

Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC)

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2023



ATTENDING: David Eppelsheimer, Commissioner Nafisa Fai, Sonja Ackman, Ansley Fancher, Larysa Thomas, Hemi Pariyani, Julie Scotland, Madhavi Bharadwaj, Afam Okoye, Robin Bousquet, Andrea Lara, Lucia Benavides,

ABSENT: Rachel Arnold, Nicole Bowles, Eileen Derr, Lucia Benavides, Annie Paulsen

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Aidan Dreaming-Elk, Jamie Kubess

STAFF PRESENTERS: Dr. Marie Boman-Davis, Alex Coleman, Kathleen Johnson

STAFF: Lainie Clem

WELCOME

Alex Coleman started the meeting with a welcome and introductions to those attending, followed by a review of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

With the quorum not met in February's meeting, the minutes for both January and February were reviewed in preparation for a vote. The following question was raised about January's minutes:

Q: On page two of the January minutes, one of the key priorities identified by the Board of County Commissioners as a guiding principle of their 2023 legislative framework was to "Support funding to initiate the planning process for replacing the county's almost 100-year-old Courthouse, which will improve how the public safety system serves our growing community." Who would support the funding of the Courthouse replacement? Is PHAC able to support this funding? The poor condition of the lobby and the filthy carpet of the Courthouse does not show respect for the humans who must pass through it.

A: Alex will make some inquiries about the Courthouse funding and report back to the PHAC.

As part of the adopted 2022-2023 budget, one of the Board's budget priorities was to do planning related to the courthouse. "In FY 2022-23, the organization will evaluate resources available to initiate a courthouse planning project, in partnership with state and local stakeholders". We will continue to look for additional information on the current status of this project and provide additional updates in the future.

With no further questions or comments, Afam Okoye motioned to approve the January and February Minutes, and Larysa Thomas seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none opposed. The motion was passed.

PUBLIC HEALTH MODERNIZATION: CLIMATE PLANNING UPDATE, presented by Kathleen Johnson, MPH

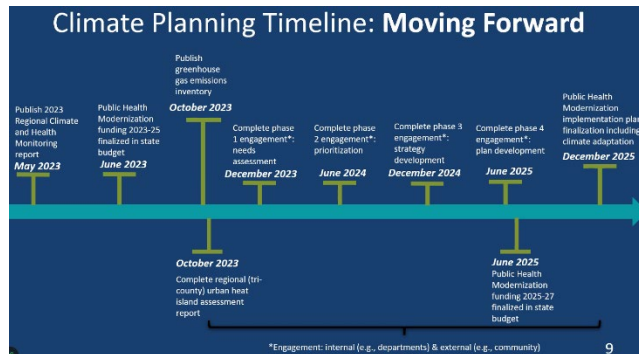
Kathleen serves as Sr. Program Coordinator of the Community Environmental Health Program for the Public Health Division. PHAC members received an update on the current County climate planning work. (Please see [PowerPoint](#) for more detailed information.)

- In October of last year, PHAC members received an update on the latest [Regional Climate and Health Monitoring Report](#) and the work in which the Public Health Division was beginning to engage in with the county's Sustainability Department to develop a Climate and Health Adaptation Plan, one of our deliverables for Public Health Modernization.

- Kathleen shared an update on the timeline and planning process of the Climate and Health Adaptation Plan, which is due to the OHA by December of 2025 as part of the LPHA Modernization Plan.
- The Board of County Commissioners asked for a Climate Adaptation Plan for the County, which is schedule to be presented to the Board on March 7th. This plan will be in collaboration with the Sustainability Group so we can utilize a One-County approach.

Climate Plan Overview:

- Involve county departments
- Collaborate with Sustainability to create adaptation plan
- Collaborate with community on strategies & goals
- Involve community in the development of adaption plan including health equity metrics
- Leverage existing resources for future mitigation work



QUESTIONS

Q: I have heard of an EPA climate pollution reduction grant at the federal level, which is rooted in mitigation. How are we mitigating climate pollution on a community level?

A: There is some interest in this multi-jurisdiction approach. There is an EPA Region 10 funding opportunity that will grant \$1 million toward a non-competitive, equity-centered collaboration of 20 partners working together. Metro would likely lead an initiative like this.

Q: Do we have data on who the biggest polluters are in Washington County?

A: Oregon.gov tracks Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Oregon by sector (agriculture, transportation, industrial, etc.), but does not name individual businesses. In 2021 Transportation was the highest sector, followed closely by Residential and Commercial emissions.

Q: I believe there will be federal tax breaks next year for electric vehicles. Do we have any rebates or incentives like this on a local level?

A: Kathleen stated that the Inflation Reduction Act provides for tax credits and rebates for a range of home improvements that reduce energy leakage, but she is not aware of any that are available locally. Marie also provided a DEQ link for the [Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program](#) that applies to *some* electric cars, but not to all of them. [Commissioner Fai added] In Oregon, the federal tax credit for electric cars is the same as in the rest of the U.S., which is up to \$7,500 in tax savings for those who purchase a new electric vehicle.

UPDATES

Legislative Budget Updates

Marie Boman-Davis introduced the testimony being submitted on March 15 to the state legislature and discussed submitting additional testimony. Friday is a big push as Marie and other Public Health staff testified in favor of the *3 to Thrive* legislation, drafted and led by Washington County. Marie will provide testimony to increase resources beyond \$50 million. The Coalition of Local Health Officials would welcome verbal or written testimony by the PHAC on HB 3090 to ban tobacco flavors. Likewise, SB 549 and 552 in support of school-based health centers, could also benefit from PHAC support.

Public Health Budget Update

PHAC members received an update on the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget process. For information on the budget and the budget process, please see [Washington County's Budget](#) webpage.

QUESTIONS

Q: Will Marie's verbal testimony be recorded?

A: Yes. The recording of the March 23 public hearing can be viewed [here](#). Additional information on SB 5525 can be found [here](#).

Q: Regarding Modernization monies, the \$50 million in the Governor's budget would maintain the current funding level?

A: In the last biennium, there was a one-time influx of federal ARPA dollars. The \$50 million would sustain the status quo—it would not be additional monies, so it does not help to advance our goal.

Q: We have a budget of \$50 million, but our ask is for \$286 million?

A: Part of our goal is to be clear with legislators that that our efforts are mandated. We started with a \$250 million gap in 2015, and the gap has continued since then. Information on what additional capabilities can be supported at various funding levels can be found in the meeting materials from the January 12, 2023 [Oregon Public Health Advisory Board meeting](#).

OTHER UPDATES

COVID-19 AAR

The Oregon Legislature required an After-Action Report on COVID-19. In our response statement we said the legislature will need to fund Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs) at \$286 million. We largely paused our focus on much of our communicable diseases and STIs during COVID-19, and now we have some catching up to do. Our government relations manager, Zakir Khan, has helped us to see the economic benefit more clearly in supporting public health; we helped a lot of businesses stay afloat.

Washington County Budget

We currently have a \$10 million shortfall, and the 2023-2024 FY budget will be supporting county operations. Budget cut packages were due to executive leadership this month, and they will make recommendations. In February, Marie presented the Public Health budget to the county CFO. Public Health was praised for ensuring that cuts did not impact our equity-centered supports (i.e., interpretation, translation, and community engagement), but rather, these areas were enhanced. We were also fortunate in our ability to retain all permanent staff in our division. The proposed budgets will be released next month.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Alex facilitated the election process for a new PHAC chair and vice-chair for the year ahead. Members were grateful for Hemi Pariyani's willingness to volunteer in the role of PHAC Vice Chair and Larysa Thomas' willingness to volunteer as the Chair. With no other members voicing interest in these positions, Madhavi Bharadwaj made a motion to elect Hemi as the Vice Chair and Larysa as the Chair of the PHAC. Afam Okoye seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none opposed. The motion passed.

ADDITIONAL UPDATES

2023 Volunteer Appreciation Event – please RSVP by Wednesday, April 5

Please join us to celebrate you and other amazing volunteers! This annual volunteer celebration will be held at the **Wingspan Event & Conference Center in Hillsboro on Thursday, April 13th from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.** Free parking in the south lot on Veterans Drive.

What: Annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

- ✧ Food, entertainment, gift basket raffle
- ✧ Greetings from County leaders

When: Thursday, April 13, 5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

✧ Welcome and introductions begin at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Wingspan Event & Conference Center, 801 NE 34th, Hillsboro

✧ Free parking in the South lot off NE Veterans Drive (parking lot accessed from NE 34th is not free!)

Who: All active Washington County volunteers

National Public Health Week April 3 – 9, 2023 Proclamation

Requested action

Will PHAC members vote to proclaim April 3 – 9, 2023, “National Public Health Week” in Washington County?

Summary of Proclamation

The Department of Health and Human Services and the Public Health Division requests the Washington County Board of Commissioners, serving as the Board of Health, join with other health jurisdictions across the nation in declaring April 3 - 9, 2023, as “National Public Health Week” in Washington County.

The Public Health Division serves many roles in protecting people’s lives, in addition to supporting and promoting community well-being. This includes providing services such as communicable disease, and public health emergency preparedness, as well as services for children and families such as WIC or universally offered home visiting for all newborns; supporting food access; and working with partners to ensure that all aspects of our community have the resources needed to be healthy.

Proclamation Vote

Hemi Pariyani made a motion to support proclaiming April 3 – 9, 2023 National Public Health Week in Washington County, and Larysa Thomas seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none opposed. The motion was passed.

Hybrid Meeting Structure

Regardless of the preparation put into ensuring that hybrid PHAC meetings function successfully, we continue to experience technical difficulties that impact everyone involved. For this reason, Alex is proposing a pause on hybrid meetings until we can ensure proper tech support. A survey will be sent to members about an in-person meeting in July or August, perhaps starting a bit later than 5:30 p.m. to allow for travel time. Hybrid meetings can be convenient, so we would like to have this option in the future, however, we need to ensure our technical setup is stable.

New Public Health Deputy Manager

The Public Health Division now has a new Deputy Division Manager, Folu Adeniyi. We anticipate Folu joining us in an upcoming meeting, where you can learn more about her and her role. A one-page informational sheet about Folu will be included in Alex’s meeting follow-up.

MEMBER UPDATES OR COMMENTS

Q: When we are voting, I believe that members should have the option to abstain. Is this possible?

A: Yes, that is a good suggestion. We will include the option to abstain when members vote.

Q: How do others feel about the requirement to wear masks in Healthcare environments lifting on April 3? After nearly three years of constant changes, can we [Public Health] make healthcare guidelines and restrictions more accessible? I looked at OHA’s website, but I found it hard to navigate to a page that plainly stated the current guidelines. Who needs to wear masks now? How do we proceed now once a family member tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Oregon (OHA) follows National Health Institute (NIH) guidelines. CDC recommendations are taken into consideration, but NIH is the source creating the guidelines for COVID-19 and its treatment. The President’s Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 ends in May. There will be numerous ramifications to our communities. SNAP

benefit allowance decreases, health insurance companies and providers are no longer obligated to provide free vaccines, etc. Barriers to treatment and vaccinations will rise again. We need to advocate for ourselves and others by updating our COVID-19 vaccines and boosters before then, as well as encouraging people to complete any necessary paperwork to access to healthcare, if available. Calling 2-1-1 is also an option for asking questions about available resources.

Information on Public Health Emergency Unwinding (PHE):

[COVID-19 PHE Unwinding Toolkit](#)

[OHA End of Public Health Emergency](#)

[OHA PHE Unwinding webinars](#)

[Oregon Food Bank Food Finder](#)

CLOSING

Alex will send out follow-up materials to the council in the next week. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 11.
Alex closed out the meeting.