



**Williamson County and Cities Health District  
Board of Health Meeting  
Thursday, May 5, 2021 6:30p.m.  
Meeting Held via Video/Telephone Conference Call  
Due to a Disaster Declaration and the Existence of the COVID-19 Epidemic  
Round Rock Public Health Center  
Scott D. Evans Conference Room  
355 Texas Ave., Round Rock, TX 78664**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Board of Health Chair Marlene McMichael.

- 1) Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance  
Ms. McMichael gave the Invocation and asked that Mr. Owens lead the Pledge of Allegiance, which he did.
- 2) Roll call was taken  
Present: Chair Marlene McMichael (Williamson County), Secretary Mary Faith Sterk (Georgetown), Joanne Land (Williamson County), Cynthia Flores (Round Rock), Terrence Owens (Hutto), Derrick Neal (WCCHD),  
  
Absent: Vice Chair Ed Strout (Cedar Park), Scott Parker (Liberty Hill/Leander), Joan Maxfield (Taylor),
- 3) Acknowledge staff and visitors; hear any comments.  
Staff members and visitors present: Richard Hamala, Caroline Hilbert, Cindy Botts, Tela Nelson, Michelle Brodderick, Lori Murphy, Melissa Tung, Kelli McGuire, Ivah Sorber, Jimmy Romell and Jennifer Moore, a member of the Public. Ms. Moore provided public comment to the Board regarding the need to open clinics, even while providing vaccinations.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda includes items considered to be routine that the Board of Health may act on with one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Board director in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the regular agenda. (Items 5-10)

- 4) Approval of minutes, Regular Meeting 03/04/21
- 5) Approval of current investment report (February 2021, March 2021)
- 6) Approval of DSHS COVID Immunization Grant

#### **Motion to approve consent agenda.**

Moved: Joanne Land  
Seconded: Mary Faith Sterk  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

- 7) Discussion and possible action on the FY2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Mr. Hamala made a statement at the beginning of this item to clarify that there was a error in the agenda. The item was for the FY2020 Comprehensive Annual Report, not FY2019. He clarified that no further corrections needed to be made to the agenda. Ms. Brodderick introduced Jimmy Romell, partner at Maxwell, Locke and Ritter, who presented the Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Health District, for the year ending December 31, 2020. Mr. Romell walked the Board of Health through the following schedules: Statement of Financial Position; Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position; Statement of Cash Flows; Notes to the Financial Statements – Recently Issued Accounting Pronouncement, Note H; Notice of Reporting Under Auditing Standards; Report on Compliance of Federal Program Uniform Guidance; and the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards.

In summary, the auditors issued an unmodified opinion on the audit. There were no issues identified with internal controls and the District is considered a "low risk auditee", meaning that there have been no findings in at least the past two years, which would require additional testing by the auditing firm. Mr. Romell also presented the Letter of Audit Findings to the Board of Health and explained that it summarized the audit findings. The Board had no questions of Mr. Romell on this item. Ms. Brodderick thanked Mr. Romell again for his team's hard work on the audit and the quick turn around in order to have the report in time for the May Board Meeting.

Ms. McMichael asked Ms. Brodderick to pass on the Board's appreciation and their thanks for the work on the audit.

#### **Motion to approve the WCCHD FY20 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.**

Moved: Joanne Land  
Seconded: Mary Faith Sterk  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

#### 8) Staff Presentation on Episcopal Health Foundation Fund and Future Implications

Ms. McGuire introduced herself and presented an informational slide deck on an initiative that the Health District is currently working on – the Texas Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (TACHI), also known as ACH. This initiative, Ms. McGuire explained, has the opportunity for long term positive impacts in the community. This initiative is funded by the Episcopal Health Foundation. Ms. McGuire explained that WCCHD is currently involved in the 15-month planning portion, in order to learn more about the Accountable Communities for Health model. This model has been in place in other regions of the Country and is a transformative approach to population health. The model allows for different sectors of health to work together in a more collaborative way, including the public health sector, clinical sector, mental health sector, etc., in order to improve the social determinants of health within a community. As part of the presentation, a short video was shown to explain the ACH model. Ms. McGuire explained that Episcopal Health asked WCCHD to identify partners that might work well as part of this initiative, who also have high levels of readiness to start on this project, high levels of engagement in the community and who WCCHD already has significant relationships with. Some of these partners include Ascension-Seton, Georgetown Health Foundation, Lonestar Circle of Care and United Way of Williamson County, with WCCHD project managing this initiative. During this 15-month planning portion, Ms. McGuire explained, the partners for this initiative are learning what is required, in terms of infrastructure, to establish a functioning ACH model in Williamson County. Some of the elements of this model WCCHD already has in place and some are not done currently and will be expanded during the 15-month planning. This model will allow for working on population health through systems changes and WCCHD staff is looking forward to planning for the County's future. As part of this initiative, Episcopal Health Foundation awarded the initiative \$210,000, of which approximately \$100,000 stayed with the Health District to fund the learning and backbone agency work that staff is currently doing. The remaining amount of the grant was distributed to the other partners in this initiative for similar learning work. At the end of 2021, WCCHD staff will be submitting an implementation plan to Episcopal Health Foundation to fund the setup of the ACH model for another 1-3 years. Ms. McGuire also brought to the Board's attention that this funding could be long-term, which is important with the loss of DSRIP funding. A governance model, as part of the planning process, is also underway, with Health Leaders throughout the County serving on this governance board. Mr. Neal will also serve on this Board. Future funding opportunities could also be brought in with the governance model and WCCHD serving as the backbone agency to the ACH model, which is something the Health District is already doing well, through the Healthy Williamson County Coalition. Additional opportunities with data management and policy coordination could also bring future sustainable funding.

Mr. Neal stated that he really proud of the WCCHD staff for taking the lead on bringing a transformative model to Williamson County and clarified that WCCHD is one of the few Health Districts in the Country that is taking on this role. He also mentioned that he was excited to address the social determinants of health in Williamson County in a new way. Dr. Hilbert also mentioned that Ascension-Seton leadership staff met with WCCHD leadership staff the prior day and both agencies are very excited to move forward together on this work. Ms. Flores thanked Ms. McGuire for her hard work on this project. Ms. McMichael agreed.

#### **No action – Informational Item Only**

#### 9) Consider and possible action on pre-authorization of supplies, services, contractual expenditures and response costs, related to COVID-19

Ms. McMichael stated that this item was requested to be added to the agenda by Ms. Flores at the March 4, 2021 meeting. Mr. Hamala explained that prior to COVID, the Board had considered, and approved, a process by which if funding opportunities with a time concern came up between Board Meetings, the Executive Staff could take action by conferring with the Board Chair and then bring it back to the Board at a subsequent meeting for ratification. Once COVID hit, the need for doing a similar process for expenses became evident. Ms. Botts clarified in the chat, that the Board approved the time-sensitive grant pre-approval process at its meeting on January 2, 2020. Mr. Hamala went on to explain that while early on in March and April 2020, the Board had several Emergency Meetings, during the March 31, 2020 Emergency meeting, the Board approved the pre-authorization of COVID-related supplies, services, contractual expenditures, and response costs by the Board Chair, with expenses to be ratified by the full Board of Health at a subsequent meeting. At the March 4, 2021 meeting, brief discussion was had that it might be time to revisit this item, now that COVID is winding down.

Ms. McMichael opened the floor to Ms. Flores for discussion. Ms. Flores explained that now that the urgency associated with COVID has passed, it is worth bringing back items, such as expenditures and contracts, back to the full Board for approval. Ms. Flores stated that a lot of the burden of these pre-approvals fell upon Ms. McMichael early on in COVID and that she appreciated Ms. McMichael's leadership in this role, but that it was time for the full Board to approve these items. Mr. Owens asked when the last time that Ms. McMichael was asked to pre-approve an item that did not have time to go before the full Board. Ms. Botts answered in the chat that the most recent pre-approvals were an MOU with Curative and a purchase contract for Luminare software in late January, though the Luminare contract did come back to Ms. McMichael for pre-approval in early February, due to some changes in the initial contract.

Mr. Neal explained that early on in the pandemic, the pre-approval process was extremely helpful, but might no longer be necessary, as

discussed. Ms. McMichael also commented that while immediate action was needed in the beginning of the Health District's response, it has been several months since such action has been needed. She, therefore, had no concerns with discontinuing this approval process. Mr. Owens also commented that as a Board, approvals are part of the work of the body. If things change, the process can be reimplemented, but the responsibility should be taken by the full Board, rather than just the Board Chair, if it is not truly needed at this time. Ms. Land also agreed that approvals should come back to the full Board, but that she had some hesitancy if items should come up in between meetings, as regular Board meetings are only held every two months. She suggested that the Board put something in place to address that issue. Ms. McMichael asked Mr. Hamala for guidance on this suggestion. Mr. Hamala suggested a spending limit or an arrangement for having a short agenda sequential meeting. Dr. Hilbert commented on Ms. Land's concern, stating that while staff does not know when it will arrive, there may be another round of COVID funding from the State of Texas, coming directly to the Health District, that will need to be approved in a very short timeframe. She clarified that while the urgency for purchases might be slowing down, the submission and approval of funding opportunities will still be on a tight turnaround. If the Board was willing to consider a limitation on funding amount for allowing authorization for the Executive Director or the Deputy Director, in his stead, to sign for those financial opportunities, that would be beneficial in her opinion. Mr. Neal also commented that discussions with other Health Districts, at the State level, have included the fact that these additional COVID monies needed to pass from the State to the local entities within 30 days, but that the State may only allow the local entities a week to apply for and accept the funds, depending upon the internal timeline of the State. Ms. Flores asked Mr. Hamala if a Board meeting, for the approval of grant funding, still needed to be posted 72 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Mr. Hamala explained that as part of a regular meeting, whether or not that meeting was held virtually, the 72-hour deadline remained in place. The Board Chair had the authorization to call an Emergency Meeting, under the authority of the Governor's Emergency Declaration. The Board would need to confirm that this was an Emergency matter that could not wait for 72 hours' notice, as a regular meeting. Ms. Flores suggested in instances with a short turn around a full meeting be called and if a quorum could not be met, then the pre-authorization of the item could come directly from the Board Chair. Mr. Owens asked why funding need to be approved by the Board, rather than the Executive Director and Mr. Neal clarified that the Cooperative Agreement lists the Board as the fiduciary agent of the Health District and the Executive Director doesn't have authorization to sign contractual or fiduciary agreements without the authorization of the Board. Mr. Owens stated that he liked the idea of having a \$50,000 spending limit cap. Purchases above that amount would need to come through the Board. Ms. Brodderick confirmed that the cost of the Luminare Software (\$119,300) did come from General Funds, as CARES dollars were not allowed to be used. Dr. Hilbert, commented that as of the prior week, staff salary savings alone equated to approximately \$103,000 and approximately 3,600 staff hours. Ms. Sterk commented that in the past several years, the Board's confidence in the grants- written and accepted- to fit within the CHA, CHIP and Strategic Plan has greatly improved. Ms. Sterk suggested that the motions be made on the approval of grants and grant funding and the second be on the approval of expenditures separate from a particular grant.

**Motion to allow time-sensitive grants to be approved by the Board Chair and ratified at the next Board Meeting.**

Moved: Cynthia Flores  
Seconded: Joanne Land  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

**Motion to allow new emergency expenditures under \$50,000 to be approved by the Board Chair and ratified at the next subsequent meeting. Expenditures over \$50,000 require an emergency meeting of the Board. If there is no quorum at that Board meeting, then the Board Chair can act on behalf of the full Board.**

Moved: Cynthia Flores  
Seconded: Terrance Owens  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

Ms. Sterk added a friendly amendment to include the word "new" in front of emergency to clarify that these are intended to be unbudgeted, unplanned expenditures. Ms. Flores agreed to that amendment.

10) Discussion and possible action on authorization for entering agreements with member entities for sharing of COVID-19 data

Mr. Hamala explained that over the past couple of weeks the County, as a Member City, as requested continued access to COVID-19 data that the Health District collects. Throughout the pandemic, the Health District has been sharing this data with both the County and other City partners, who have participated alongside the Health District in the response. As the pandemic begins to wind down locally and the possibility of the State of Texas discontinuing its Emergency Declaration increases, the Health District questioned if the current basis for sharing of information would need to change. To continue the data sharing, the District felt it might be best to have a Data Sharing Agreement in place with the County and the Member Cities that would be separate from an Emergency Declaration. This structure would be consistent with HIPAA rules and the Texas statutes for reporting of communicable disease information. While there is no current

document to review, WCCHD staff would like to move forward with the creation of such a document, if the Board agrees. Dr. Hilbert reiterated that when sharing the data with our County and City partners, who would be utilizing this information to perform public health functions. She also explained that WCCHD staff sees these data sharing agreements as a way to better streamline the data-sharing process and to make sure that all parties are aware of the expectations for storing and utilizing this data.

Ms. McMichael asked Mr. Hamala to clarify, as there is no document to approve, if the agreement will come before the Board for approval after it is written. Mr. Hamala stated that there were several options for the Board to consider. They could pre-authorize the Executive Director to sign such an agreement, after it is drafted by both the Health District and the Member Entity's attorneys or they could ask that it come back to the Board for review prior to the Executive Director signing it. Ms. McMichael explained to the Board that proper data sharing has been at times contentious for our Member Agencies, who may not have realized to restrictions the Health District has under HIPAA, which can also affect the Health District's funding. She went on to explain that she thought that the implementation of a data sharing agreement with the Member Entities is a great idea. Ms. Sterk stated that she would prefer the Board be involved in drafting the data sharing agreement document so that if questions arise from their representative Cities, the Board can answer in an informed manner. Mr. Neal agreed, as did Ms. Flores, Ms. Land and Mr. Owens. Mr. Hamala explained that in drafting a framework with the County for this type of data sharing agreement, which would not be specific to COVID data sharing, it could be applicable to all the Member Entities of the Health District.

**Motion to authorize the Executive Director and Legal Counsel to work with Williamson County on a draft agreement for data sharing with Member Entities, that is consistent with HIPAA compliance regulations, which will be brought before the Board of Health for final approval.**

Moved: Mary Faith Sterk  
Seconded: Joanne Land  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

11) Discussion and possible action on Executive Director and Employee Catastrophic Pay

Ms. Brodderick began by referencing the agenda item background information in the Board's agenda packet, explaining when and why the Catastrophic Pay policy was approved by the Board of Health. While the bulk of these costs took place in 2020, there is no budget allocated for this item in the approved FY2021 budget. This issue is therefore, being brought before the Board for discussion on discontinuing this liability, given the potential upcoming demobilization of the Health District's COVID-19 Response. As the processing of the employee catastrophic pay is also a manual process, for both the Human Resources and Finance team, there is also a cost associated with the staff time for processing this additional pay. Ms. McMichael asked Ms. Brodderick to expand on the total costs paid out and how much of that might have been reimbursed through CARES dollars. Ms. Brodderick did not have that information immediately available but explained that she would be happy to provide that to the Board after the meeting. Ms. Brodderick did explain that a large portion of the Exempt employee overtime pay would not be eligible for CARES reimbursement. These employees, which included the WCCHD Executive Leadership Team, District Leadership Team, and a significant portion of Team Leads. Mr. Neal did include that while case counts are continuing to go down, there is still a need for response. At the same time, as case counts decrease, the need for staff to return to their regular, full-time jobs has increased – leading to an overall large workload at times, just trending more towards regular duties, as a pose to COVID duties, which is where staff was earlier in the pandemic. Mr. Neal went on to say that with the current level of infection in the community, he doesn't foresee being in a significant level of COVID response past the month of May 2021, but that some level of vaccine administration will become part of the Health District's regular and on-going duties. Ms. McMichael added that her concern was for the mental health of the staff. Working a lot of hours over a long period of time wears on individuals and the work product is not as good, regardless of the ability to earn overtime. Mr. Neal agreed and informed the Board that several times over the course of the pandemic the Executive Leadership Team emphasized the need to staff to not work overtime hours, unless absolutely necessary and instead to take their time as flex time.

Mr. Owens commented that overtime was decreasing and asked if there had been conversations to add additional staff, if the need is still there? Mr. Neal explained that much of the money is not permanent funding and therefore the trend has been towards temporary and contract staff, rather than additional full-time employees. Ms. Brodderick added that there is a cost for hiring and training new staff and a payment of unemployment when they are no longer needed. Instead, District leadership has tried to focus on job-sharing and just-in-time training as a way to create additional backup when staff are pulled into other duties. Ms. Flores expressed that early in the pandemic she had concerns about expenses not being reimbursed and now we have those expenses. She asked for the impact to the FY2020 budget and stated that she believed the Board should move towards the elimination of overtime pay. Ms. Sorber clarified that when the overtime pay policy was discontinued, any overtime hours earned by non-exempt employees would be used as flex time, only turning into dollars if the employee left the Health District for any reason. Ms. Sorber also offered the difference in exempt via non-exempt pay information to be sent to the Board of Health after the meeting, along with Ms. Brodderick's data. Ms. Flores requested at a date, by the end of May, be

determined as the final date of earned Employee Catastrophic pay. Ms. Sorber asked that the motion include the clarification of the last day of May being the final date, to account for payperiods being different from months.

**Motion to authorize the Executive Director to return to the regular compensation policy for earnings of all employees following the June 10<sup>th</sup> pay period, which includes the last day of May 2021, and to the discontinue Employee Catastrophic Pay policy at that time.**

Moved: Cynthia Flores  
Seconded: Joanne Land  
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts).

12) Executive Director's Report

Mr. Neal began by stating that a full-time, permanent Local Health Authority/Medical Director has been hired, who will not be starting until mid-July. He explained that while Dr. Magoon and Dr. Jarvis have been serving as interim joint Local Health Authorities, they won't be able to continue to cover the Local Health Authority and Medical Director duties in the same capacity until July. The Health District will, therefore, be piecemealing the LHA/MD role over several additional doctors until Dr. Norwood comes onboard. Dr. Norwood has a Masters degree in Public Health, so staff is looking forward to working with her in this capacity. Mr. Neal also informed the Board that his one-on-one sessions with employees have continued and that one of the Epidemiologist and Emergency Preparedness employees, Jason Fritz, gave a presentation at the American Mosquito Control Association Annual Conference, a feat the Health District is extremely proud of. Mr. Neal reminded the Board that the 2020, in addition to a pandemic, also had the highest West Nile Virus Cases in Williamson County ever. Mr. Neal concluded by thanking the Board of Health for their continuing support. Ms. McMichael thanked the staff for their continued dedication to the citizens of Williamson County and the great things that they are doing. Mr. Owens concurred and shared a story of how, in the role of his full-time job as a in-home care administrator, he hears wonderful praise for the Health District. Ms. Land also concurred.

**No action – Informational Item Only**

13) Set next meeting date, place, agenda (Thursday, July 1, 2021, 6:30 p.m)

14) Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn**

Moved: Joanne Land  
Seconded: Mary Faith Sterk  
Vote: Approved unanimously

**Board Chair McMichael adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.**



Recorded by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Botts, Executive Assistant



Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Derrick Neal, Executive Director

