

KITTITAS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)

Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2026

Commissioners' Auditorium

Present

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

Absent: Brett Wachsmith

Public Health: Candi Blackford, Jesse Cox, Chelsey Loeffers, Erin Moore, Kate Johnson, Lauren Wickerath, Dora Beukelman, MacKenzie Carter, Lianne Bradshaw, Rebekah Moon, Mark Larson M.D., Katie Odiaga, Kasey Knutson, Whitney Wheelock, Audi Martinez,

Cory Wright called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comment:

Open at 10:00 a.m.

Closed at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Cory Wright asked for a motion for approval for the December 18, 2025 Board of Health meeting minutes and the December 18, 2025, Public Hearing meeting minutes.

03.01: Motion to approve December 18, 2025, meeting minutes and the December 18, 2025, Public Hearing Meeting Minutes as presented. Dede Feddema moved to approve the December 18, 2025 and the December 18, 2025 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes as presented. Laura Osiadacz second. All approved. Motion 03.01 carried to approve the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes and the December 18, 2025 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes as presented.

Director/Administrative Officer Report

Chelsey Loeffers reported on the following:

- Ruben Mackenzie, new Public Health Technician, started on March 9th. Mr. Mackenzie has previous banking experience and is a great addition to the department.
- Denise Payton starts on March 30th as the new Kittitas County Veteran Service Officer. Ms. Payton comes to us with years of experience working with veterans at HopeSource.
- Updated the board about a safety issue that happened a couple weeks ago due to a chickenpox case and lack of community understanding of exclusions. The department is currently working with the PA office to improve security in the Morris Sorenson Building.
- Kittitas Valley Healthcare has nominated the Communicable Disease team for a Community Health Leadership Award for their work in the community. The awards are announced in June.
- Public health week is the first week of April and Jess Santos, the department Communications Coordinator, is working on a Public Health Week Campaign.

Ms. Loeffers presented the following quick budget update:

- One measles case with 18 staff and 655 hours total cost \$30,454.70.

- FPHS 2025-2026 Biennial appropriation anticipated \$4 million shortfall but ended up \$3.6 million shortfall with an overall \$2.2 system reduction after applying system underspend.
- FPHS 2026-2027 final verdict no reduction to general fund appropriation but due to vape tax account legislative mistake there will be a \$21 million reduction to the system.
- Review of 2026 short session budget adjustment timeline and noted April 2 the FPHS Steering Committee will meet to discuss decision process for funds.

Measles Response Review

Kate Johnson, Public Health Nurse, and Lianne Bradshaw, Epidemiologist, gave an overview of the local measles response. They presented the following to the board:

- Measles 101: noting it is highly contagious virus, spreads through the air for up to 2 hours, symptoms are fever, cough, and rash, and two doses of MMR vaccine gives up to 97 percent protection.
- Discussed complications from measles.
- Discussed challenges measles presents for public health.
- Reviewed a map of the US where active cases are.
- National and state cases.
- Discussed timeline for the response.
- Partnership with Central Washington University for case and contact.
- Coordinated communication with CWU and KVH Public Information Officers.
- Reviewed response and preparedness with vaccine/prophylaxis, lab and testing, operational support.
- Noted 201 total exposed.
- Friday February 20th end of response.
- Reviewed lessons learned/strengths/ and response success.
- What's next: Car-a-van Friday March 13th (cancelled due to weather), after action review and improvement, training and exercise.

After the presentation there were questions discussed about vaccination status for CWU and local schools. Highly recommended to know your vaccination status.

Dr. Mark Larson briefly discussed the FIFA World Cup. Seattle is one location and noted that there will be visitors from all over and how that increased risk for potential cases in the future and that the United States will lose its measles elimination status this next year due to its continuous transmission of measles. Dr. Larson is working with the state and staff preparing for 2026 wildfire season and smoke issues with low water levels and not much snow pack this year.

Q4/ 2025 Year End Financial Report

Katie Odiaga reviewed the following 2025 year-end financial update:

- 2025 Revenue as expected.
- 2025 Expenses as expected.
- 2025 Highlights: passport program, new one-time funding, end of Covid funding, purchase of Randox Analyzer purchased for Coroner's Office, and new EH grants.

PFAS Informational Presentation

Jesse Cox presented PFAS basics and why they matter.

- PFAS: Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances are man made chemicals used in many products that are resistant to breaking down and are found in water, food, consumer products, and occupational exposure.
- Health impacts vary from increased risk of diabetes, lower birth weight, immune system effects, lower kidney functions, some cancers, and liver effects.
- Takeaways: PFAS are persistent, widespread, and potentially harmful and understanding exposure pathways is important.

Mr. Cox asked for questions or comments at this time from the board. Board discussed ways to communicate information around testing and how to decrease exposure to the public for education

purposes not a panic purpose.

1/10th of 1% Post Sunset Update

Kasey Knutson reviewed with the board that there was no more sunset clause. The funding for mental health and substance use disorder prevention will continue, locally. Ms. Knutson discussed the history of the 1/10th of 1% funding that was established in 2021. During that time there was a hearing and public testimony was presented including the following issues:

- Opioid epidemic
- Overdose deaths
- Increase in mental health concerns
- Youth suicide, increase in emergency calls
- Limited access to service

The board put a sunset clause for the funding in place to allow gathering of data and show the community the impact of the funds used in Kittitas County. The sunset date was 2027. Ms. Knutson discussed lessons learned and the path forward for the county. Multiple county departments are meeting to discuss how to fund, process and procedure improvement, and what the county funds to make this program sustainable.

Other Business

None

Board of Health Member Updates

Linda Navarre noted that community members burn on days when the smoke lingers and not checking DOE for best burn dates.

Dede Feddema noted that she is working with the Red Cross in Kittitas County and discussed connecting them with public health. Mrs. Feddema also noted she is returning to work at KVH and is excited to be back

Concluded at 11:42 a.m.



Laura Osiadacz, Commissioner, Chair



Chelsey Loeffers, Director
Kittitas County Public Health



Candi Blackford, Clerk of the Board of Health