

MARATHON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2020

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

MCHD Staff: Joan Theurer, Dale Grosskurth, Chris Weisgram

Others Present: Tim Buttke

1. Call to Order

John Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:48 a.m.

2. Public Comment Period

3. Approval of the Minutes of the October 13, 2020 Board of Health Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting made by Craig McEwen. Seconded by Sandi Cihlar. Motion approved.

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

A. None

5. Policy Discussion and Possible Action

A. Update on the Board of Health training session focused on health equity

John Robinson shared he will be connecting with Board members before the next meeting to work on developing the agenda for the training session.

B. Share letter from the WI Department of Health Services regarding findings from the 140 Review

Joan shared a copy of the letter was included in the packet for review, and provided a brief overview of the results.

Motion to accept the chapter 140 report, and extend to the staff of the health department appreciation for their work during the pandemic made by Lori Shepherd. Second made by Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee. Motion carried.

C. 2021 Funding for the Marathon County Start Right Program

John Robinson shared a budget amendment is going before the County Board of Supervisors to cover funding of positions in the District Attorney's office. The proposed amendment would decrease funding for Start Right home visiting by \$59,935. John encouraged the Board to

support funding for the Start Right program, given the benefits to the families who receive services.

Discussion on the need for early childhood services to support families in the community as they live through the challenges of the pandemic. Corrie Norrbom shared that research from the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank will present on return on investment in early childhood interventions on November 19.

Joan Theurer shared that the data that is collected locally on an annual basis is align with the outcomes that have been identified at the state and national levels.

Motion to support continued funding for the Start Right program at its current level made by Craig McEwen. Seconded by Kue Her. Motion approved.

John Robinson shared that the finance committee of the County Board will be taking up the proposed budget amendments at 3:30 p.m. today.

- D. Report from the Health & Human Services Committee November 4, 2020 meeting on policy issues impacting public health
 - i. Public Engagement Strategies for Local Communicable Disease Ordinance

Joan Theurer provided an overview of the November 4 discussion held at the Health & Human Services Committee meeting. During the summer, a draft ordinance was brought forward regarding enforcement powers related to COVID-19, and put on hold until guidance documents from state associations were available. In early fall, it was determined that it was necessary to engage the public and gather input as far as strategies to consider for an ordinance providing enforcement powers. Currently, a proposal will be put together by WIPPS to engage the community in a conversation with the intended outcome to be creating a forum allowing differing perspectives to hear each other and move forward more aligned.

Tim Buttke, Chair, Health & Human Services Committee, shared the need to come to commonality regarding responding to COVID-19. The goal of the forum is to bring different perspectives together to discuss the issues surrounding the pandemic.

John Robinson reiterated the need to engage the community and have a dialogue in the community. Further updates will be provided at next month's meeting.

Joan Theurer encouraged Board Members to reach out to John Robinson or Supervisor Buttke if they know of leaders in the community with varying perspectives who would contribute constructively to the conversation.

John Robinson shared the plan is to have the proposal from WIPPS moved forward as a contract in December, so the discussion can begin in January 2021.

- ii. Declaring Every Third Thursday in November as Rural Health Day

Tim Buttke shared an update on the resolution being brought for consideration at the County Board meeting tonight, declaring Rural Health Day.

Sandi Cihlar shared background information on the importance of recognizing Rural Health Day, given recent increases in disparities faced by farmers in Marathon County.

Tim Buttke clarified that the fiscal impact statement at the bottom of the resolution was included as the County Board considers fiscal impact on every resolution.

Motion to support the resolution declaring the third Thursday in November as rural health day made by Sandi Cihlar. Seconded by Corrie Norrbom. Motion approved.

- iii. Wisconsin Changes Policy relative to Medicaid Coverage for Incarcerated Individuals <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/101620.htm>

Joan Theurer shared that recently a change was made at the state level which will suspend Medicaid coverage for individuals who are incarcerated, rather than terminating coverage. When someone is released from jail, their Medicaid benefits will resume.

- E. Discuss local efforts to controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Marathon County

Joan Theurer asked Corrie Norrbom to share an update on an effort to reach out to Hmong and Hispanic residents, and the proposal to promote influenza vaccines for sub-populations in Marathon County.

Corrie Norrbom shared that immigrant populations are typically impacted disproportionately in any public health problem, and a project to improve communication between communities was undertaken. Community liaisons were trained on basic recommendations for COVID-19 to act as community health workers, and provide two way communication. Since May, over a thousand families have been reached to provide them with basic information and resources. Grant funding from WI Department of Health Services will allow information resources to be shared with communities around the County.

John Robinson shared the Wausau City Council will be voting tonight on the proposed city ordinance requiring wearing of masks in certain settings.

Joan Theurer shared issues that have arisen when ordinances have been discussed or proposed, as well as the importance of hearing the perspectives of law enforcement.

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

- A. Update on Marathon County's COVID-19 response efforts and focus for the next 30-60 days to include: disease investigation/contact tracing, community testing, vaccination plans, communication to the public, and demands on community resources

Joan Theurer shared updates on several areas of COVID-19 response, including challenges in determining where to put limited resources. Current levels of new cases require the health department to work under crisis standards for contact tracing. Changes have been made to information provided to residents and businesses, empowering them to complete their own

contact tracing, so health department staff can prioritize specific populations. Currently the State is providing assistance with caseload and is handling about 25 cases on behalf of the health department daily.

Community testing continues with the WI National Guard, and will extend through mid-December. Testing during the winter months is being planned at the West Street location, with services being provided by Aspirus.

The goal is to provide a safe and effective vaccine, including community distribution when adequate quantities are made available. Health care providers are being encouraged to enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccine Program. There may be a gap in enrollment with long-term care facilities because of staff capacity issues. The vaccination program contains three phases. Phase one will be health care workers, long term care residents, individuals over age 65, and other essential workers. The role of the health department during phase one will be coordination with health care providers, and identifying how to address potential gaps in providing vaccine. Currently, sources of funding are unknown. Phase two of the program would expand to providing vaccine to the general public. Phase three of the program would be the point at which residents needing vaccine have received it, and plans would be underway to integrate vaccination into primary care.

Discussion on the amount of staffing that would be needed to be able to operate at the needed level to cover the caseload and plans for vaccine distribution.

John Robinson asked what is being done to address public concern for a safe and effective vaccine. Joan Theurer shared there is hope for better alignment nationally for COVID-19 response, which will provide effective messaging around response and vaccine. It will be important to health care providers to step forward and be vocal, as well as the business community.

Joan Theurer shared that the UW system has implemented a rapid antigen testing for UW campus communities around the state. Plans are being made to include PCR confirmation tests as part of their testing protocol.

B. Update on Staffing

Joan Theurer shared Patti Poverski, Administrative Specialist for more than 30 years has retired as of November 2. Kim Wieloch, current director of finance at North Central Health Care has accepted the Director of Operations position and will start November 30.

7. Announcements

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

- A. Confirm December 8, 2020 meeting date and determine agenda topics
 - i. Formalizing the reporting relationship between the Board of Health and the Health & Human Services Committee

9. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Craig McEwen. Seconded by Lori Shepherd. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shepherd, Secretary
Chris Weisgram, Recorder