

**POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 5, 2020**

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Ainsworth declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session. Commissioner Mordhorst and Commissioner Pope were present.
2. **MINUTES** : **COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER POPE SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2020**

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. RECLASSIFICATION IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Matt Hawkins, Administrative Services Director, requested a reclassification of a Behavioral Health Supervisor to a Behavioral Health Program Supervisor. This is for Doug Akin and he has been in a supervisory role for several years now and is able to do this work and would be able to handle all the supervisory duties of all the personnel that would be under him. If this is approved it would be an approximate increase of \$4,000 including PERS contribution if that were for a period of 12 months. The Behavioral Health budget can absorb this cost and it would be effective May 1, 2020.

**BY CONCENSUS, THE BOARD APPROVED STAFF RECOMMENDATION UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **NON-LISTED ITEMS** - (Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners considered the below identified non-listed items.)

**a) COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM**

Commissioner Pope stated that he would like to have a covid-19 response team update every Tuesday as a standing agenda item until further notice. He was hoping to have the Public Health Director present but she is unable to attend today. Polk County and the Board of Commissioners acting as the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) have a Covid-19 Response Team that is made up of Administrative level to coordinate the team and he is the point person for the Board of Commissioners representing the LPHA and the Public Health Administrator, our Emergency Manager, the County Administrator, Health and Human Services Director as well as our IT Director as needed. They are trying to coordinate all of the pieces that come together, as they change daily. As of last Thursday we were operating under the premise of rules and guidance that we received on April 24<sup>th</sup> and then on Thursday that changed again and there was a whole new set of prerequisites for what we had to do as the LPHA in order to get through the gating process. The gating process is essentially meeting all the state's criteria for local public health and eventually for business the business community as well to get to a point where you can open your business in a phase one process. The prerequisite packet came out at the end of last week and they are working on getting guidance from Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Governor's office so that when we submit our application it is as complete as possible. They are working very hard to meet the requirements but they are still constantly changing which makes it difficult but they are continuously working at meeting them all. They are going to be required to do much more testing and contact tracing which will require a lot of people, and we will have to meet those needs on a regional basis which now consists of 6 counties including Polk. He is working with a lot of people trying to coordinate who will manage the communications with hospitals administrators. The contact tracing part will be the most difficult part because we will need at least ten new employees to do this job for the requirements that are currently in place. Up until yesterday the state was committing to hiring 631 people and using state

resources to fund contact tracer positions to distribute around the state to help us, and as of yesterday he was told that they will not be hiring anybody. Today our Public Health Director, Kristty Polanco, was told that the state would help with recruitment only. Commissioner Pope stated that the Western Oregon President Fuller who is very committed to helping us with graduate students and others that they have in their healthcare training program. He encouraged the public to call their congressional representatives and state representatives and senators and put pressure on the Governor's office to get the money allocated to the counties and cities pointed in the right direction. Commissioner Ainsworth stated that Commissioner Pope has done an amazing job and he appreciates the work that he has done. He also expressed his disappointment that they canceled the fireworks in independence.

Marilyn Morton asked if the communication circle including Jody Christiansen from Regional Solutions. Commissioner Pope answered that she is involved in the communication that comes to the County does include her as well. She asked when he hopes to have to application submitted to the Governor's office. His hope is to have it done by the end of this week or for sure by Monday. The application can't be complete because there are parts in the checklist that OHA has not completed and probably won't this week. He expects they will send it back and ask for them to amend it somehow. Marilyn also offered to work as a contact tracer part time if needed. We still have not gotten guidelines from the state telling us what the required qualifications are for this position.

**b) CITIZEN TESTIMONY**

John Golly, Dallas resident, asked the Board where in the constitution it says they can come and test him or track him and who he associates with. He believes the Commissioners should not have to do any of these things they are requiring because we as citizens have the right to associate with whoever we would like. Commissioner Pope stated that he agrees with him. Mr. Golly said that if he agrees then he should be pushing back against the government. He referenced the constitution where it is read the state cannot enter into a pact with another state. Commissioner Pope stated that the Governor has a legal team to defend her actions and we do not. It is the Commissioners responsibility to do the best they can to protect the interest of the citizens of Polk County through their responsibility working with state a federal government.

Carol Chaney, Dallas resident, asked if we know when we will be able to open. We will be requesting to open on or before May 15<sup>th</sup> but we won't know when until the application has been reviewed and responded too. Zack Steele, with Dallas Chamber, stated that we were supposed to get the opening guidelines for Beauty Salons and professional services on Tuesday and they still have not seen them, and now the Chamber has been cut out of the communication regarding the guidelines.

Mike Berkis, business owner in Dallas, who has said that he took a large loan to remodel and then had to shut down. He is now living off of his retirement which is getting very low. Mr. Steele stated that there is a serious mental health problem in the county for business owners and families who are facing financial ruin and see no way out. Commissioner Ainsworth commended our Behavioral health Department because they have been home but staying in touch with their clients. Commissioner Mordhorst urged the citizens to also reach out to the Governor's office and let her know how you feel and how it is affecting you and your neighbors. Marilyn Morton discussed the testing that was being done and that the state may be asking for volunteers for testing and long term monitoring.

Marleen Cox, business owner and Vice President of the Downtown Dallas Association, discussed the concerns she has heard from other business owners around. She has heard concerns about liability issues if somebody were to claim they got sick from their establishment, as well as workman's compensation rates. She feels that people should be able to open and let the people decide if they want to stay home or not.

Jackie Lawson, business owner and member of the Dallas City Council informed the Board that she was able to get a motion passed at last night meeting that they are in full unanimous support of the County Commissioners and they recognize the Board as the Local Public Health Authority.

Commissioner Ainsworth adjourned the meeting at 10:19 am.

Minutes: Ciera Atha  
Approved: May 12, 2020