws
- Evidence of productive use of time
- Participate in the development of an Action Plan and demonstrate progress

Currently they have the capacity to serve approximately 20-25 individuals. All of this is based on funding and new laws could impact the need for the program in the future. Ms. Murphy briefly touched on the funding request for the programs future and how that funding could impact the population it can serve.

##### Kittitas Valley Hospital Designed Crisis

Greg Aubol, Comprehensive Mental health, presented the Kittitas Valley Hospital Crisis Case Management Program information:

- Program History
- Current contact statistics
- Staffing patterns

- Populations ages served
- Patients presenting concerns
- 2022 Crisis Services
- Coordination of Care
- Proposal and budget request


#### Kittitas County Jail Program

Steve Panattoni presented on the jail population and how mental health issues have increased over the last few years. The jail contracts with Comprehensive Healthcare for counseling services and Compass Direct for medical services. It was noted that most inmates have dual diagnosis. Since the jail has had a provider coming more frequently and counseling services, he has noticed a change in the population. Inmates are beginning to talk and asking for support services and making a connection with the people providing those services to them. When people end up in jail it's because they have made bad choices. What the jail hopes to do is to help some of the inmates obtain services and support they need to prevent them from being a "frequent flyer" and hand them off to providers in the community that will continue to help them navigate their diagnosis and treat them. Mr. Panattoni also discussed with the board the funding availability and funding needs for current and future jail programming.

The group discussed the possibilities to fund current programs that have funding streams that will be ending before the 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% Committee will be ready to take applications for funds. They discussed possible funding options the Board of County Commissioners could do prior. The group also had conversation about the 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% Committees first meeting, bylaws, future RFP process, having BOHAC meet with community members and provide feedback on priorities, and what the board sees as focus priorities for the funding.

It was requested that - the 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% Committee consider the proposals from the Behavioral Health Court and Comprehensive Healthcare at their May meeting due to the end of grant funding currently supporting both programs, and that a recommendation from the committee be brought to the Board of County Commissioners as soon as possible.

Meeting concluded at 12:03 pm

  
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Cory Wright, Commissioner

  
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Chelsey Loeffers, Director  
Kittitas County Public Health

  
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Candi Blackford, Clerk of the Board of Health