

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023**

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, with Peter Browning, Commissioner, and Lisa Janicki, Commissioner present. Ron Wesen, Commissioner excused.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Browning called the to order at 10:01 a.m.

II. AGENDA:

Chair Browning introduced Public Health Director Keith Higman.

a) Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Higman introduced the first agenda item.

A motion was made by Lisa Commissioner to approve the record of the proceedings of the Board of Health for January 17 and February 23, 2023. Peter Commissioner seconded the motion.

The vote passed unanimously. Ron Wesen, Commissioner's absence was excused

1. Board of Health Record of the Proceedings for January 17, 2023. **(Approved)**
2. Board of Health Record of the Proceedings for February 23, 2023. **(Approved)**

b) Public Health Director Remarks

Mr. Higman shared that he would be working with the Board of Health Chair to help set the agenda to ensure meetings would be useful to the Board and/or informative to the public.

Mr. Higman discussed his recent ride-along with a Meals-on-Wheels volunteer driver. Before accompanying the driver to deliver the meals to residents, he met staff and volunteers at the Mount Vernon Senior Center who made and packaged the meals for delivery to homebound residents in the community. Mr. Higman shared that the need in the community for this meal service was increasing and the client load was outgrowing the budget. Mr. Higman shared he would be performing a comprehensive review of the program to submit a funding request to the legislature to solicit additional support and funding for the program.

c) Medical Reserve Corps Planning and Recruitment

Mr. Higman introduced Public Health Analyst Julie de Losada to provide an update on the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and recruiting new members.

Ms. de Losada was excited to share that 26 new volunteers had recently started with the MRC to help create prepared and resilient communities through service. The volunteers were from different parts of the county and included Spanish speaking volunteers.

Mission sets that MRC members could train for included: senior resilience, severe weather shelter support, family assistance shelter, disaster mental health team, functional assessment team, and community preparedness outreach and education.

Ms. de Losada discussed the differences between MRC and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and what kind of work MRC volunteers would do to help within the main mission sets. Anyone could be an MRC volunteer.

d) Communicable Disease Update

Mr. Higman introduced Communicable Disease Manager Polly Dubbell to provide an overview of diseases in the community.

First, Ms. Dubbell provided information about five hepatitis A cases in the State of Washington that occurred from eating frozen strawberries sold through Costco, PCC, and Trader Joes. Food products containing frozen strawberries were being recalled. She reviewed hepatitis A incubation and symptoms.

Next, Ms. Dubbell reviewed the community transmission rates of three sexually transmitted infections (STI's) monitored in Skagit County: chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. One in five people in the United States had an STI.

Discussion was held about the emergency orders in place regarding Covid-19 that were ending on May 11, 2023, and that Covid was still negatively affecting the elderly and those with comorbidities.

e) Behavioral Health Program Update

Mr. Higman introduced Public Health Analyst George Kosovich to provide a behavioral health update.

Mr. Kosovich provided updates on Martha's Place, Care Management for Co-Response, and the Recovery Café.

Martha's Place would be accepting tenants soon. It was a Permanent Supportive Housing Project in Mount Vernon that Catholic Community Services would be managing.

Care Management for Co-Response paired a mental health professional with a law enforcement officer. A manager for the program had been hired and an additional position needed to be filled. In addition, to enhance the program and help law enforcement and residents, a software system (Julota) had been purchased to mitigate arrests and incarcerations by diverting clients to appropriate resources instead.

Recovery Café on Riverside Drive in Mount Vernon had a "soft opening" this week with a grand opening anticipated in late May. This was a location to gather, socialize, and connect with to support other individuals in recovery. Recovery circles would be formed and evening gatherings would be an option for individuals. Mr. Kosovich said there was a strong recovery community in Skagit County and the Café would provide an important space for continued success. New Earth Recovery would be managing the Café.

f) Health Officer Update

Mr. Higman excused Dr. Leibrand from providing an update to the Board of Health and discussion was held about a drug resistant fungus being monitored in hospitals nationally.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Browning adjourned the proceedings at 11:05 a.m.

*Note, to obtain an audio or video recording of this meeting; please contact the Skagit County Commissioners' office.

**BOARD OF HEALTH
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ron Wesen, Chair

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

Dr. Connie Davis, At Large Board Member

Dr. Aaron Katz, At Large Board Member

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board