



**Williamson County and Cities Health District
Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, March 4, 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 6:33 p.m. by Board of Health Chair Marlene McMichael. As only four Board members were in attendance, a quorum was not met. Under guidance from Legal Counsel, Ms. McMichael could go through items 1 and 2, but should wait for a quorum to be met prior to hearing any public comments.

- 1) Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
Ms. McMichael gave the Invocation and asked that Ms. Maxfield lead the Pledge of Allegiance, which she did.
- 2) Roll call was taken and a quorum was met by the time that roll was called (6:34PM)
Present: Chair Marlene McMichael (Williamson County), Secretary Mary Faith Sterk (Georgetown), Joanne Land (Williamson County), Scott Parker (Liberty Hill/Leander), Cynthia Flores (Round Rock), Joan Maxfield (Taylor), Derrick Neal (WCCHD), Terrence Owens (Hutto)
Absent: Vice Chair Ed Strout (Cedar Park)
- 3) Acknowledge staff and visitors; hear any comments.
Staff members and visitors present: Richard Hamala, Justine Price, Cindy Botts, Caroline Hilbert, Amy Jarosik (Wilco EMS), Dr. Jeff Jarvis (Wilco EMS), Mike Knipstein (Wilco EMS), Tela Nelson, Michelle Brodderick, Lori Murphy, Melissa Tung, Kelli McGuire, Ivah Sorber,
- 4) Recognition of Williamson County Community Health Paramedicine Support

Mr. Neal began by stating that the Community Health Paramedicine team, led by Ms. Jarosik and supported by Dr. Jarvis and Mr. Knipstein, have been an integral part of the COVID response and have been instrumental in saving lives in congregate settings. He also noted that today was a particularly poignant day with which to have this recognition because as of today, WCCHD has been in COVID-19 response for 365 days. Due to the work that this team has done, WCCHD has finally begun to see fewer clusters, leading to the ability to close down the COVID Cluster Team. Mr. Neal then gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the work that this team has done in support of WCCHD.

Ms. Price added that Ms. Jarosik and her team have become "family", not just support and guests because of how much they have worked collaboratively with WCCHD staff and on the variety of projects for the past year. These accomplishments, especially with such a small team, are really impressive. Ms. Jarosik and her team have been leading the way with the most vulnerable populations throughout the response.

Ms. McMichael thanked Ms. Jarosik and her team for their work and invited her to speak to the Board. Ms. Jarosik thanked everyone for their kind words and stated that she was very appreciative of the ability to grow during this pandemic as a leader and a provider. She stated that she has made amazing friendships over the course of the past year and has developed new skills that she is excited to carry on into the future. She made mention that her team of two has carried her and have always been willing to say "yes" to whatever is asked of them. Ms. Jarosik also stated that it has been gratifying to work with Annie Burwell's Mobile Outreach Team, and the local fire departments.

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)

- 5) Approval of minutes, Regular Meeting 01/05/21
- 6) Approval of current investment report (December 2020, January 2021)
- 7) Ratification and Approval of Professional Services Agreements for Local Health Authorities and Medical Directors
- 8) Approval of Contract with Luminare (COVID-19 Vaccine Management Software)
- 9) Approval of Contract for Participation in Texas Accountable Communities for Health (ACH) Initiative
- 10) Approval of appointment of primary Local Health Authority
- 11) Approval of COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Agreement with Curative.

Motion to approve consent agenda, minus items 7 and 8, which were pulled for discussion during the Regular Agenda, at the request of Cynthia Flores.

Moved: Joanne Land
Seconded: Terrance Owens
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts), Scott Parker approved via chat.

REGULAR AGENDA

7) Ratification and Approval of Professional Services Agreements for Local Health Authorities and Medical Directors

Ms. Price began by stating that Dr. Lori Palazzo resigned last month, leaving a vacancy over a large swath of medical oversight to WCCHD duties. This item is to shore up existing agreements with Drs. Magoon and Jarvis to ensure that WCCHD has continuity of operations until a new Medical Director is hired. Drs. Pundhir and Irvin's agreements are as assistant Medical Directors and would serve in more of a backup function. WCCHD is not currently utilizing the services of Drs. Pundhir and Irvin, but wanted to have depth and we are stretched thin across routine clinical services, COVID vaccines, a record number of tuberculosis cases etc. Medical oversight is critical and currently the role is being split between Drs. Magoon and Jarvis, with Dr. Magoon overseeing most of the routine clinical oversight, for things such as ordering labs, TB treatment, clinical notes, etc. Dr. Jarvis spearheading the COVID-19 efforts, in particular the vaccine efforts and POD oversight. Ms. Price asked if there were specific questions that Ms. Flores had when she asked this item to be pulled from the Consent Calendar for discussion. Ms. Flores asked for further information on the monthly phone stipend of \$100 listed in the contract. Ms. Price explained that this stipend is similar to the staff cell phone stipend and is a flat amount to help pay for cell phone service, for those employees who are "on call" and may be asked to use their cell phone to complete work or answer phone calls. One of the main functions of the medical oversight piece of the Medical Director position is to be "on call" to answer any medical questions or consult needs from staff.

Motion to approve the ratification of Professional Services Agreements for Local Health Authorities and Medical Directors.

Moved: Joanne Land
Seconded: Cynthia Flores
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts), Scott Parker approved via chat.

8) Approval of Contract with Luminare (COVID-19 Vaccine Management Software)

Ms. Price explained that all WCCHD is attempting to scale up COVID-19 vaccines through the POD site, data entry and the data and vaccine management portion, on the software side, has a lot of complexity and a lot of needs. It has proven to be one of the largest constraints in being able to meet the need in scaling up and delivering vaccine to the residents of the County. In looking for solutions, various software solutions were reviewed. Luminare is a proven software solution and has been used with great success in other jurisdictions, including Corpus Christi, which has used it for extremely large-scale vaccine operations. Essentially, Luminare rolls all of the elements of vaccine management, from registration and scheduling, through vaccine inventory and eligibility screening, into linking into the State's ImmTrac system to create a HIPAA-compliant seamless environment to collect, store and transmit required information for vaccine distribution. This software system is being implemented currently and should be active and ready for use within about two weeks. Staff believes that Luminare will really streamline and improve the vaccine distribution process. Ms. Price stated that the cost is not cheap, as most good software solutions are, at approximately \$120,000. This is not a pre-budgeted expense and therefore staff asked Marlene to pre-approve it. Staff is now asking the Board to ratify the purchase as an emergency response need for COVID-19 vaccination efforts and anticipating that the cost will need to be pulled from WCCHD Reserve funds. Ms. Price clarified that although the financial health of the District would be discussed later in the agenda, she did not anticipate the cost of this software being a burden on the District or on the current reserve levels, even absent CARES reimbursement from the County. Staff feels that the software purchase is crucial to where the Health District needs to go in coming months to scale up for vaccination efforts and to do it in a way that prevents the Health District from incurring liability. That liability is being skirted, currently, by using a web-based scheduling tool. Currently, we can't screen for eligibility requirements or capture any meaningful information. All of this has to be done at the POD site, which is cumbersome and very time-consuming.

Ms. Flores expressed concern about the cost of the software and asked if the District had procured bids that the Board could review. She also asked about the detail of the hourly rate listed on the contract. Ms. Price clarified that while staff did review other software options, the contract was not put out to bid officially. She stated that there are exceptions to the RFP and bidding process in an emergency and staff worked with Ms. Brodderick, as the Health District's financial officer, to ensure that the procurement of this contract was in compliance with all fiscal oversight requirements. As this was truly and emergency need, staff did not feel that we had the time to go through the onerous and time-consuming RFP process, which would take weeks or months. Even with the ability to contract directly with Luminare, software implementation is a long process, working with Wilco IT, Luminare and WCCHD staff to work through the requirements of Wilco IT's project management screening documents. Mr. Neal added that approximately 90% of health districts throughout the State are utilizing this same software and that as a member of the Texas Association of City and County Health Officials (TACCHO), WCCHD has been able to partner with other Health Districts to determine the best uses of the various available software packages. Ms. Price also added that it is not uncommon for the hourly rate of Luminare-staffed assistance to not be specified in the contract, itself, as the rates are regularly changing. She also stated that the clause in the contract referencing the assistance to be billed at an "hourly rate" also states that they cannot charge us for any work without a written proposal. Should the Health District need to take advance of this, for any customization of the software, which is not anticipated to be needed for this software platform, the proposal would be brought back to the Board for approval,

with the actual rate at that time included in the proposal specifics. Ms. Flores reiterated that the cost for this software was high and was for a 12-month period. Ms. Price affirmed this was correct. Ms. McMichael added that software, and IT in general, has been a huge issue in providing vaccines, throughout Williamson County, not just the Health District. Even the larger providers, like Family ER have had issues with their software managing the complexities of large-scale vaccine distribution. Curative is stronger in the IT department, but she is very excited about getting this software platform on board and smoothing that hurdle.

Motion to approve the contract with Luminare, as presented.

Moved: Terrance Owens
Seconded: Joanne Land
Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts), Scott Parker approved via chat.

12) Executive Director's Report

Mr. Neal began by stating that he wanted to focus on the transition the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has undergone in the past few months. At the end of January, Dr. Lori Palazzo resigned as Local Health Authority and Medical Director. Mr. Neal emphasized all of the tremendous contributions that Dr. Palazzo made during her time here, especially during the pandemic. The stress of the pandemic has been tiresome and wears on us, even for those who have a heart in Public Health. Mr. Neal said that he wanted to take the opportunity to thank her for all of her hard work and the ways that she advanced the Health District. Mr. Neal went on to say that the Health District has put in provisions to address those responsibilities until such time that the District secures another full-time Local Health Authority and Medical Director. Recruitment for that position will commence in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Neal also informed the Board of Health that Ms. Price resigned as well, approximately a month ago, with 8 weeks' notice. Ms. Price having been with the Health District for seven years, has been instrumental in her contributions to the District. The ELT has been focused, since her resignation, on identifying her replacement and ensuring a smooth transition. To that end, an offer was made yesterday to Dr. Caroline Hilbert, for the Deputy Director position. Ms. Price will work with Dr. Hilbert, over the next four weeks, to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. Because of the layered functions of the Deputy Director role, especially during a pandemic, Mr. Neal mentioned that he would be working with Ms. Price on a Professional Services Agreement, to assist in the transition, as necessary, after she leaves, in support of the new Deputy Director.

Mr. Neal stated that the highlights of the work the District is doing is listed in the Executive Director's Report, in the agenda packet, but that in light of Ms. Price's imminent departure and last Board of Health meeting, he wanted to provide time for her to make any comments she would like to. Ms. Price thanked Mr. Neal for all of his kind words and stated that she was grateful for her time at the Health District and with the amazing employees who work there. Several staff members and Board Members thanked Justine for her service and expressed the appreciation they had for her work and for her as a person. Mr. Neal then introduced the new Deputy Director, Dr. Hilbert, and allowed her to say a few words of introduction. Dr. Hilbert expressed gratitude to be chosen for the role and mentioned that she looked forward with working with the Board, moving forward.

Lastly, Mr. Neal asked Ms. Sorber to briefly inform the Board about the Annual Employee Turnover and Retention Rate Chart, which Ms. Botts shared on the screen for the Board Members to see. Ms. Sorber walked the Board through the various charts. There were no questions from the Board of Health. Ms. McMichael asked the Board to thoroughly read through the Executive Director's report to see all of the items that the Health District is continuing to work on, while managing a pandemic. She stated that she is very proud of the staff for their hard work.

No action – Informational Item Only

13) 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan- Year 1 Summary

Ms. McGuire introduced herself as the Community Partnerships Manager at the Health District and walked the Board through the Year 1 Summary of the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Ms. McGuire reminded the Board that due to the pandemic; the process and the progress of the CHIP have needed to adapt. The CHIP details the goals, objectives, and strategies to improve Williamson County's top five health priorities, as identified in the 2019 Community Health Assessment, and how Williamson County will be tackling those priorities. The Healthy Williamson County Coalition was utilized to build the CHIP, so it is a strategic plan, taking into account all the partner agencies of the Healthy Williamson County Coalition, for the next 3 years.

Ms. McMichael asked if the mechanics of the goals and objectives changed due to COVID, in order to move the objectives forward. Ms. McGuire answered that yes, in some cases they have. She then gave an example of the Resilient Wilco Working Group, which initially had a lot of strategies involving in-person presentations, reworked a large portion of the goals and objectives to the restrictions of COVID and an anticipation that this might be a long-term shift of how collaborations are done. Ms. Flores commented that Ms. McGuire's description

of the Coalition partners as equal partners in developing and implementing the identified goals and objectives is correct. She thanked the Coalition and the Health District for all of their collaboration and assistance in moving forward these strategies and goals for the betterment of health in all of Williamson County.

No action – Informational Item Only

14) 2020-2021 WCCHD Strategic Plan- Year 1 Summary

Ms. Tung introduced herself as the Quality and Strategic Management (QSM) Division Director and walked the Board through the Year 1 Summary of the WCCHD Strategic Plan. Ms. Tung mentioned that similar to the CHIP, due to the pandemic, the WCCHD Division Directors needed to review and, in some cases, update, their goals and strategies to make them relevant for the pandemic. Ms. Tung explained that for the 2020-2022 WCCHD Strategic Plan, the three focus areas are Community Outreach, Health Equity and Employee Satisfaction, Retention and Professional Development. Ms. Tung reminded the Board that these focus areas were derived from activities done with the Board of Health, as a group, and with the WCCHD Division Directors, as a group. For the first Year, approximately 40% of the goals and strategies have been started. Ms. Tung clarified that this was actually a strong number, given the pandemic and the various unanticipated priorities that have arisen over the course of the last year.

Ms. McMichael brought up the fact that, as identified in the Executive Director's report, the number of WIC clients have increased significantly, due to the pandemic and the associated shutdowns and job losses, and that prior to the pandemic, the WIC client numbers had steadily been decreasing for the past few years. Ms. McMichael wanted to provide kudos to WIC staff for managing that increasing number of clients. Ms. McMichael then suggested that the Board Members visit the POD site, if they haven't already done so, as the mass vaccination efforts are inspiring. Mr. Neal and Ms. Price detailed why the Taylor site was chosen for WCCHD's mass vaccination site.

Ms. Maxfield thanked WCCHD staff for focusing vaccination efforts on the eastern end of the County, as the individuals who live and work there, very much appreciate it.

No action – Informational Item Only

15) Preliminary FY20 Budget to Actual Summary

Ms. Price stated that it was customary to provide a detailed FY Budget to Actual Summary, as a glimpse of the finances, prior to the presentation of the Audit at the May Board Meeting. Ms. Price walked the Board through a presentation on the strong financial health of the Health District for FY20. She did explain that while the numbers are preliminary, they should be very close to what is finalized. The numbers, she further explained, are presented on an accrual basis, which is required by the IRS, and reflects a much more accurate picture of the District's complex finances.

Ms. McMichael informed the newer members of the Board that in the past, grants and other funding opportunities were pursued with a wider net, and resulting in actions that were not part of the Health District's Strategic Plan. She explained that one of the directives that the Board gave to Mr. Neal, upon hire, was to correct this approach. Ms. McMichael commended WCCHD staff for their strategic application of grant funding opportunities. Ms. Flores asked what the final date of allowable expenses was for CARES funding through the County. Ms. Price clarified that the date for allowable expenses has been extended through the end of 2021, although only approximately \$80,000 remains of the originally approved \$1M for the Health District's use. Ms. Price stated that this amount may be used for contractual staff, as this is an area where the Health District is stretched the thinnest. Potentially, depending on how long vaccinations continue, the Health District may need to go back to the County to request additional CARES funding, particularly if overtime is becoming an issue or the need for contractual staff grows more evident. Ms. Flores expressed that she had concerns about timing for allowable expenses for CARES funding and reiterated that early on in the response, she voiced concerns that funding requirements be kept on top of by dedicated staff. She also asked about a presentation a couple of Board Meetings ago that mentioned that \$500,000 had yet to be reimbursed and whether that amount had yet been reimbursed. Ms. Price clarified that the Health District has only received one reimbursement payment from the County for CARES funding, of approximately \$130,000, but the remainder of the nearly \$1M in allowable expenses, the County is still processing for reimbursement. She did clarify that staff does not anticipate the requested reimbursements to be challenged, as staff has been extremely communicative with the County Auditor's Office, the County staff is just slowly working through the requests. Ms. Brodderick agreed and further explained that because CARES funding consists of federal dollars, County staff is spending a considerable amount of time scrutinizing everything from incident command forms to detailed descriptions of tasks and purposes of purchases. When the Health District provides billing, they don't just provide a general ledger report, which comes with a description, but ICS forms, requisitions, with justification, additional backup information, which also has justification paperwork, etc. Ms. Brodderick stated that while she can't speak

for the County's team, it's a very arduous process for WCCHD Finance staff to collect this information – more so than the FEMA process – and it likely is for the County's Finance staff as well. Additionally, the Auditor's Office is working through not only the Health District's claim, but all of the other municipalities and organizations that were granted funding approval. Ms. Brodderick also stated that unfortunately, their team, like many other organizations, have experienced attrition of staff, flu, COVID and other issues that have slowed their approval process further. WCCHD staff has become more strategic in their working with County staff and has started asking for "pre-approvals" in order to smooth out items that may be different than the "status quo" requests. Unfortunately, the reimbursement process is just a very arduous, lengthy process. Ms. Flores stated that she knew the documentation was going to be arduous and it sounds like things are on track. She thanked Ms. Brodderick for her team's hard work.

Mr. Owens asked if the Census plays a part in requesting additional CARES, or other funding, to serve the County population. Ms. Price explained that the Census serves as the basis for the annual Member Contribution, which are paid on a per capita basis. Ms. Price stated that while the amounts increase slightly each year, due to the population changes, the actual rate has not changed in nearly a decade. The approximate increase based solely on that population changes, from FY20 to FY21, for all the Member City contributions is \$40,000.

No action – Informational Item Only

16) Set next meeting date, place, agenda (Thursday, May 6, 2021, 6:30 p.m)

Mr. Hamala informed that Board that the Texas State Governor has lifted the mask mandate and other COVID-19 restrictions for the State. He clarified that he did know if the Governor would continue to extend the Disaster Declaration, that allows for Board Meetings to be held virtually, by Zoom. Mr. Hamala encouraged Ms. McMichael to work with Mr. Neal to determine a backup plan for how to meet in-person, if the Disaster Declaration is not extended. Mr. Neal appreciated that update and will work with staff and Ms. McMichael to address this for the next Board Meeting.

Ms. Flores reminded the Board that approximately a year ago, the Board approved the Board Chair to "pre-approve" COVID expenses, which would then be ratified by the Board at a follow up meeting, due to the need for time considerations on purchases. Ms. Flores asked if a discussion on this item be put back on the agenda for the May meeting to determine if the pre-approval process is still necessary. Ms. McMichael agreed that it was fine to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

17) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn

Moved: Cynthia Flores

Seconded: Joanne Land

Vote: Approved unanimously by Roll Call (called by Cindy Botts), Scott Parker approved via chat.

Board Chair McMichael adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.



Recorded by: _____
Cindy Botts, Executive Assistant



Reviewed by: _____
Mary Faith Sterk, Secretary