



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

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**KITTITAS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)  
Special Meeting Minutes  
June 16, 2025  
Commissioners' Auditorium**

**Present**

Board of Health (BOH): Brett Wachsmith, Laura Osiadacz, Cory Wright, Danielle Bertschi, Linda Navarre, Dede Feddema (Utley)

Public Health: Candi Blackford, Jesse Cox, Chelsey Loeffers, Erin Moore, Kate Johnson, Lauren Wickerath, Mackenzie Carter, Lianne Bradshaw, Rebeka Moon, Melissa Schumaier, Dora Beukelman, Katie Odiaga, Cambron Walker, Nea Alfaro, Jessica Santos, Audi Martinez

*Laura Osiadacz called the Board of Health meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. due to admin technical difficulties.*

**Public Comment**

Open at 10:02 a.m.

Closed at 10:02 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Laura Osiadacz asked for a motion to approve the March 19, 2025, and the March 20, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

06.01: Motion to approve March 19, 2025, and the March 20, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Cory Wright moved to approve the March 19, 2025, and the March 20, 2025 Board of Health meeting minutes as presented. Brett Wachsmith second. All approved. Motion 06.01 carried to approve the March 19, 2025, and the March 20, 2025 Board of Health meeting minutes as presented.

**Other Business**

**Public Health Champion Presentation**

Andrew Lyons, Board of Health Advisory Committee, presented the Kittitas County Public Health Champion award. The Kittitas County Public Health Champion Award recognizes individuals, groups, or organizations that make significant contributions to the health of Kittitas County. The award is funded by former Health Officer Jim Gale. There were four applicants. This year the award is presented to the Upper Kittitas County Senior Center. They were chosen for the work they do to promote activity, mental stimulation, engagement, and economic support for older adults in upper Kittitas County. The award comes with a \$500 donation to be used to benefit the health of the community.

**Board of Health Advisory Committee Discussion/Decision**

BOHAC was created to increase community input into the activities and decisions of the BOH. With the addition of non-elected official position to the BOH in 1995 and 2021, the role of BOHAC has become less active and as it currently stands is not frequently used as a resource for or by the BOH.

BOHAC's current primary activity is to select and award the annual Public Health Champion Award.

BOHAC also assists with BOH member appointments by interviewing and recommending members to the BOH.

After discussion at the March 26, 2025, Public Health Study Session, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) found that it is no longer necessary to have a separate advisory board and requested that this topic be brought to the Board of Health for discussion/decision. The board discussed fundraising, combining with another non-profit to carry out the work of the committee and transferring funds, and appointing new members to the board when seats become vacant. There was a motion to approve Resolution 2025-001 to Dissolve the Board of Health Advisory Committee.

Motion 06.02: Motion to approve BOH Resolution 2025-001 to Dissolve the Board of Health Advisory Board. Dede Feddema moved to approve BOH Resolution 2025-001 to Dissolve the Board of Health Advisory Board. Brett Wachsmith second. All approved. Motion 06.02 carried to approve BOH Resolution 2025-001 to Dissolve the Board of Health Advisory Board.

Request to Schedule a joint BOH/BOCC Public Hearing to Consider Revisions to KCC Chapter 13.08.080 on August 14, 2025

Jesse Cox reviewed the proposed code change to Kittitas County Code Chapter 13.08.080. Kittitas County Code 13.08.080 regulates the evaluation of groundwater levels determining septic suitability in new plats. The current code is outdated and does not reflect modern septic technologies that can safely function in area with higher groundwater levels. The proposed revisions will align county regulations. Mr. Cox is seeking approval for a joint BOH/BOCC Public Hearing where the board will consider and decide on the proposed changes on August 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm.

Motion 06.03. Motion to approve a joint BOH/BOCC Public Hearing where the board will consider and decide on the proposed changes to Kittitas County Code Chapter 13.08.080 on August 14, 2025. Linda Navarre moved to approve a joint BOH/BOCC Public Hearing where the board will consider and decide on the proposed changes to Kittitas County Code Chapter 13.08.080 on August 14, 2025. Cory Wright second. All approved. Motion carried to approve a joint BOH/BOCC Public Hearing where the board will consider and decide on the proposed changes to Kittitas County Code Chapter 13.08.080 on August 14, 2025.

Department Updates

Health Officer Update

Dr. Mark Larson presented on Measles. Dr. Larson informed the board that Clark County had an outbreak of measles from 1 December 31, 2018-April 26, 2019, had 72 confirmed measles cases and total cost of the outbreak was 3.4 million dollars. This year there have been a total of 6 confirmed cases in Washington. There have been no outbreaks. An outbreak is defined as 3 or more related cases. Dr. Larson reviewed the MMR vaccine and number of doses needed in children along with effectiveness rates and noted the controversy about vaccines and autism. Measles is one of the most contagious communicable diseases along with whooping cough.

Measles vaccination rates in Kittitas County as of December 2024:

19-35 months: 71.4%

4-6 years old; 61.4%

Dr. Larson noted that if a child is exposed to measles and they are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated they would need to be excluded from school or childcare for 21 days after rash onset in the last case of measles. As of August 21, 2025 there are 12 Ellensburg School District children out of compliance and that does not include incoming Kindergarteners. Ellensburg School District is working with Public Health to get all kids in compliance for the 2025-2026 school year.

Update to Budget Reductions to the Washington State Department of Health

Dr. Natalie Wilhelm, Regional Medical Officer, Washington State Department of Health came to the meeting to introduce herself and provide a brief overview of how the Department of Health is being impacted by current state and proposed federal budget reductions and cuts.

### Director/Administrative Officer Report

Chelsey Loeffers informed the Board of Health members that there was a new State Secretary of Health, Dennis Worsham. He has 32 years of service in Washington State's public health system. He has previously held the positions of:

- Director of Snohomish County Health Department
- Interim Director of Public Health-Seattle and King County
- Deputy Secretary of Health at the Washington State Department of Health

Ms. Loeffers noted that the 2025 Local Board of Health training would be locally here on October 7-9. The training will be at the Hotel Windrow and would like the board to put this on their calendars.

Ms. Loeffers updated the board on the department's funding updates which include the following:

- Approximate department funds
- Timeline for state, federal, and county fiscal years
- Planned 2026 reductions
  - COVID and Opioid funding
- Federal Budget Proposals- areas of possible reductions to or elimination of:
  - Maternal Child Health
  - Emergency Preparedness and Response
  - Nutrition and Physical Activity
  - Medicaid Admatch
- New Revenue
  - Passport Program
  - Air Quality in Overburdened Communities
  - Pollution Prevention Assistance
- Final FPHS Appropriation
  - Public Health system \$30 million total with a \$24 million reduction at best
  - Planning for \$112million reduction each year
  - 2026/2027 budget may need additional reductions
- FPHS Steering Committee Decisions
  - No reductions to Tribes, no reductions to State BOH, \$5 million reduction to system projects, \$4 million reduction to DOH, and \$4 million reduction to LHJ's
- WASLPHO Recommendations
  - No "double Whammies", preserve service delivery models, reduce 50% average chronic underspend, apply 2.33% reduction to all LHJ's, LHJ's to select where to apply 2.33%
- Local Budget Decision Making
  - Reviewed criteria for consideration
- Budget Reduction Strategies
  - Reviewed strategies to reduce budget

### Q1 Financial Report

Katie Odiaga reviewed Q1 financial update revenue and expense numbers and noted that the department is currently on track for 2025.

### Communications Presentation

Jessica Santos presented on the Kittitas County Communications Strategy update. Mrs. Santos reviewed the following about how we are communicating with our community. She discussed the following:

- Where does Kittitas County Public Health stand today:
  - How are we currently communicating?
  - Has our communication been effective?
  - What are the gaps and opportunities?
- KCPHD Communications Plan: A strategic guide for how we share, listen, and connect with our community

**Other Business**

None

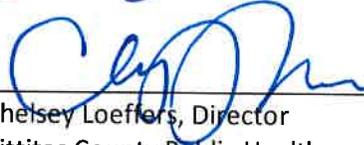
**Board of Health Member Updates**

Linda Navarre noted that there is a home care service in the upper county. She is happy to see this. Mrs. Navarre also noted that she has noticed an increase in kid activities that get them outside.

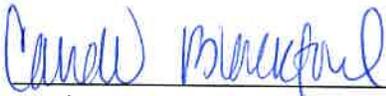
Concluded at 11:32 a.m.



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Laura Osiaqacz, 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