

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023**

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, with Ron Wesen, Commissioner, Peter Browning, Commissioner, and Lisa Janicki, Commissioner present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

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

II. AGENDA:

Chair Browning introduced Public Health Director Keith Higman.

a) Approval of Minutes:

1. Board of Health Record of the Proceedings for May 9, 2023. **(Postponed)**

b) Public Health Director Remarks

Mr. Higman commented on heat events and smoke from wildfires. Public Health had recently procured mobile air cleaning units. He shared some statistics on world population figures and he discussed the transition of Public Health employee Julie de Losada from her position in Public Health Emergency Response and Preparedness & MRC Coordinator to her new position as Chief of the Department of Emergency Management.

c) Population Health Trust Quarterly Update

Mr. Higman introduced Public Health Analyst Kristen Ekstran to provide updates and lead discussion regarding Population Health Trust's (PHT) work regarding Food Security and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

d) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report:

Ms. Ekstran invited PHT members Mo Pettitt and Bill Henkel to provide an overview of the DEI Report and discuss findings and ideas with the Board.

1. Overview

PHT member Mo Pettitt discussed how the DEI report grew from the COVID Recovery Plan. One of the goals was to identify equity training to make available to the community. She shared how PHT worked through DEI to arrive at the final report that she believed was helpful and would be hopeful and inspiring.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Pettitt for the context and for PHT's deep discussions on DEI to create a report that would help the community and organizations further incorporate DEI within their workforce culture.

2. Organizational and Community Relevance

PHT member Bill Henkel added that meetings had been held with multiple boards from other organizations to discuss DEI training and the next steps to operationalize changes.

3. Next Steps

Ms. Ekstran stated that PHT had taken additional steps to ensure equity goals were imbedded in all their other work (First 1,000 Days, Food Security, etc.) and discussion was held with the board about other places or systems that would benefit from additional equity work. Ideas were discussed including law and justice and county materials including voter's pamphlets.

e) Food Security:

Ms. Ekstran introduced the agenda item.

1. Food Policy Council Update

Ms. Ekstran said the group working on Food Security had been meeting regularly and identified two main contributors that led to food insecurity: unaffordable/insufficient housing and not having gainful employment.

The group was reviewing assets and gaps in the Skagit County food system from beginning to end and identifying where improvements could be made within: farming and production, storage and distribution, using and eating food, and the waste of food.

The Board shared concerns about the increased cost for food and housing, the COVID-19 housing support programs coming to an end with anticipated strain on food distribution centers, access to grocery stores, being prepared during and after disasters, and the shift in the population that had occurred from half the population farming and growing their own food to two out of 100 people doing so.

f) Community Health Workers in the Public Health Workforce:

Mr. Higman introduced the agenda item. Public Health employed Community Health Workers (CHW's) to provide education and outreach to serve harder to reach or underserved populations. Mr. Higman invited Jennifer Sass-Walton to introduce staff working at Public Health as Community Health Workers.

1. Overview

Prevention and Community Health Manager Jennifer Sass-Walton said CHW's (or Promotoras/Promotoras de Salud: Promoters of Health) often served in public facing positions and were liaisons between residents and public service sectors. CHW's were trusted members of the community that helped improve the provision of services and connect residents to other health and social services.

Jennifer recognized three CHW's who were unable to attend the meeting: Rosa Paz, Aracely Padilla, and Vanesa Ochoa. Rosa Paz was a trilingual Promotora. Aracely Padilla was a Behavioral Health Promotora who helped residents access substance use disorder services, mental health treatment, access to naloxone, and access health insurance and other basic needs. Vanesa Ochoa worked in Emergency Preparedness.

Other CHW's and Promotoras introduced themselves:

Kelli Perry with Senior Services, Meals on Wheels, and nutrition

Emily Molina with the Nurse Family Partnership, Meals on Wheels, and other programs as needed

Mel Pedrosa with Communicable Disease

Bianca Ochoa with Communicable Disease

Lurdes Ponce with the Emergency Preparedness Response Team

Graciela Ibarra Vivanco with Communicable Disease

2. Examples

CHW's and Promotoras Kelli Perry, Emily Molina, and Graciela Ibarra Vivanco provided an overview of their fulfilling work with Skagit County residents.

Mr. Higman thanked the Community Health Worker/Promotora team for their important work in the community.

g) Health Officer Update

Dr. Howard Leibrand did not provide an update to the Board of Health.

h) Public Comment

Commissioner Wesen recognized Senator Wagoner and thanked him for his attendance.

Chair Browning thanked the Community Health Workers for their work in the community.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Browning adjourned the proceedings at 11:04 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