

Minutes of Meeting
Office of Emergency Management
September 9, 2021
2:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios and Commissioner Leslie Duncan met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Coroner Warren Keene, M.D., KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, KCSO Captain Stuart Miller, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Tiffany Westbrook, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) North Area Field Officer Jay Baker, Kootenai Health Chief Regional Operations Officer Jeremy Evans, Kootenai Health Emergency Manager Ken Mitchell, Kootenai Fire & Rescue Fire Chief Christopher Way, Kootenai Fire & Rescue Deputy Chief of Support Services Dan Ryan, Kootenai County Emergency Medical Services System (KCEMSS) Chief Bill Keeley, Panhandle Health District (PHD) Emergency Services Division Administrator Joe Righello, PHD Division Administrator Don Duffy, PHD Public Health Preparedness Coordinator Nick Mechikoff, Coeur d'Alene Press Reporter Madison Hardy and Kootenai County Residents Bruce Mattare and Susan Norris. Commissioner Bill Brooks was excused.

- A. **Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. **Business (Action):**

Meeting between the representatives of the Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management, Board of County Commissioners, Panhandle Health District, Kootenai Health, Idaho Office of Emergency Management and Emergency Operations Center principals to discuss a coordinated COVID emergency plan, including:

- **Current COVID Situation**
- **Needs From/Of Our Organizations**
- **Coordination of Efforts/Response Plan**

KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris stated that the meeting was to be held as a round table discussion between participants.

Kootenai Health Chief Regional Operations Officer Jeremy Evans updated those present on the current status of the COVID Pandemic in Kootenai County. He described the challenges Kootenai Health faced in meeting the needs of its patients. In response to a question from Sheriff Norris, he remarked that if a field hospital were set up, they would not have enough people to staff it. He said they were looking for other ways to increase the number of beds available to inpatient care, including asking Northwest Specialty Hospital to suspend elective care and devote their resources to this. He remarked that he had been in contact with State officials to find out how to encourage their cooperation.

A discussion among those present followed in which different suggestions to create additional bed space were considered.

KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos remarked that the State Disaster Declaration related to COVID was still in effect.

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Tiffany Westbrook stated that she had recently confirmed the Disaster Declaration's active status with Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Jamila Holmes.

Mr. Evans explained how other emergency care needs would be handled during a crisis. He also offered commentary on vaccinations, masking and social distancing protocols.

Kootenai County Emergency Medical Services System (KCEMSS) Chief Bill Keeley and Kootenai Fire & Rescue Fire Chief Christopher Way discussed ways that emergency medical response could be streamlined in order to avoid overtaxing the Emergency Rooms with patients that did not actually need transport.

Mr. Evans noted that there were local Urgent Care Centers which would also be provided with guidelines on which patients to transfer to the Emergency Room.

Sheriff Norris urged additional advertising from several sources to encourage residents to take all appropriate precautions.

Ms. Westbrook confirmed that OEM still had some funds available for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). She said that the Fairgrounds would still be a good location if a field hospital were needed.

There was general agreement expressed regarding Chairman Fillios' offer to speak to people at Northwest Specialty Hospital, on the need for Public Service Announcements, phrased as simply as possible, to encourage people to get vaccinated and on the need for Ms. Westbrook to secure space for a field hospital.

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. There were no public comments.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 3:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
