

Dubuque County Board of Health

Minutes of February 3, 2021

Mr. Bechen called the February 3, 2021, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present:	Tom Bechen, Diane Pape-Freiburger, Dr. Valerie Peckosh, Katie Jones, Dr. Bobby Koneru, Corey Young, Suzanne Stroud, Adam Hoffman
Members Absent:	Hendrik Schultz
Others Present:	Patrice Lambert, Dubuque County Health Department; Collin Dolphin, Dubuque County Health Department; Bailey Avenarius, Dubuque County Health Department; Ann McDonough, Dubuque County Supervisor; Ben Fischer; Ed Raber, Interim Board Executive Director

Additional Notes: None

1. Roll Call

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of Agenda

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to add a discussion and action item to #9. Mask Mandate Committee Report on the Agenda. Katie Jones seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to approve the amended Agenda. Dr. Valerie Peckosh seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Tom Bechen made the motion to accept the Minutes from January 20, 2021 with the corrected title of Hendrik Schultz. Diane Pape-Freiburger seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

5. COVID-19 Update

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display a COVID-19 update for the Board of Health Members. Patrice Lambert presents the PowerPoint and shares that influenza activity has been low across the county over the past year. She attributes this to the COVID-19

mitigation strategies that have been followed such as mask wearing and social distancing. Patrice also discusses the three COVID-19 variant cases that have been found in the State of Iowa. The State Hygienic Lab is now equipped to test for these variants.

The remainder of the update is focused on COVID-19 vaccinations in Dubuque County. Phase 1B Tier 1 of vaccinations began Monday, February 1, 2021. Over the next 2-3 weeks, first responders, childcare workers, and prek-12 teachers, and those 65 and older will be vaccinated. There is an estimated 20,854 people in Phase 1B Tier 1. The Dubuque County Point of Distribution (POD) plans to open next week for these vaccinations.

Phase 1B Tier 2 focuses on essential workers in food, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. The IMT has partnered with the Dubuque Area Chamber and Greater Dubuque Development to assist in collecting information from these business to prepare them for vaccination.

Patrice then explains a breakdown of costs for the POD. It is understood that many of these costs can be covered by grants that were awarded to the Dubuque County Health Department. Remaining costs may also be reimbursable through FEMA. Moving forward, the IMT will work with Stella Runde and Megan Bonert to determine acceptable funding sources and requirements. The County's 6-Year PHEP Response Contract includes approximately \$241,071 to spend on COVID-19 response.

Patrice also shares additional updates, including the extension of the county's alternative care site at the Mt. Carmel BVM Center and isolation shelter. These items will be coming to the BOH again in the future.

Lastly, Patrice shares that since the COVID-19 mailer went out to Dubuque County residents, there has been a 34% increase in subscriptions to the IMT COVID-19 Daily Updates. She adds that the Walgreens/CVS Vaccination Program will run from February 4 – February 8 with a limited supply of vaccines that were left from the National LTC Vaccination Program. This program is separate from the local public health vaccination program. Patrice also states that there are 42,500 masks still available in Dubuque County.

Katie Jones asks if Walgreens vaccinations count towards the 50% rule of dividing allocations between 65+ and priority occupations. Patrice replies that it does not, as this is a stand-alone, one time program.

Katie also asks if all tests sent to the State Hygienic Lab are being tested for variants or if it is a random sampling. Patrice replies that she is not sure, but that she can check with IDPH and get an answer for her.

Tom Bechen clarifies that at this time Patrice is not asking for any approval from the BOH, but that in the next few weeks, requests may come regarding the alternative care site and the isolation shelter. Patrice confirms this.

Dr. Bobby Koneru asks how quickly it will take to get through Phase 1B. Patrice answers that IDPH has said that vaccine allocations will remain low for the next few weeks, with eventual increases. She adds that without knowing vaccine allocation amounts, it is hard to guess when Tier 1 will be completed. Patrice clarifies that the County has been receiving on average, close to 1,000 doses a week. She also adds that Pfizer is housed at UnityPoint and MercyOne as they can handle storage requirements, while Moderna can be sent to other health care providers as well.

Patrice Shares that on the Iowa Coronavirus website/dashboard, you are able to see how many vaccinations have been provided and administered in Dubuque County and throughout Iowa. This data is updated on a daily basis.

6. Committee Assignments

Tom Bechen begins the discussion of committee assignments by asking Board members if there are any committees that are no longer necessary. Tom wonders if Testing Committee still requires BOH dedication. Diane Pape-Freiburger agrees that the Testing Committee does not need to be active at this time.

Corey Young requests to move from the Mask Mandate Committee to Equity Committee.

Diane Pape-Freiburger and Katie Jones request to continue on Immunizations Committee.

Adam Hoffman requests to serve on the Environmental Committee. Tom Bechen would also like to serve on this committee.

Tom Bechen adds that Hendrik Schultz would like to serve on the Community Health Needs/Food Council Committee. Dr. Valerie Peckosh is also serving on this committee.

Katie Jones adds that substance abuse has become an epidemic in itself during this pandemic. Suzie Stroud suggests adding brain health to the Substance Abuse Committee, and adds that she would be interested in serving on that committee. Cory Young also requests serving on this committee. Tom Bechen offers to assist.

Diane Pape-Freiburger wonders if the Community Health Needs/Food Council Committee should cover lifestyle health issues. Dr. Bobby Koneru agrees with Diane and adds that health should be approached holistically. This would include brain health, physical health, and lifestyle.

Dr. Valerie Peckosh and Katie Jones agree that lifestyle health needs are of high interest. Suzie Stroud suggests breaking out Food Council to include more lifestyle factors.

Dr. Bobby Koneru notes that cardiovascular disease, cancer, brain disease, and obesity/diabetes are the four most common causes of death. He suggests refocusing the committees to reflect these four main ideas. Diane adds that these committee issues are also addressed in CHNA/HIP.

Tom Bechen explains that these committees developed over time as response to community needs rather than approaching the committees from a broader prospective.

Dr. Valerie Peckosh adds that looking at health more holistically and as it relates to lifestyles would be beneficial to the community. She would like to see committees become more functional and able to provide. Dr. Bobby Koneru supports this idea.

Diane Pape-Freiburger suggests changing County Health Needs/Food Policy Council to Community Health Committee.

The BOH decides to table this item for the next BOH meeting to allow members more time to think of how to reconstruct all committees to focus more holistically on community health.

7. Environmental Update

Collin Dolphin shares his screen to share an update on environmental work done at the County Health Department. He explains the Grants to County program that includes free water testing for Dubuque County residents and assist with well plugging and reconstruction. This program awarded \$30,300. Quarter 1 consisted of 5 wells pluggings and 1 reconstruction. During Quarter 2 Bailey and Collin provided water tests to 21 community members and 3 well pluggings. COVID-19 has prevented more testing in the community during the first two quarters. Over the next 2 quarters, Collin plans to test 80 wells.

Adam Hoffman clarifies that the County tests for E.coli and coliform while the State Hygienic Lab tests nitrates. Collin confirms this.

Adam also asks how wells are chosen to be tested by the County. Collin responds that based on calls coming in with inquires about testing, a road is decided and letters are sent to surrounding community members to offer testing through Grants to County.

Diane Pape-Freiburger asks if the money isn't used this year, where allocations for next year decrease. Collin responds that with COVID-19 this may be more flexible. Collin and Bailey will look further into this and get back to the BOH with an answer.

8. Board Member Term Expiration Dates

Tom Bechen begins the discussion with background on how terms were decided to get everyone on an acceptable 3-year term expiration cycle. IDPH and the County Attorney confirmed that if everyone is okay with this plan, the BOH is able to proceed. Corey Young and Suzie Stroud are two members with shorter terms and they are okay with that.

Diane Pape-Freiburger states that she is opposed to this as it goes against BOH code and bylaws.

Dr. Valerie Peckosh believes it is important that BOH has a set rotation schedule every three years.

Due to lack of a motion, the BOH agrees to move forward with the determine member term expiration dates.

9. Mask Mandate Committee Report

Katie Jones begins the discussion by providing background on the original mask mandate resolution passed by the BOH. This resolution has an end date of March 1, 2021. The Mask Mandate Committee recommends amending this Resolution to remove an end date and state, “this Resolution will remain in place until rescinded.” Voting on this change today would allow for a public hearing at the next BOH meeting on February 17. It would then go to the BOS for final approval on February 22, 2021.

Katie adds that she spoke with Hendrik Schultz today who believes that the removal of any mitigation strategies at this point would be premature given COVID-19 variants, and schools reopening full time. He also said that the Resolution could potentially be re-evaluated after high risk populations are vaccinated. Diane Pape-Freiburger adds that upcoming holidays and delayed rollout of vaccines could pose a risk as well.

Tom Bechen believes that the mask mandate has been a huge success and has worked in the community, but wonders if there needs to be an end point to the Resolution. Katie Jones understands this as well. Corey Young also adds that the community may not accept or comply with a Resolution that does not have an end date. Diane points out that the City of Dubuque Mask Mandate does not have an end date. Bobby also states that as things change often, with vaccines and variants, it is difficult to include an end date.

The Governor’s proclamation expires on February 6th and it is unsure if this will be extended or not.

BOH members discuss various data points that could determine end dates for the Resolution such as vaccination rates. However it was decided to not include an expiration date at this time.

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to revise the end date of the current resolution to state that “this Resolution will remain in place until rescinded.” Dr. Valerie Peckosh seconded the motion. 6 Aye, 1 Nay, motion carried.

Katie Jones made the motion to have a public hearing for the mask mandate resolution on Wednesday, February 17 at 6pm via Zoom. Diane Pape-Freiburger seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

Notice of the February 17, BOH public hearing will be in the three county papers on Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

10. Financial Committee Report

Tom Bechen informs the BOH that on January 25, 2021 the BOS approved the requested \$200,000 COVID-19 relief dollars for FY22. They also approved a motion to move forward with the Food Policy Council clerical staff member. The BOH has also been approved to spend COVID-19 relief money without a second approval from the BOS.

11. Next Meeting

The next BOH meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 17, 2020 at 6pm via Zoom. This meeting will also serve as a public hearing on the mask mandate resolution.

12. Public Comment

Ann McDonough – The BOH needs to take action on the Food Policy Council to accept funds. Supervisor McDonough also recommends using Ed Raber to assist in reconstructing the BOH committees. She also adds that there is this is the first time hearing of the mask mandate expansion and that community members need the opportunity to speak on the issue of having no end date to the resolution. Lastly, she comments that the Governor’s proclamation may have significant impact on the County mask mandate’s effectiveness.

13. Adjournment

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to adjourn at 8:25pm. Dr. Bobby Koneru seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.