

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.

Phone (620) 793-1835 \ Fax (620) 793-1990 \ Email clerk@bartoncounty.org

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams®** at the following link: <https://bit.ly/31obIOE>

March 2, 2022

The Board of Barton County Commissioners acting as the Board of Health convened this 2nd day of March 2022, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Kirby Krier, Commissioner, 1st District
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District (*Chairman Pro-Tem*)
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District, Chairman
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk
Matt Patzner, Director of Operations
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor
Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director

Members attending via Teams®:

James R. Daily, Commissioner, 4th District

Members absent:

Jennifer Schartz, Commissioner, 5th District

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 9:51 A.M.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2022, meeting.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

-Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, will introduce Health Department Advisory Committee members.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, thanked the board for recognizing the Health Department Advisory Committee members. The inception of the advisory committee was in 1987 because some of their grants required an advisory committee to review current program policies, objectives, programs on an ongoing basis as well as assess the future needs of the programs. The members must be Barton County citizens. There are no less than five members from the allied medical field with at least one being a physician and one being appointed from the animal health field. Appointees serve uncompensated two-year terms and are appointed by the Board of Barton County Commissioners. There can be up to nine members. At this time, there are 8 members with one open position that terms December 31, 2022. The current members and their backgrounds are:

Brian Wilborn - Finance, marketing, banking, personal management, and leadership

Krista Smith - Degree in physical therapy, worked in school system, familiar with grants

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Libby Merritt - School nurse, labor & delivery nurse, contractual nurse at the Health Department
Jan Watkins – Registered Nurse, retired after 45 years
Dr. William King – OB GYN for 30 years, provided family services at the Health Department
John Stettinger – Retired GBFD 40 years, Battalion Chief/AEMT, Sheriff's Office, CPR Instructor
Connected the Health Department with Convoy of Hope
Dr. Mike Malone – DVM 42 years, bioterrorism training and containing disease outbreaks
Dr. Perry Smith – Retired Family Practice physician after 40+ years, provides family planning services for the Health Department

Winkelman said this committee had been with them through the pandemic. They have no idea how much they were relied on for their support and guidance. There were very few meetings that had to be cancelled over the last two years.

Commissioner Esfeld thanked the committee for their support.

Information only. No action required.

B. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE:

-Karen Winkelman will present an update on COVID-19 measures.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said the number of COVID cases and hospitalized individuals had decreased. When you talk about an epidemic, you are talking about a widespread occurrence. When it is deemed a pandemic, it is worldwide. Now we are in the direction of focusing on an endemic, something regularly found and is something to be expected to be there. Shifting strongly towards endemic now. In public health, tend to work in a proactive manner to prevent things. The last two years they had to be reactive. They had guidance but it was constant change and they had to learn to adapt. They can be proactive for a short time such as a disease outbreak or a tornado but then go back to being proactive. It is a much more comfortable place to be in. From KDHE and CDC last Monday, the latest update, what they are looking at as guidance for our communities is measured by three metrics. Those are the number of new COVID admissions in the past seven days, the percentage of staff and patient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients and the total new COVID cases in the past seven days. There are three stages, low, medium and high. Barton County is currently low. For the individual, it means stay up to date on vaccines and boosters. For public health, the responsibility would be to distribute and administer vaccines and continue to achieve higher levels of vaccination and insure access to testing. The Health Department still provides testing daily however the numbers are very low, only one or two a day. They also provide vaccinations on a walk-in basis and will go to homebound individuals and long-term care facilities. Winkelman said that public health serves a critical role, but they are usually invisible. Winkelman thanked the Board of Commissioners and them as the Board of Health for their support. A friend told Winkelman that our children and grandchildren will be studying this pandemic in history classes in the future.

Commissioner Krier asked Winkelman the percentage rate of vaccinations in Barton County. Winkelman said Barton County was 46% completed and the state of Kansas was 53% completed.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Winkelman if she thought COVID would be like the flu as far as getting vaccinated each year. Winkelman said that was unknown at this point in time.

Krista Smith, Advisory Board Member, reminded everyone that the directorship of the Health Department was taken on by Winkelman approximately two weeks before the pandemic hit. Smith said that Winkelman did a fantastic job under tremendous stress. Across the state, many health directors walked away but Winkelman stepped up and handled it well.

John Stettinger, Advisory Board Member, said the Health Department along with others stepped up, fought the battle and won.

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Wendsey Ensley, Health Department Nursing Supervisor, said they were grateful for the community and all of the departments that helped. The Sheriff's Office helped with traffic control at the drive thru vaccination clinics. They appreciated all of the love and support they received. They learned a lot and were better for it.

Commissioner Hutchinson said in 1918, there was the Spanish Flu which lasted approximately the same length of time and there were 15 -100 million deaths worldwide. COVID deaths were approximately 7 million worldwide. Commissioner Hutchinson asked Winkelman about the workload since February 1st. Winkelman said it had shifted incredibly. KDHE was doing the investigations and managing contact tracing. The Health Department has been able to get back to their regular jobs and it had been refreshing.

Commissioner Krier asked committee members for their thoughts.

John Stettinger said the Health Department never really got a break. They went from vaccine clinics to investigations and kept the department running. They handled it well.

Krista Smith said their last board meeting was fun, they did not talk about COVID for the first time in two years. They heard more about the grant process and discussing things that had to be put on hold.

Dr. William King asked Winkelman if the rapid tests being done in pharmacies and homes were being logged into the CDC system. Winkelman said no they were not.

Commissioner Hutchinson congratulated Dr. Perry Smith for being recognized as the 2021 Citizen of the Year.

Information only. No action required.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.


V. ADJOURN:


Commissioner Krier moved to adjourn at 10:25 A.M.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Shawn Hutchinson
Chairman