

Minutes of Meeting
Panhandle Health District Board of Health Interviews
April 13, 2021
3:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Kootenai County Residents Michael Burns and Suzanne Knutson.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business (Action):**

Panhandle Health District Board of Health Interviews:

3:00 p.m. – Michael Burns

Chairman Fillios explained that the PHD Board of Health met nine or ten times per year, with meetings usually held during the lunch hour and last between 60 and 90 minutes.

Kootenai County Resident Michael Burns confirmed that his background was primarily in nursing. He said he was currently working for the Veteran’s Administration as a clinical reviewer. He stated he had about 30 years of experience as an RN (Registered Nurse).

- What is the role of the Panhandle Health District’s (PHD) Board? (Commissioner Duncan)

Mr. Burns said he was not exactly sure, other than as an advisory board for the County related to delivery of healthcare to the citizens.

- Where does Panhandle Health District’s funding come from? (Chairman Fillios)

Mr. Burns said he did not know specifically where their funding came from, but he suspected it came primarily from the State and County, with some Federal funds as well.

- Commissioner Bill Brooks asked how Mr. Burns felt about PHD’s recent activities, including the mask mandate.

Mr. Burns discussed his understanding of the science and supporting data related to the mask mandate. He indicated he did not feel the information was sufficiently conclusive to warrant a mandate.

- What do you think about the one septic system per 5 acre minimum (over the Aquifer) rule? (Commissioner Duncan)

Mr. Burns said he was not familiar with this rule and asked Commissioner Duncan for clarification. After her explanation of the rule, he said he thought that might be more of an environmental issue than health issue and that he was not certain of the justification for the rule.

- Do you believe nutrition/prevention should fill a bigger role in PHD's community education? (Chairman Fillios)

Mr. Burns admitted he did not know how much of a role nutrition and prevention currently played in PHD's activities, but said he felt strongly that it should be a primary focus. He said he believed attention needed to be encouraged for preventive medicine.

- Commissioner Brooks asked Mr. Burns if he could list additional areas in which PHD was active in the County.

Mr. Burns said they had programs for child/nurse services, substance abuse and suicide prevention.

- Can you imagine a circumstance when mandating a vaccine could be necessary? (Commissioner Duncan)

Upon reflection, Mr. Burns said he did not think he could. He added that he was not sure that was the proper role of government. He commented that there was both a health question and a personal liberty question that needed consideration.

- Chairman Fillios asked if he felt that government should be involved with questions related to healthcare.

Mr. Burns remarked that the government existed to protect the life, liberty and property of the individuals, so he felt they should have some sort of role in the area. But he questioned whether it was appropriate for the government to mandate that private individuals accept a vaccine.

- Commissioner Brooks asked Mr. Burns what areas he saw stem cell therapy as being useful.

Mr. Burns said it was useful in many areas, such as spinal cord injuries.

- How will you keep the BOCC apprised of the issues facing PHD?

Mr. Burns said he would use email.

- Chairman Fillios asked Mr. Burns to describe his areas of experience in the nursing field.

Mr. Burns stated he had a very well rounded resume. He said he had worked in many different fields, in management, ran a clinic, long term care, veterans, and veterans with mental health issues. He remarked that he particularly liked working with veterans.

- Commissioner Duncan asked if he felt he had time to devote to this position.

Mr. Burns said he did; he was willing to make the time.

Chairman Fillios invited Mr. Burns to ask the Board any questions he might have.

Mr. Burns asked the Board some questions related to the mechanics of the relationship between the Board of County Commissioners and the PHD Board of Health. Commissioner Duncan described the relationship.

In response to another question, Commissioner Brooks confirmed that the PHD Board of Health meetings were open to the public via Zoom at the present, due to pandemic restrictions.

Treasurer Steve Matheson entered the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Kootenai County Resident Jessica Jameson, M.D. entered the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

3:30 p.m. – Jessica Jameson

Chairman Fillios explained that the PHD Board of Health met nine or ten times per year, with meetings usually held during the lunch hour and last between 60 and 90 minutes.

Dr. Jameson introduced herself and said she was an anesthesiologist by training, a former flight surgeon in the Air Force and had lived in Coeur d'Alene for about ten years. She added that she was now an interventional pain physician, owned her own practice, Axis Spine Center,

- What is the role of the Panhandle Health District's (PHD) Board? (Commissioner Duncan)

Dr. Jameson replied that the role of the Board was to assist in making decisions in the best interest of public health.

- Where does Panhandle Health District's funding come from? (Chairman Fillios)

Dr. Jameson said they received both state and local funding, in addition to grants and fees associated with some of the services they provided. She said she did not know specifically how much they received from Kootenai County.

- Commissioner Bill Brooks asked how Dr. Jameson felt about PHD's recent activities, including the mask mandate.

Dr. Jameson stated that she had difficulties with mandates. She said she felt strongly about civil liberties, but it could become a gray area regarding mask mandate and vaccines. She remarked that it was a very emotional and challenging issue that faced the community.

Dr. Jameson confirmed that she did not agree with the mask mandate, despite her stance's unpopularity within her profession in general. She explained that there were many studies that had been released which supported many different conclusions.

- What do you think about the one septic system per 5 acre minimum (over the Aquifer) rule? (Commissioner Duncan)

Dr. Jameson said she had some concerns about that rule. She remarked that she felt this issue would receive more attention as more people moved to this area. She said the aquifer needed to be protected and thought that as long as the science supported the one home with a septic tank per five acres rule, it was acceptable.

- Chairman Fillios asked her views on vaccination.

Dr. Jameson stated that she did not think that vaccines that had not been fully tested, fully approved or have a proven historical record should be made mandatory. She contrasted rules regarding the polio vaccine, the flu vaccine, based on the disease's ability to mutate, morbidity rate and mortality rate. She concluded that, based on the emergency approval of the vaccine and the many unknowns about the Coronavirus, that the vaccine should not be mandated at this time.

- Commissioner Brooks asked Dr. Jameson if she could list additional areas in which PHD was active in the County.

Dr. Jameson listed suicide prevention, measures to combat the opioid-abuse epidemic, teen pregnancy, water, soil and septic monitoring, vaccinations, nutritional interventions for young children, among other things.

- Do you believe nutrition/prevention should fill a bigger role in PHD's community education? (Commissioner Duncan)

Dr. Jameson agreed that this should be a higher priority.

- Can you imagine a circumstance when mandating a vaccine could be necessary?

Chairman Fillios indicated they had already addressed this question.

- How will you keep the BOCC apprised of the issues facing PHD? (Chairman Fillios)

Dr. Jameson said she felt email would be the most efficient way to keep the BOCC informed, except in cases where a circumstance required fast action.

- Commissioner Brooks asked Dr. Jameson what areas she saw stem cell therapy as being useful.

Dr. Jameson commented that stem cell therapy had been used for many years to treat cancer. She explained that the problem was that there were multiple different kinds of stem cells. She said most of the data was from autologous stem cells, those coming from the patient's own body. She pointed out that the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) did not regulate this much in this area. She expressed her conviction that IV stem cells being used for treatment of such things as Parkinson's disease or Multiple Sclerosis was unethical, because of a lack of proof that they had the desired effect.

Chairman Fillios invited Dr. Jameson to ask any questions she might have.

Dr. Jameson asked what the Commissioners saw as the largest public health issue facing the community in the next ten years, outside of COVID.

Commissioner Brooks said he felt that water quality would be one of the biggest ones.

Commissioner Duncan commented that she felt education on nutrition and preventive care would be a topic of concern.

Chairman Fillios said that, since so many people coming to the area were over the age of 60, this would present challenges.

- D. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing.

Kootenai County Resident Suzanne Knutson asked how many of the applicants that they were interviewing were from the health care industry and how many from other areas.

Commissioner Duncan said that, out of the six applicants to be interviewed, five were from the medical field, one of them primarily involved in the nutritional and environmental fields.

Ms. Knutson asked why they were not interviewing more people with environmental experience, like water quality. She said her husband had applied for the opening and had a great deal of experience in that area. She commented that the Commissioners might be focused too much on medical experience due to the pandemic when PHD was involved in many more areas than just that.

Commissioner Duncan pointed out that only one other person on PHD, the other person that represented Kootenai County, was from the medical profession. All the other members were from different areas of expertise.

Chairman Fillios read the description of the PHD Board from statute: "One member of the District Board, if available to serve, shall be a physician licensed by the Idaho State Board of Medicine and no more than one member shall be appointed from profession or special interest. All members shall be chosen with due regard to their knowledge and interest in public health and in promoting the health of the citizens of the State and the public health district. Representatives shall come from both rural and urban populations."

Chairman Fillios said one person on the PHD Board had specific background in water quality.

Ms. Knutson thanked the Commissioners and said she felt that they had done a good job of spreading the word about the opening widely.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
