

MARATHON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2020

Present: Via Zoom Web Conference: John Robinson, Corrie Norrbom, Kue Her, Sandi Cihlar, Craig McEwen, Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee, Lori Shepherd

MCHD Staff: Dale Grosskurth, Joan Theurer, Eileen Eckardt, Judy Burrows, Jon Schmunk, Chris Weisgram, Rachel Klemp-North

Others Present:

1. Call to Order

John Robinson Called the meeting to order at 7:47 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the June 2, 2020 Board of Health Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting, with correction made by Craig McEwen. Seconded by Lori Shepherd. Motion approved.

3. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance, or Resolution

A. None

4. Policy Discussion and Possible Action

A. Discuss membership opportunities to serve on the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDB) and National Association of Boards of Health (NABOH)

Joan Theurer shared that Board of Health members are provided membership to the associations. Board of Health members are eligible to serve on the state board as well as with the national association. Historically, Marathon County members have not served in leadership roles with the boards.

Sandi Cihlar asked the thoughts of other members, and if they have had the opportunity to review information from either association. Sandi has been in contact with a representative from the national association, and will reach out to provide an update on discussion held by the Board.

Joan will ensure membership lists are up to date with the new Board of Health members during the last year. John Robinson suggested taking some time to review the information on each associations' website. Additional discussion will continue at the next meeting.

B. Update on the Marathon County Community Health Assessment process and Health Officer's decision to delay until 2021

Joan Theurer shared that in early winter the process of identifying community health priorities was started, and provided a brief overview of the timeline typically used by Marathon County. With response to COVID-19 taking priority, the identification of community health priorities was put on hold, and the decision was made to delay the process until 2021. Joan also shared there has been discussion to also delay the next LIFE Report by a year.

Joan Theurer provided an update on the health priorities that are currently in place, and what the focus will be during the next year. Joan reviewed the amount of reduction in time spent on each of the priorities, as well as the shift in work to COVID-19. Work will most likely focus on alcohol & other drug misuse and abuse, behavioral health, adverse childhood experiences, and the overarching goal of socio-economic factors that affect health.

Judy Burrows shared an update on what the School Based Counseling Consortium is doing to plan for the next school year, given factors such as less staff time available, schools possibly continuing with e-learning or mixed schedules, and ongoing pandemic response.

Joan shared challenges to moving forward, including unknowns for 2021. It is not known how long funding will be available for COVID-19 response, or whether or not a vaccine or treatment will be ready in the next year.

Craig McEwen suggested the importance of reviewing the County's strategic plan, as behavioral health and adverse childhood experiences are specific strategies in the plan.

John Robinson indicated discussion will continue at the next meeting, in relation to the County Budget.

C. Update on Start Right Program funding in light of the adoption of the Marathon County 2020 Budget Repair Plan

John Robinson shared an update on the budget repair plan, including what the County Board looked at in relation to COVID-19 response, and associated effects on revenues. Strategies implemented include freezing of hiring for positions where possible, contractual and material savings, etc. Program savings was looked at, including with Start Right, because not all services are currently operating.

Joan Theurer shared that each department was asked to submit an updated budget. The Health Department's goal was to submit something that was revenue neutral. In addition, the Health Department was to reduce Start Right home visiting contract by \$79,000. Joan worked with Children's Service Society of Wisconsin regarding their contract, and two areas were agreed on for reductions; including discontinuing Play and Learns, and home visiting services being reduced by 20 families. Joan will be discussing the plan for 2021 with the County Administrator.

Discussion on the importance of providing services to the County's youngest and most vulnerable, and the risk of bigger issues in the future if services cannot be provided now.

John Robinson asked if outreach could be completed to families who utilize the services, and also share updated information with 211.

D. Report from the Health & Human Services Committee July 1, 2020 meeting on policy issues impacting public health

John Robinson shared that the last Health & Human Services Committee briefly discussed statutory powers and authority as it relates to the COVID-19 response.

Joan Theurer shared the recommendation for a County Ordinance moved forward to the Health & Human Services Committee, and then the Executive Committee. The Ordinance was paused to allow for further review of concerns raised by the business community, and allow a new state-wide work group to work on the issue. Four guideposts agreed upon by the work-group include: 1) Does the effort protect public health? 2) Can it be implemented (is it practical)? 3) Is the ordinance enforceable? and 4) Will the public find it reasonable and largely engage in voluntary compliance?

Joan shared that meetings continue, and will likely result in a “white paper” outlining health officer authority, and what needs to be in place to carry out enforcement. Recommendations will likely come back to the Board for consideration in August. Joan shared the work-group will also be working on putting together information to provide education on health officer authority.

5. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Update on Marathon County’s COVID-19 response efforts and focus for the next 30-90 days

Joan Theurer provided highlights of response efforts, including seeing an increase in positive cases. Recently the increase in cases has been higher in the 20-39 year old range.

Strategies to control spread include harm reduction, through communication with various groups in the community. The Chamber of Commerce is planning to launch a consumer safety pledge initiative for business to participate in, and a masking campaign. Surveillance is another strategy being used to respond to the pandemic, and a dashboard will be ready to roll out at the end of this week. Boxing in the virus through testing, isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine is the third strategy being used to respond to COVID-19.

Joan shared that testing capacity has continued to increase across health care systems, using the National Guard to support community events to underserved populations. Staffing capacity has limited the monitoring of those isolated and quarantined. There are also challenges with limited infrastructure, as the department has outgrown its current space.

Joan asked Board members what they need to be able to carry out their role in being an informed member, and advocate on behalf of the Health Department.

Tiffany Lee asked what the relationship is with school districts and what guidance has been provided to districts. Joan Theurer shared that Amanda Ostrowski, Public Health Educator, has been working with schools. The Department of Public Instruction has also issued guidance for school districts. Recommendations have also been issued from the state association for implementing school sports.

Discussion on what is being asked of schools to reopen while also ensuring safety of students, staff, and the community overall.

Discussion on what is being done with the Chamber's masking campaign, and with health care agencies, and other sectors regarding de-politicizing the issue of wearing masks.

Joan shared background information on the backlog of negative test results being reported. The priority remains on disease investigation and contact tracing.

Discussion on how to ensure minority groups are not singled out in the community as a result of race and ethnicity information in the dashboard coming out later this week.

6. Announcements

None

7. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location, Future Agenda Items:

- A. Confirm August's meeting date and determine agenda topics
 - i. Board of Health Self-Assessment Plan of Work

8. Adjourn

John Robinson adjourned the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shepherd, Secretary
Chris Weisgram, Recorder