



**Williamson County and Cities Health District
Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, January 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 6:35 p.m. by Board of Health Chair Marlene McMichael

1) Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. McMichael asked that Mr. Strout lead the Pledge of Allegiance, which he did. Ms. McMichael gave the Invocation.

2) Roll call was taken

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

Absent: Scott Parker (Liberty Hill/Leander)

3) Acknowledge staff and visitors; hear any comments.

Staff members and visitors present: Richard Hamala, Justine Price, Cindy Botts, Kendra Estes (Lead Nurse, HISD), Amy Jarosik (Wilco EMS), Henry Gideon (Asst. Superintendent, HISD) William Edward, Todd Robinson (Director of Communications, HISD), Celina Estra-Thomas (Superintendent, HISD), Shelbi Davis, Tim St. Peter, Mark Churilla, Melissa Tung, Kelli McGuire, Lori Murphy, Nicole Evert.

Item 4)

Ms. Price introduced this item by stating that the assistance provided by Ms. Estes and her team during the response has been incredible. As the Health District began looking for ideal sites for initial first responder vaccine distribution, and was having difficulty finding such sites, Ms. Estes and her team not only offered an ideal site, which the District ended up using, but also several backup options. The HISD team was incredibly accommodating, friendly and trusted us with the responsibility of their facilities. This really laid the groundwork for the establishment of a successful POD operations and did so at a really critical time when we, as providers, didn't have a lot of notice as to when the COVID-19 vaccine would be arriving and when it could be distributed. Ms. Price expounded that the Health District is so appreciative to Ms. Estes and her staff for everything they have done to make those successful and for their continual offers of assistance.

Ms. McMichael offered Mr. Owens, as a HISD Board Member, the opportunity to speak. Mr. Owens stated that he has continue to be amazed at the HISD staff's commitment to the community. He explained that he had the opportunity to receive a vaccine at the Hutto High School POD site. As a recipient, he thought that it was a very well-run operation and appreciated that the School District took care of the Health District, which allowed the Health District to take care of the vaccine recipients. Mr. Owens stated that the motto in Hutto is: "Better Together". Mr. Neal stated that he wanted to recognize Ms. Estra-Thomas for being a great partner with the Health District, even before the discussions on vaccine POD locations took place. Mr. Neal stated that she has always been a voice of reason on the Health District's ISD partner conference calls and that between the TEA and Public Health guidelines, there can be some juxtaposed and contentious thoughts, but Ms. Estra-Thomas continues to bring positive energy to the calls. Mr. Neal clarified that the partnership with HISD has been multi-faceted and layered throughout this past year, and that he has been grateful for the leadership that Ms. Estra-Thomas and Mr. Owens have brought to their ISD and the Williamson County community, as a whole. Ms. Estra-Thomas responded that she appreciated the Health District's support, as a Superintendent, trying to make safety decisions for the HISD children and teachers. She was appreciative of the Health District as a resource. Ms. Estra-Thomas mentioned that HISD was glad to help and will continue to extend a hand in whatever way they can, moving forward. Ms. Estes stated that she was thankful to work with the Health District and their example of amazing public servants. Often individuals can be critical of the work that ISDs do, and things are likely similar for the Health District. The support that the Health District has shown to Ms. Estes, her team, and the ISD in general is very much appreciated.

Ms. McMichael read the proclamation from the Health District Board of Directors to Hutto ISD. Ms. McMichael once again thanked HISD's efforts and services to the Health District and to Williamson County. Ms. Land asked to say a few words on this subject. She thanked both the WCCHD staff and the Hutto staff for everything that was done for the POD. She stated that she had the opportunity to view the process and was able to see how well run the process was. Mr. Strout also attended on a day that Cedar Park staff was going to be vaccinated and was very impressed with the location and the process of the POD.

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) Recognition of Hutto High School Staff for Vaccine Site Support

Ms. Mc Michael pulled this item from the Consent Calendar in order to address it separately, after the Acknowledgment of Staff and Visitors.

5) Approval of minutes, Regular Meeting 01/05/21

6) Approval of current investment report (October 2020, November 2020)

7) 2020 Summary of Actions Taken

8) Approval of All Together ATX Grant and Summary Budget Amendment

9) Approval of NACCHO Disability Grant

Motion to approve consent agenda, minus item 4, which was pulled and discussed earlier in the agenda.

Moved: Joanne Land

Seconded: Terrance Owens

Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts)

REGULAR AGENDA

10) Recognition of 2020 Grants and Associated Staff

Ms. Price asked Ms. Botts to go to this item within the Board packet and share it on the screen for the full group. Ms. Botts did so. Ms. Price explained that while a lot about COVID response has been shared with the Board of Health, over the past year, the Health District staff has continued to do a lot of other items. She went on to explain that knowing that DSRIP funding was going to be phased out over the next couple of year, WCCHD staff has “stepped up” in identifying new sources of funding and innovative ways to leverage the existing funding for strategic objectives, including such things as Health Equity Zone outreach. Ms. Price stated that she wanted to highlight some of the grants that WCCHD has been able to receive. These accomplishments are outstanding in any year, but even more so given the fact that the vast majority of the staff were also working COVID response, on top of their normal jobs. Ms. Davis, as WCCHD’s Technical Writer and Grants Coordinator, helped develop the District’s framework for grants, including cross-divisional collaborations and shoring up gaps in administrative functions, as it pertains to the grants administration, and allowing staff to work together on the shared vision of protecting and promoting the health of the residents of Williamson County. The referenced summary page describes how the grants are broken down over the course of the calendar year and the impacts that they have had. Ms. Price highlighted some of the grants for further discussion. Ms. Price introduced Ms. Davis and asked her to say a few words about her role as a Grants Coordinator, which she did. Ms. Davis also highlighted Ms. Evert, Mr. St. Peter, Ms. Jarosik, Mr. Rimel, and other employees and partners. Ms. Tung thanked Ms. Davis for her work as Grants Coordinator. Ms. Brodderick highlighted the work that the grants teams has accomplished, from a Finance perspective, in the chat, which Ms. Davis read out to the group. Ms. McGuire added that the vast majority of the grants received by the Health District include partners and as the Community Partnerships Supervisor, she is able to see how collaborative our grant process is with the agencies already assisting the community at large. The collaboration is also very strong within WCCHD, with various individuals, from various Divisions, jumping in to assist on different sections of the grant application in order to help the team, as a whole, succeed. Ms. Evert added that she appreciated all that Ms. Davis has done to guide those less knowledgeable about grants and grant funding through the process. Mr. Rimel, Mr. St. Peter and Ms. Jarosik all described their grants and expressed their appreciation of Ms. Davis’ assistance.

7:24PM – Cynthia Flores left the meeting.

Ms. McMichael asked if any Board Members would like to speak. Mr. Neal emphasized the importance of the grants coordinator function, as DSRIP funding is being phased out, and highlighted Ms. Davis’ commitment, excellence and leadership. Ms. Sterk added that she was impressed with the breadth of the funding that WCCHD has been able to bring in. Sustained funding that is not dependent upon any one source of income is vitally important, but the breadth of these grants shows the magnitude of the work that the Health District does. Ms. McMichael made a point to thank all of the staff that have worked so hard on applying for and administering grants.

No action – Informational Item Only

11) Executive Director’s Report

Mr. Neal began by stating that since the last Board of Health meeting, the Health District has taken some “political hits”, but that WCCHD staff continues to remain dedicated and resilient, despite the undeserved bad press. Staff is “battle-tested” and working as one unit. Staff is

always striving to improve, but communication continues to be key to our success, with working with internal and external stakeholders, including some of our individual County partners. Mr. Neal made a point to mention that Staff sees, and appreciates, the interaction of the Board Members. The meetings are more engaging and with their input into the Health District's strategic plan, it is a more collaborative process with the Executive Leadership Team.

Highlights of the Executive Director's report discussed the following information: direct funding of additional CARES dollars to the Health District, the successful establishment of the Environmental Pool Program and the coordinating relationship building with Kalahari, upcoming work on the next Community Health Assessment, Additional grants and the continuing excellence of our MRC and it's leader, Tim St. Peter.

No action – Informational Item Only

12) Board Chair Update on Response Numbers and Discussion of Vaccine Transfers

Ms. McMichael asked that Ms. Botts pull up a document recently spearheaded by staff, the COVID by the Numbers document. This document, which was sent out to all of the Board Members just prior to the Board Meeting by Ms. Botts, describes the response level of the Health District, from the beginning of the pandemic, through the end of 2020. The document will be updated on an ongoing basis, to continue to capture these elements. Ms. McMichael highlighted some of the numbers for discussion, including the number of staff involved in the response, and how much she was impressed at the continued level of "normal business of the Health District" with so many individuals also involved in the COVID response. Ms. McMichael mentioned that despite a recent negative statement in the Media by outside partners criticizing the Health District for not being open and dispensing of COVID-19 vaccine on Christmas Day, staff was setting up for the POD on Christmas Eve, also a holiday, and began a 4 day vaccination event the day after Christmas – also a holiday. Each day of the POD took 42-45 staff and volunteers and was able to do 900 vaccines in those days. 12,000+ calls, over 4,000 hours of volunteer time and approximately that same amount in staff overtime. This was a mammoth effort by the Health District. On top of this, WIC and PESS and EH were still operating. On top of this, the District was also contending with the largest outbreak ever in the District's history with West Nile Virus. There was also a tuberculosis outbreak, and 800 other various outbreak investigations. This is exhaustive work and the staff's families have paid a price for their dedication. Despite this, staff continues to work together as a team. This document, Ms. McMichael continued, is information that the Board Members can utilize to talk about the importance of the Health District, support staff and support the efforts of the Health District, which is part of the job of a Board Member.

Ms. Sterk added that from both the perspective of a Board Member, as well as an employee of a LTCF, who utilized the services of the Health District, during this pandemic. Development of the Health District over the years has been significant and she is grateful. Mr. Owens added that as the newest Board Member, he came in right at the beginning of the pandemic, so that is all he has ever known. The continuity of work that the Health District does, while responding to COVID, is important and he thanked the staff for continuing to do that. Ms. Land also added that she echoed the prior Board Member's sentiments and thanked that staff for all of their hard work and the step up towards excellence over the past two years.

Ms. Maxfield asked how many first responder vaccinations have been done in the County or if there is a certain percentage of individuals that are still outstanding. What is the plan for the future? Where and how will those vaccines be distributed? Ms. Price explained that the next targeted group for vaccine distribution by the Health District are the individuals in Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF) that fell through the cracks of the Federal LTCF vaccination program. Staff was also anticipating receipt of the second dose of the vaccine for the 900 first responders already vaccinated. Ms. Martinez explained that unfortunately, there is no singular "list" to reference to determine that all of the eligible individuals that fall into the 1A category have been or had the opportunity to be vaccinated. These include home health workers, a variety of medical workers, etc, in addition to the very clear-cut first responders. Those individuals will continue to be prioritized as we get vaccine. Ms. Maxfield also asked about the continuity of Health District testing. Mr. Neal responded that at this point it is about the capacity of the staff. Ms. Price added that WCCHD testing ceased testing more than a month prior and has transitioned to a focus on vaccinations as at this time, there is sufficient testing in the County, outside of WCCHD. The operations of the WCCHD testing was entirely dependent upon CARES funding as the tests are extremely expensive, and funding has run out from the County.

Ms. McMichael asked that the Board convene in Closed Session with legal council regarding transfer of vaccine.

8:00PM – Executive Session called

8:21PM – reconvened to Regular Session

No action – Informational Item Only

13) Election of 2021 Board Officers

Ms. McMichael opened the floor for discussion of 2021 Board Officers. Ms. Sterk proposed a motion that the Board re-elect the current slate of officers for the next year, with Ms. Land seconding Ms. McMichael confirmed that Ms. Sterk was the Secretary, Mr. Strout was the Vice Chair and she, herself, was the current Chair. Mr. Strout asked if any of the other current Board Members were interested in serving in one of the positions. Mr. Owens stated that he was not interested in serving to one of the elected positions at this time. Ms. Land concurred.

Motion to re-elect the current slate of officers for 2021.

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

14) Set next meeting date, place, agenda (Thursday, March 4, 2021, 6:30 p.m)

15) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn

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

Board Chair McMichael adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.



Recorded by: _____
Cindy Botts, Executive Assistant

Reviewed by 
Mary Faith Sterk, Secretary