



**Williamson County and Cities Health District
Emergency Board of Health Meeting
Via Video/Telephone Conference Call
Monday, March 31, 2020, 6:30p.m.
Round Rock Public Health Center
Scott D. Evans Conference Room
355 Texas Ave., Round Rock, TX 78664**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Board of Health Chair Marlene McMichael

SPECIAL SESSION

- 1) Roll call was taken

Present: Chair Marlene McMichael (Williamson County), Secretary Mary Faith Sterk (Georgetown), Vice Chair Ed Strout (Cedar Park), Cynthia Flores (Round Rock), Derrick Neal (WCCHD) Joanne Land (Williamson County), Terrence Owens (Hutto), Joan Maxfield (Taylor)

Absent: None

Staff members and visitors present: Richard Hamala, Justine Price, Cindy Botts, Ivah Sorber, Michelle Broddrick.

- 2) Consider and take action authorizing paying WCCHD employees and the Executive Director overtime compensation for the COVID-19 response.

Ms. Sorber went over the background information of the agenda item, including the detail on the Williamson County overtime compensation policy for those County employees who are participating in the COVID-19 response. She also clarified that while the WCCHD Cooperative Agreement provides that the Board of Health set the compensation policy for all WCCHD employees, including the Executive Director, in the past WCCHD policy has followed suit on similar County policies. Director Strout asked for clarification on how many hours would be eligible for non-exempt verses exempt employees working on the COVID-19 response. Ms. McMichael asked if the Federal Government would reimburse the County and/or WCCHD for the additional salary expenses. Ms. Broddrick replied that staff was already in the process of documenting various expenses for inclusion in a US Health and Human Services or FEMA reimbursement process. Those salaries that could be paid out of an existing grant, would, but other response staff salaries would be paid out of the general fund. Mr. Neal clarified that it was his opinion, based upon the other emergency events he worked, including Hurricanes Harvey and Rita, upon a declaration of a state emergency by the Governor, staffing expenses are typically considered reimbursable. Mr. Owens asked about the anticipated reimbursable time frame, from submittal of the claim until receipt of a check. Ms. Broddrick clarified that it can take up to 24 months for a claim to be processed, depending upon a variety of circumstances, including length of the event and number of claims submitted. Ms. Flores asked if the timeline for reimbursement was known and expressed concern that the federal reimbursement process was labor intensive for staff. Ms. Broddrick explained that while the current FEMA and HHS reimbursement processes were not known, that element would be looked into and staff liaisons to the County's Emergency Operations Center were already in the process of collecting documentation, in conjunction with the County's staff.

Motion to approve paying WCCHD employees and the Executive Director overtime compensation for the COVID-19 response, consistent with the Williamson County's policy.

Moved: Scott Parker

Seconded: Joanne Land

Vote: Approved unanimously

- 3) Consider and take action to authorizing amendment of the FY20 Budget to provide for COVID-19 response costs, including additional payroll, supplies and services, as necessary

Ms. Flores asked how agenda items 3, 4, and 5 differed and in particular how item 5 differed from the Board's previously approved action to allow for Ms. McMichael's approval of time-sensitive grants? Ms. Price agreed that items 3, 4, and 5 were all similar and separated in the agenda in order to clarify what the Board was being asked to consider in relation to the different areas of impact with the COVID-19 response. She also agreed that item 5 was very similar to the Board's previous action in relation to time-sensitive grants (where authorization would be requested from the Board Chair to accept such grants and at a following Board meeting, the grant would be approved by the full Board of Health, as is practice for traditional grants). Item 5 was included, however, to address the specifics of

potentially larger sized grants than what was originally envisioned. Ms. Flores added that contacting Ms. McMichael prior to addressing needs related to any COVID-19 needs, including items 3, 4 and 5 by phone and/or email. Ms. McMichael stated that she preferred to be contacted via email. Ms. Price clarified that any supplies related to already approved grants would fall under the Board's authorization of that grant. Non-grant related supplies or contractual services, such as for additional contact tracers, related to COVID-19 would be part of a motion associated with Item 3, which staff is requesting the Board consider.

Ms. McMichael clarified that COVID-related costs associated with grants, could be approved via the existing grant approval process, including the time-sensitive grant approval process. COVID-related costs that are not budgeted and would not be part of a grant. After discussion the motion was combined to authorize Items 3, 4, and 5. Ms. Sterk and Mr. Parker brought up discussion on already established purchasing parameters that were confirmed by Ms. Price and Ms. Broddrick to also relate to purchases in this motion.

Motion to have Health District staff receive documented, via email, approval from the Board Chair for any supplies, services, contractual expenditures and response costs, related to COVID-19, as well as authorization of Items 4 and 5 of the agenda, as stated.

Moved: Cynthia Flores
Seconded: Joanne Land
Vote: Approved unanimously

- 4) Consider and take action authorizing use of WCCHD contingency and reserve funds for COVID-19 response costs, as necessary.

No additional action taken.

- 5) Consider and take action authorizing submittal of federal and grant funding requests related to COVID-19, as necessary.

No additional action taken.

- 6) Adjourn.

Ms. McMichael asked Mr. Neal if he wished to provide a status update on how staff is doing. Mr. Neal answered that the Health District was operating in an "all hands-on deck" level in relation to COVID response. Mr. Neal stated that many Health District staff are working as part of the Emergency Response for the County, within the ICS structure of the County's Operations, in addition to the Health District's own ICS structure for response. Mr. Neal detailed how important he felt it was for the County's response to remain public health focused, as this is the first national pandemic in more than 100 years, rather than be viewed from an Emergency Management or Law Enforcement perspective. He continued that Health District staff was doing well and we are learning to manage this response and ourselves for the long haul, as this will not be over in more than a month. Ms. Price added that COVID-19, as a pandemic, brings new challenges, including determining how to run programs, such as WIC, in an entirely new way from home. The staff, she stated, has really stepped up into leadership roles. In regards, to City and County partnerships, the Health District is known as a team player and that has helped us to find solutions when challenges arise. Ms. Price stated that Williamson County will soon start seeing exponential growth of cases and potentially a strain on our health care system. Discussion on the procedures and processes in response to those cases was had.

Board Chair McMichael adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Recorded by: 
Cindy Botts, Executive Assistant

Reviewed by: Minutes approved on July 2, 2020, as part of the Consent Calendar. To be signed at a later date.
Mary Faith Sterk, Secretary