

Barton County Board of Health Agenda Meeting Minutes

Recorded audio is available on compact disk upon KORA request to the Barton County Clerk's Office, 1400 Main – Room 202, Great Bend, Kansas 67530.

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October 5, 2021

The Board of Barton County Commissioners acting as the Board of Health convened this 5th day of October 2021, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Kirby Krier, Commissioner, 1st District
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District *(Chairman Pro-Tem)*
James R. Daily, Commissioner, 4th District, Chairman
Jennifer Schartz, Commissioner, 5th District
Donna Zimmerman, County Clerk
Barry McManaman, Interim County Administrator
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor
Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Daily called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M.

Commissioner Krier moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Schartz seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the minutes of September 10, 2021, Board of Health Meeting.
Commissioner Schartz seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS:

-At this time, the Commission will consider COVID-19 restrictions as relate to quarantine length recommendations.

Commissioner Krier asked Dereck Hollingshead to play a two-minute video to explain what Karen (Winkelman), who has worked so hard and so diligently, has had to put up with.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the discussion is on quarantine lengths on contact tracing and not on COVID positives.

Commissioner Krier said Human Health & Services Secretary Becerra will be questioned by Senator Paul in the video. This is what our health director must see and provide for. It is difficult for her. What is the state vaccination percentages? Winkelman said 47.7% of the entire population is fully vaccinated. Barton is at 40.7%.

Commissioner Krier moved to accept this Proclamation, The Declaration of Essential Workers in Barton County, Kansas.

Commissioner Krier read the proclamation.

Commissioner Schartz asked to have discussion on this.

Commissioner Krier said we have not even had a second.

Commissioner Schartz said this is the first time I have seen it. It looks very positive, but if I were to vote

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for this, I would like to know if by voting for this that I am leading credence to the fact that we should change our quarantine recommendations at this time.

Commissioner Krier said we are not at that point; this is just for essential workers.

Mark Rondeau said Mr. Chairman, a point of order, this is not even on your agenda. It is clearly inappropriate for him to bring this up when it is not even on the agenda. He wants to show up, let him do that but he can put it on the agenda first.

Commissioner Daily said I do not have a problem with what this says but it certainly is not on the agenda and we did not make a motion in the beginning to add it.

Commissioner Krier said this is part of the agenda.

Commissioner Daily said no, I do not think so. Our agenda item is COVID-19 Restrictions as they are related to quarantine length recommendations.

Commissioner Krier said when this came out originally, people that were essential workers could continue to work with masks and go work. Not every worker in Barton County were considered essential.

Commissioner Daily said once again, having just now seen this and what the content is, it sounds perfectly fine to me, but once again it is not on the agenda at this point.

Commissioner Krier said we could put it on next week.

Commissioner Daily said this could easily be a proclamation that we could take care of in the regular agenda session and not have to have a Health Board meeting to do it.

Commissioner Krier it is kind of health related.

Commissioner Daily said it is essential worker related, but what do you think, Patrick.

Patrick Hoffman said he had not reviewed the proclamation either, so I am not sure I understand what it does and does not mean. Does the proclamation change anything about quarantine restrictions?

Commissioner Krier said no.

Commissioner Schartz said or who the essential workers are.

Commissioner Hutchinson said to sum it up, this proclamation declares all Barton County workers as essential.

Commissioner Daily said it was not a part of our discussion item. I don't disagree with the proclamation itself by making all our citizens essential workers, I think it is fine. But I think this is probably an inappropriate format for it at this point. It could be on our regular agenda next week as a proclamation, because it is not necessarily 100% health related. That way we can wait for Patrick to have an opportunity to look at it and bring it back to us at that point.

Donna Zimmerman said essential workers is a board of health issue and would need to convene another board of health meeting.

Commissioner Daily said that does not bother him either.

Patrick Hoffman said he does not like to digest on the fly.

Motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Krier moved for those persons employed within the boundaries of Barton County, Kansas, should any person be in close contact, that being defined as being within 6 feet or less for at least a period of 10 minutes or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a positive case, that person shall first, follow the mandates of his/her employer in reference to work attendance and second, in the event the employer has no such guidelines, that person shall take a common sense approach that will include:

- Self-monitoring for a period of seven days;
- Use of a mask while working indoors or within 6 feet of other people or persons; and
- Use all universal precautions available (washing hands, coughing into sleeve, etc, etc).

Commissioner Daily asked for clarification and asked if that would reduce the 14-day quarantine to 7-days.

Commissioner Krier said no, leaving that up to the employer.

Commissioner Schartz asked Karen Winkelman for her opinion.

Commissioner Daily said we have discussed the quarantine issue on more than one occasion and the

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latest occasion having been with the school board in Hoisington.

Commissioner Krier said yes, and this has nothing to do with the schools. Zero to do with the schools. Commissioner Daily said the one thing that we have always been able to do is rely upon KDHE and their guidance along with the CDC. Going back to Senator Rand Paul, people in this day and age and in our country through history, do not like to be told what to do. We like to make our own decisions.

This particular quarantine issue along with the COVID problem itself has been an issue that has been politicized and creates a giant size problem for people. As you can tell from that video, it is not an easy topic to discuss without emotion. But we have always relied upon the information by KDHE and the CDC to look at how long it takes for this particular disease to manifest itself, to bring itself to incubation period. It is not uncommon for people to have had a shot and still get the disease. My 80-year-old brother-in-law died last Friday from a COVID related incident. He had other medical issues, but this particular problem put him in the hospital so his whole incubation period was in the hospital. It took that length of time and all the other things they could do to try to cure it and it never happened. It really does not matter if it is 14 days or 140 days or what the case may be, this disease is going to take so long before it incubates itself before you can really tell whether you have it or not.

Commissioner Krier said I leave it up to the employer.

Commissioner Daily said there is plenty of information that contradicts one set of findings from another set of findings.

Commissioner Daily asked Winkelman to answer Commissioner Schartz's question.

Karen Winkelman said I think you know where I stand. I continue to follow KDHE guidance and recommendations. My interpretation of this is that the employer would have the final say.

Commissioner Krier said yes, for their workers.

Winkelman said that could be whatever, that is how she interpreted this, and you know where I stand from the last meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the Health Department and KDHE quarantine guidelines for contact tracing are only recommendations, so that means there are no ramifications if someone chooses not to follow the recommendations of KDHE or the Barton County Health Department or the Barton County Health Board. It is very important that everybody understands that. This has nothing to do with COVID positive. COVID positive quarantines are 10 days or 72 hours whichever is longer. This would not change that. This basically is just saying we can disagree on the recommended time of quarantine for contact tracing.

Sheri Tubach, KDHE Deputy State Epidemiologist, said it is a recommendation, however, the local Health Department has the authority to issue legal orders of quarantine.

Commissioner Hutchinson said we do not have that currently.

Commissioner Schartz said that we said all along that these are recommendations, people can either follow them or not. I think when we set forward a recommendation from someone like Karen who is in a position of authority, she is following what has been prescribed as being the best recommendations.

We could change that but if people are going to comply, they are going to comply. If they are not, they are not. We sat here and listened to Sheri saying a couple of weeks ago that 14 days is preferred, a 10-day quarantine will get 80% of the people and a 14 day will catch the other 20%.

Commissioner Krier moved to amend his motion and state that self-monitoring for a period recommended of 14-days.

Commissioner Schartz asked how is that different than what we have in place right now.

Commissioner Krier said basically it allows the employer to know they have the authority to do what they want.

Commissioner Schartz said but they have all along.

Commissioner Krier said they do not know that. This motion will tell that to the public.

Commissioner Schartz said I do not know that I would want to further that information.

Commissioner Krier said you want to hide it.

Commissioner Schartz said no, no.

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Commissioner Krier said that is what you just said.

Commissioner Schartz said you know people are going to go along with it or they are not.

Commissioner Krier said you people, meaning who.

Commissioner Schartz said the employers.

Commissioner Daily asked Commissioner Krier if I understood what you said, the sentence says self monitoring for a recommended period of 14 days. That is what you want to change it to.

Commissioner Krier said yes.

Commissioner Schartz said so that really does not change anything, we are just putting out more information.

Commissioner Krier said I will amend it (the motion) again. Moved self-monitoring for a period of 15-days recommended. How's that. There we changed it.

Cathy Anderson said if we take the school system, if we look at the school system last year and we followed all the recommendations that were outlined, we did a 14-day quarantine and had a successful school year. School did not close, kids stayed in school. Now we have a variant that is actually more transmittable and we are trying to deviate from those recommendations.

Commissioner Krier said this has nothing to do with the schools.

Cathy Anderson said she was saying that worked, by following the recommendations. It was successful. Now we are looking at all the loopholes. I am confused as to why we would deviate from something that was successful. The same recommendations were community wide. Confused as to why you would reinvent the wheel when the wheel worked so well last year.

Commissioner Krier said there is a motion.

Commissioner Daily said he was making sure that all the discussion was taken care of.

Commissioner Schartz said she was not going to beleaguer the point, but this motion you are putting forth does not change anything. It just brings it out to the public that this is kind of in their hands because it is a recommendation.

Commissioner Krier said because he has had to watch people, a lot of employers that are losing workers.

Commissioner Hutchinson said for example, at the landfill last year they had an employee that was not COVID positive but was on the quarantine list. The Director had that employee work in a compactor away from all other employees the whole time he was on quarantine. In fact, the Director clocked him in and clocked him out so he was able to work. The employee did not infect anyone else or even come in contact with anyone else. As the schools, my daughter was in high school last year and she brought COVID home to our family during high school so it did not work perfectly.

Michelle Rondeau, retired nurse, said Karen (Winkelman) is basing her recommendation on KDHE and the CDC. You are basing your concerns and contradictions on personal situations. Winkelman is trying to make rules that is best for all. I get the employer issue. COVID is a terrible thing. I do not think this is going to make it better or go away. Needs to be some kind of standard of care.

Commissioner Daily said as a point of information, up until recently not only has this board, but also the Board of County Commissioners, has always supported Karen and the recommendation of 14-days as a normal quarantine period. In the very beginning of all that, Karen was issuing orders that the Sheriff and his personnel were serving to enforce that quarantine period. It was controversial back then because it affected the schools and employers, and it still does. The recommendation being offered here is basically the same thing. To clarify, this is letting everyone know that 14-days is a recommendation. We do not put out mandatory orders anymore. The recommendations that she makes are based on KDHE findings, CDC findings and what is recommended to her. Karen is a very smart lady, she is a fine Health Director. But she does not have the laboratories; she does not have the personnel to make all those determinations. This is being done on a far broader scale than what we have here.

Kathy Anderson said why change this now. It has worked, I am an employer and I appreciate the

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recommendations. I do not have the volume of information that Karen does, and I appreciate that and would not want it any other way.

Mark Rondeau said he had a comment in response to Commissioner Hutchinson's comment that there are no ramifications if we do not follow the recommendations. That's bullshit because people are dying. There is a person who cannot get into the hospital because there are so many COVID patients. It affects everybody. We are so selfish and so self-focused. I didn't want to wear a mask or get a shot, but I did because we are all in this together. And to say well, we will just let the employer decide. It ought to be based on science, that is my concern. You have the recommendations. If it ain't broken, don't need to fix it.

Commissioner Hutchinson said all I did was point out the law. I thought you would appreciate that. Like this is a recommendation, not an order.

Rondeau asked why would you recommend something different.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he did not recommend anything different.

Rondeau said I know, but that is what is on the floor.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the reason that all this had come up was to point out the fact that it is a recommendation. We have seen cases where people have been quarantined for 21 days in a row or 28 days in a row and never became COVID positive.

Rondeau said that happened to him.

Commissioner Hutchinson said you probably could work from home knowing you. You could probably send pretty good letters from home, I know you could. I know for a fact that he could actually.

Commissioner Schartz said where my head is right now is to not support this motion. The reason is because there are no changes and if Mr. Krier is correct, that we just need to make people more aware, I think by having this meeting and the media saying what has happened here will get our message out.

All we are doing is repeating a motion that we have had from the past and I do not want to get in a habit of repeating myself just so people hear the message that we are trying to send.

Commissioner Krier said he made the motion, so people know what these 5 (commissioners) vote on.

Commissioner Schartz said I think we could just support what is already in place.

Commissioner Krier said it is a simple yes or no, it is not rocket science.

Commissioner Esfeld said she wishes she had some words of advice. I appreciate Commissioner Krier bringing this to light. We all vote the way research, and our education tells us to along with our constituents. I have had discussions with Commissioner Krier and his constituents calling him on this.

So, either way we decide, we will make some people happy and some not. I wish that I had more of a foundation on this myself so I have to go by what I am told and by what I learn. I appreciate everything that Karen and KDHE brings to the table. But that leaves me still confused. It brings me to my constituents, some of which are here today. I did my own research as you know I always do, and you are going to hear both things, but the majority of my constituents appreciate the way it is right now.

Preston Moore, Pharmacist, and full transparency, Karen Winkelman's son-in-law. How do you plan to deal with the apparent lack of standardization in that one employer will quarantine and one will not?

Their rights per the recommendations. Will we still have the standard guidelines when that one employer did not quarantine, allowed that employee back to work and possibly infected others when they came down with it 7-days later. Then we will have to go the 48 or 72 hours and have a possible cluster. All that standardization will still stay in place, or will not be up to an employer?

Commissioner Krier said we have had clusters with the recommendations. Moore asked if the whole process of identified clusters stay in place. Commissioner Krier said it has nothing to do with it. Moore said so this does not affect that? That is my question.

Commissioner Krier said no.

Commissioner Daily asked if there were any other questions or comments. The motion has been made. Is there a second.

Commissioner Krier said no.

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Commissioner Krier said no.

Commissioner Daily asked if there were any other questions or comments. The motion has been made. Is there a second.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion to see the vote.

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Commissioner Daily said it has been moved and seconded, without reading this again, that we provide our businesses and the business owners with direction on how they are to handle quarantines and so on for their business and employees. The crux of it being where they are self-monitoring for a recommended period of 14 days, use a mask while indoors within 6 feet of other people and use all universal precautions available like washing hands, coughing into their sleeves, etc.

Zimmerman said the most recent motion was 15 days.

Commissioner Daily said excuse me, I did not get 15 down. Does everybody understand the motion?

Commissioner Daily called for the question.

Commissioner Krier and Commissioner Hutchinson voted aye.

Commissioner Esfeld, Commissioner Schartz and Commissioner Daily voted nay.

Commissioner Krier requested a roll call vote.

Commissioner Daily asked those in favor to say aye.

Commissioner Krier and Commissioner Hutchinson voted aye.

Commissioner Esfeld, Commissioner Schartz and Commissioner Daily voted nay.

Motion failed 3 - 2.

Commissioner Daily asked Karen Winkelman for comment. Winkelman said she had no comment.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

V. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Krier moved to adjourn at 11:45 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:

Donna Zimmerman
Barton County Clerk

James R. Daily, Chairman