

TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2020

Present: Tim Sinton, Melissa Moyer, Austin Moyer, Jim Hodgskiss, Barb Shaffer, Ken Bassmann, Lin Wright, and Elaine Sedlack. Via Remote: Randy Morris.

Guests: Melody Martinson (Choteau Acantha), Keith VanSetten (Teton County Sheriff), Jennifer Stutz (Teton County Attorney's Office), Jerry Collins (Choteau American Legion Post Six Commander), Levi Hodgskiss, Aaron Leys, and Marlin Styren (Legion rodeo committee), Betsy Styren (Auxiliary president), and Dick Lyman (stock contractor).

The meeting was called to order by Melissa Moyer at 5:30 pm in the Teton County Courthouse Annex Conference Room to allow for social distancing and via remote computer and phone access for those preferring more social distancing and due to the limited size of the conference room.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present in the conference room due to room size and social distancing requirements for COVID-19 but were present via computer and phone access. Public comment was reserved for the later discussion on the proposed American Legion Rodeo and Mixer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 26, 2020 emergency meeting were reviewed. Barb moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Ken and approved unanimously.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Tim chaired this section of the meeting.

American Legion Rodeo: Tim commented that after talking to the governor's office there is no date yet for moving the state to Phase 3 of the re-opening plan and whether to move back to Phase 1 depends on the number of new cases, hospitalizations and deaths occurring in the state. He said he has talked to medical providers and community members about the proposed rodeo.

Jerry Collins said as Commander of Post 6 he has absolute control over the rodeo. In addition to the original plan and the revised plan which were sent to all members of the board of health by Melissa he showed a Power Point presentation of their proposal. The rodeo would be divided into 2 days with slack on July 3rd and the main rodeo on July 4th. He has added 10 additional people to help maintain social distancing. In response to questions from the board he said they have no control over people after they leave the rodeo. The grandstand has numbered reserved seating but the rest are general admission tickets which allow people to sit anywhere. They have separated the seating into blocks of approximately 50 seats but people can move around as they want. Beer and food concessions would be available. He expects about 600 spectators at the slack on July 3rd and 3,000 or more at the main rodeo on July 4th. Many of the slack contestants typically leave after their event in order to attend other rodeos.

Jerry responded to questions and concerns from the board. Tim inquired about insurance. Jerry said the Legion has insurance for the rodeo itself but cannot insure the city or county in the event someone contracts COVID-19. Board members raised concerns about the difficulty of doing contact tracing given the large number of spectators, lack of easy rapid access to contact information, and lack of information of who was in contact with whom. Essentially all the spectators would need to be put in quarantine if even 1 case developed. It would put our local population, which tends to be older and higher risk, at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. Jerry said they have already sold about 350 tickets. Melissa asked if 1,000 spectators was doable and Jerry said no it cost too much to put on the rodeo. In response to a question about why Choteau was chosen for this rodeo Jerry said there were 5 other rodeos scheduled for July 4th and it is a Choteau tradition. Also this is a Northern Rodeo Association event as opposed to just a local rodeo. Melissa said not all the other rodeos had been approved yet by their local boards of health. Since there were repeated references to the High School Rodeo Association rodeo in Choteau as well as the Youth Steer Show and the 4-H Fair which were all approved by the board it was pointed out that none of them had spectators. When asked if they could do the rodeo without spectators Levi said even though they could do a "Pay per View" event the Legion would only get about 30% of the money which was not worthwhile. It was also pointed out by the board that since entering Phase 2 there has been a significant increase in new cases every day and the worst thing for the public's mental health would be to have to go back to Phase 1.

Public Comment: Melissa reported the health department had received 16 letters in favor of the rodeo and 33 opposed. Copies of all the letters were sent to the board of health as they were received. Jerry commented that people in favor of something don't tend to comment as much as those opposed.

Melissa said those in favor included 5 from Teton County residents citing the tradition and the boost to local businesses. The other favorable letters came from Northern Rodeo Association members who cited their personal investments in time and money as well as the fact people have the option to attend or not and if they are afraid of COVID-19 they can stay home.

Those opposed to the rodeo included 31 Choteau residents and 2 anonymous letters. They cited the sacrifices everyone had already made and the fear of COVID-19 occurring in Choteau affecting school opening in the fall or increasing restrictions on small businesses. Some said while it would be good for the local economy it would be better to take the year off. Some felt alcohol would affect individual judgement and limit the social distancing and 1 pointed out Phase 2 limits groups to 50 people unless social distancing can be maintained.

Tim limited public comment to 2 minutes each. Eleven people called in to comment. Eight were in favor of the rodeo with comments regarding having spectators signing waivers in case they contracted COVID-19; that people can hide or get on with life and it was time to get on with life; that decision making was based on income with those with

steady income being opposed and we should look for reasons to have the rodeo rather than reasons to shut it down; that people from out of the area are coming through town and we have no control over them so why worry about the rodeo people who we have some control over; that the rodeo was well planned and they were excited to attend; and one saying his family was all adults and didn't have a problem with wearing masks. One person questioned what number of spectators the board would approve considering the amount of money that goes to the contestants and the stock contractor and the amount the Legion would need to make.

The 3 who were opposed said COVID-19 is still a threat but people aren't paying attention anymore; why were they selling tickets to the rodeo in early May when it hadn't been approved yet; and 1 who said she loved the rodeo and looked forward to all the July 4th activities and volunteers to help but feels this year it should not happen. Tim commented that all the 12 medical professionals he talked to including 1 doctor from Toole County thought we were crazy to even consider the rodeo. Tim asked Jim how the other county commissioners felt about the rodeo and he said they were not in favor of it. He asked Melissa if she had heard from the Choteau mayor and Melissa said he was generally not in favor.

Following public comment Barb made a motion to not approve the American Legion Rodeo this year. The motion was seconded by Elaine. Jim whose son is on the rodeo committee and Ken who is a member of the Legion recused themselves from voting. The vote was 5 ayes in favor of the motion and none opposed so the motion passed. Jerry asked for a roll call vote. Tim Sinton: aye, Barb Shaffer: aye, Elaine Sedlack: aye, Lin Wright: aye, and via remote Randy Morris: aye.

Rodeo Mixer: Jerry explained the rodeo mixer is not a dance although it has replaced the usual street dance. It is an opportunity for people to meet the rodeo staff (and contestants if there were a rodeo). There will be 25 to 30 tables set up in the rodeo grounds with beer and other beverage service to the tables. Seating is also available in the stands. A live band will be playing. Jerry expects around 200 people to attend. The Legion makes money on the beverage sales as there is no entrance fee. Cassie Campbell will have her food concession set up outside the rodeo grounds. The event runs from 7:00 pm to midnight on July 3rd. They will have bracelets to mark those 21 and over for alcohol and could also use them to indicate people have been checked for COVID-19.

Public Comment: None.

Elaine made a motion to approve the rodeo mixer on July 3rd. It was seconded by Lin. Jim and Ken recused themselves from the vote. The motion was approved unanimously with Randy voting via remote.

Public Health Department Updates: Melissa said the health department had just received a \$36,000 CARES Act COVID-19 grant to increase public health resources and to collaborate with emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement. It

would allow mental health counselors to partner with EMS and law enforcement during a mental health crisis.

Melissa also said she had just gotten a plan from the Soroptimists for their July 3rd “Art in the Park” event and the duck races. Tim asked whether the July 4th parade was happening. She explained it is a motorized or horse only parade and instead of going down Main St was going to wind around through several neighborhoods so people can watch without congregating in one area.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm by Melissa. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, September 21, 2020. Location to be determined depending on the COVID-19 status. Other emergency meetings may be needed to deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Tim Sinton, P.A., Chairman

Elaine Sedlack, Secretary

Summary of written public comment

In Favor of Rodeo Occurring		
Total Letters	16	
Letters from Teton County Residents	5	
Summary of Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tradition, historical public gatherings - Mental health, stress, isolation – positive role that community events may play in addressing these issues. - Supportive of local arts and culture - Local economy, especially small businesses, rely on community participation/tourism - Many members of the Northern Rodeo Association wrote in – expressed willingness to compromise and follow safety guidelines among contestants - Contestants and stock contractor investment (time and money) in their sport and strong desire to participate in the event - Hard work of the Choteau American Legion to plan this event, and other rodeo associations - Individuals have a choice to attend the event, and/or self-quarantine as they see fit - Positive experiences at High School rodeos across the state 	

Opposed to Rodeo Occurring		
Total Letters	33	
Letters from Teton County Residents	31	
Summary of Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teton County has a large vulnerable population (elderly, high-risk), concerns about exposure to them and sacrificing protection of their health - Increases in cases/outbreaks could affect students' ability to attend school in the Fall - Increase in cases/outbreaks could lead to moving backward in Phases and another stay-at-home order would hurt local businesses - Folks understand that the rodeo and other 4th of July festivities with large groups of attendees are good for the local economy but want it cancelled this year - Concerns about attendees' ability to follow measures that prevent COVID-19 such as physical distancing, hand-washing, and mask-wearing, especially if alcohol is available - Ratio of spectators to staff is 80 to 1 - Currently no confirmed cases in Teton County, and if rodeo is allowed concerns, we will see cases and possible deaths – moving backward instead of forward - Phase 2 of the Governor's Directive states events over 50 people should be avoided - Attendees from out of county and out of state - Question ability to contact trace cases with large events - Concerns about fans not being screened for illness - Questions about ability to adequately sanitize bleachers, railings, and other surfaces - Questions about safely handling concessions and money - This event is different from High School Rodeo, which had no spectators 	