

# **TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES**

**March 27, 2020**

Present: Jim Hodgskiss, Tim Sinton, Melissa Moyer, Austin Moyer, Lin Wright, and Elaine Sedlack.

Remote: Randy Morris, Barb Shaffer, and Kim Bassmann.

Guests: Remote: Joe Coble, Teton County Attorney, and Lora Wier.

Guests: Present: Melody Martinson, Choteau Acantha

The emergency meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm by Melissa Moyer in the Teton County Courthouse conference room.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 16, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Jim moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Tim and approved unanimously.

## **New Business:**

Emergency Health Rule Relating to COVID-19: Melissa reported the Governor of Montana has issued multiple emergency directives relating to the COVID-19 outbreak with the latest directive on March 26, 2020. The directives are designed to limit exposure and spread of the disease in Montana. The last two emergency directives stated the county attorney has enforcement authority within the county of the governor's directives. However Joe Coble, Teton County Attorney, wants the board of health to pass an emergency health rule relating to COVID-19 as the board has the ability to make and enforce rules for the county. They can be more restrictive than the state rules but not less restrictive. Melissa feels there are no additional restrictions needed in the county at this time. The previous directives did not cover hair salons or golf courses but the new directive from the governor does include them. Outdoor activities are allowed as long as people retain social distancing. The proposed rule states that "Teton County will abide by any current or future Directives issued by the Governor of Montana related to COVID-19 response". It further states that "Violations of this rule shall be punished pursuant to Sections 50-2-123 and 50-2-124, Montana Code Annotated". Tim moved the motion be approved as written. It was seconded by Jim and approved unanimously.

COVID-19: Current Status: Melissa reported on the current status. There are no cases in Teton County yet but it is spreading around the state with 108 cases, including 1 death and 7 people hospitalized. The United States has surpassed other countries in the number of cases to date and the number infected continue to climb.

Testing: Melissa said the goal is to identify cases as soon as possible and do contact investigation and containment. Frontier Family Medicine in Fairfield and Benefis Teton Medical Center in Choteau can test. Tests are sent to the state lab in Helena. Generally people are tested first for influenza followed by a respiratory panel to rule out other

respiratory illnesses and if those are negative, then COVID-19. Some secondary labs are now running tests. If a person has symptoms the tests go to the state lab and if no symptoms they can go to other labs. Current testing criteria include people with symptoms who have traveled internationally, are a close contact of a known case, people over 65 or who have other illnesses that put them at high risk, and health care workers. People who have returned from international travel or been exposed to a known case are asked to do self-quarantine for 14 days and check their temperatures daily. There is no reason to test those without symptoms like the worried well. Just because they are negative now doesn't mean they won't be positive later. Jim said he heard some scam artists are selling at home testing kits which are useless. Melissa said currently the state has an adequate number of tests.

Personal Protective Equipment: Melissa reported PPE from the SNS (Strategic National Stockpile) has been sent out including masks, gowns, and gloves. A second push will be coming which will be directed at EMS and DES. She said household members of positive cases are asked to wear gowns, masks, and gloves. Jim said Miller Hutteritte Colony made hundreds of masks but they were rejected and not needed locally. The question of what to do with homemade masks that are brought in but are not good for medical use was discussed. Can they be used in households with positive members or does that give them a false sense of security? It is hard to know what is acceptable and who makes that decision. One area is making masks on 3D printers from cut up masks.

Businesses: Austin reported good compliance with businesses locally. Most had already complied before he contacted them. The governor's directive involving essential businesses was very broad. If people can work from home it keeps the business from shutting down completely. He has the ability to pull a license from a bar that does not close.

Fines for non-compliance: Melissa said the route taken for someone who is non-compliant is for the health department to contact them by phone followed by law enforcement contact followed by the county attorney who would follow his protocol. The group felt it was not necessary at this time to set fines for non-compliance.

Recommendations: Melissa said there was good response within the community with people doing social distancing. She suggested people plan ahead so they only have one person within the home doing the shopping and limit that to once a week. She also encouraged people to continue to use local businesses to keep them going. Most local restaurants are doing curbside takeout and some are doing home delivery. Essential businesses remain open but maintain social distancing when shopping.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:49 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, June 15, 2020 at 5:30 pm in the Teton County Courthouse conference room.

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Tim Sinton, P.A., Chairman

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Elaine Sedlack, Secretary

**EMERGENCY HEALTH RULE RELATING TO COVID-19**

WHEREAS, Section 50-2-116(2)(c)(i) provides that a local board of health may adopt regulations that do not conflict with 50-50-126, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) or rules adopted by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services;

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared a pandemic from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, an epidemic of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has occurred across the United States, including the State of Montana; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bullock declared an emergency within the State of Montana for COVID-19 by Executive Order on March 12, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Teton County Commission declared a Public Health Emergency in Teton County on March 23, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) recognizes COVID-19 as a threat to the residents of Montana;

WHEREAS, the Teton County Health Department has also worked to identify, contact and test individuals in Teton County who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the State of Montana DPHHS and the CDC;

WHEREAS, proactively implementing mitigation measures to slow the spread of the virus is in the best interest on Teton County and its people;

WHEREAS, COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death and is a new strain of Coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person-to-person;

WHEREAS, the CDC identifies the potential public health treat posed by COVID-19 both globally and in the United States as "high" and has advised that person-to-person spread of the COVID-19 will continue to occur globally, including within the United States, Montana, and Teton County.

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends to avoid spreading COVID-19 to increase social distancing to six feet in between individuals;

WHEREAS, the circumstances of this outbreak may exceed the capacity of the services, personnel, equipment, supplies, and facilities of Teton County;

WHEREAS, based upon all of the above, on March 15, 2020, the Governor of the State of Montana, in consultation with public health authorities, has closed all non-residential public schools in Montana through March 27, 2020 and strongly recommended the limiting of all gatherings, specifically gatherings of more than 50 people;

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, President Donald Trump recommended that, for the next 15 days, all Americans avoid groups of more than 10 people, and avoid eating and drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts;

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, the Governor of the State of Montana, in consultation with public health authorities, has closed all public venues for purposes of public food or beverage service and other activities that pose an enhanced risk, in Montana through March 27, 2020 and appropriate social distancing practices of all exempt facilities and establishments;

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020, the Governor of the State of Montana, in consultation with public health authorities, has issued an extension of closures of non-residential public schools and restriction of certain businesses from typical on-premise business by members of the public in Montana through April 10, 2020 and social distancing requirements of members of the public and other retail businesses;

WHEREAS, on March 26, 2020, the Governor of the State of Montana, in consultation with public health authorities, has directed individuals to stay at home or place of residence, practice social distancing requirements, and cease operations of non-essential businesses and operations in Montana, as outline in the directive, through April 10, 2020;

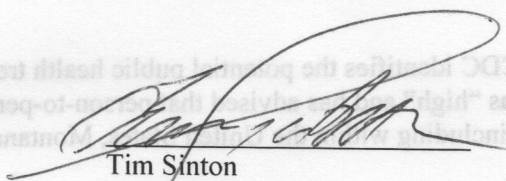
WHEREAS, to provide additional enforcement mechanisms under 50-2-124, MCA, the Teton County Board of Health desires to adopt an emergency health rule;

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020 the Board of Health held an emergency meeting, heard testimony, and made oral findings regarding the danger presented by COVID-19;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, pursuant to Title 50, Chapter 2, Part 1, and specifically Section 50-2-116 of the Montana Code Annotated,

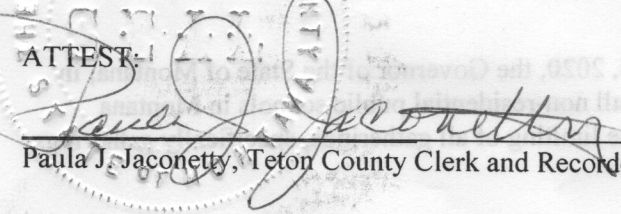
1. Teton County will abide by any current or future Directives issued by the Governor of Montana related to COVID-19 response.
2. Violations of this rule shall be punished pursuant to Sections 50-2-123, and 50-2-124, Montana Code Annotated.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
Tim Sinton

Teton County Board of Health Chair

ATTEST:

  
Paula J. Jaconetty, Teton County Clerk and Recorder