

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
June 23, 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 JUNE 16, 2020**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. VSO UPDATE

Brent DeMoe, Family & Community Outreach Director, informed the Board that Nikki Rak, Assistant Veterans Service Officer, will be taking her test next week to become an accredited Veterans Service Officer. Eric Enderle, Veterans Service Officer, stated that they are very proud of Nikki and that she got a 100% on her milestone test which is a pretest to the one she will take next week. Since the Polk County VSO Office opened back in 2017 almost \$10 million has come to Veterans in Polk County in new awards and retro payments.

Initial claims appointments are scheduled for one hour but also consist of research and communications. They average 10 hours on each appeal and always have 75-100 claims and appeals in process. Gale's Lodge has been a huge success and has already helped 6 Veterans get back on their feet in one year. Eric shared some specific success stories of Veterans that they have helped get claims filed, some have received retroactive awards well over \$100,000. Most of these cases were referrals who had no intention of coming to see a Veteran Service Officer and only did because somebody told them about how knowledgeable Polk County Veterans Service Office is.

Veterans who come into the Polk County VSO are also being connected with many ancillary benefits. VSO can assess their needs, and by working closely with Family & Community Outreach they are often connected with healthcare and assistance with housing issues, among other things offered at the Resource Center. Polk Community Veterans Collaborative was recently developed to help identify what barriers there are in the community for our Veterans and how they can overcome them. VSO is currently working on streamlining some COVID-19 testing procedures because they do have a couple of tenants that are high risk.

Mr. DeMoe and Mr. Enderle expressed their gratitude for the County finding the money to allow for a second Veterans Service Officer. In other counties the wait time for their initial appointment can be up to four weeks. Without both the VSO's they would not be able to spend so much time on appeals and study case law in order to get those big retro awards. Unfortunately, most claims get denied and it is a matter of how much work the local VSO's do to prove that it should have been approved in the first place. There is a coalition of Veterans Service Officers that have been very vocal that dollars need to go to the counties first before big things at the state are funded. Commissioner Pope recommends getting Commissioners from all the counties involved with this and advocating that the VSO programs not be cut.

4. COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Noelle Carroll, Health Services Director, informed the Board that Kristty Polanco, Public Health Administrator, is out and Jacqui Umstead, Health Services Program manager, is going to be giving the Board an update today. Ms. Umstead stated that in the last 7 days Polk County has had 2 presumptive and 6 positive COVID-19 cases. Polk County had 2 outbreaks previously that have both officially ended. Public Health also organized additional testing of 72 works last week and they all came back negative. They will be doing more testing at a Marion County Meduri location soon.

There is a group home with a staff member who tested positive but everybody was tested and came back negative. Public Health is following up with them closely to ensure they are meeting the CDC guidelines for PPE and sanitization. There is a medical clinic that has five positive cases. All of those staff live in Marion County but because the facility is in Polk County it also falls under our jurisdiction.

Marion County and Polk County are considered a region by the state now. The Board would like to receive Marion County data as well as Polk in the future when receiving COVID-19 updates.

Dean Bender, Emergency Manager, reviewed the personal protective equipment (PPE) inventory that Polk County has. Polk County received two shipments from that state last week. We distributed approximately 1,000 N95 masks a week. We also received the gloves that were on back order. Last week we filled 8 orders, which is a slight decrease from previous weeks. Non-urgent medical transport are now eligible to request masks from the county. We received the backpack sanitation device and the maintenance staff will be trained on it and then a protocol will be developed for how often that will be used and where. The handheld devices are still on back order. Public Health has filled 3 orders for dental offices in Polk County.

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

a. MASK ENFORCEMENT GUIDANCE

Morgan Smith, County Counsel, updated the Board regarding enforcement requirements on the County for face masks. The state has stated that they already have a contract with counties to enforce health and safety regulations within eating establishments, which would be done by our Environmental Health department. The state has said they expect the counties to treat it more as an informational opportunity to establishments who are not following the face coverings order and have provided some template letters that can be sent. The letter would essentially say that this is a warning and letting them know that we have received a complaint and asking them to remedy their internal practices to address it. We would be the first line of enforcement on any establishment that we provide a license and not the others. If we do not intend to enforce on the establishments that we don't provide a license too then they ask that we defer those complaints to the state and they will triage it appropriately.

Noelle Carroll, Health Services Director, reminded the Board that the state is waiting for the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) to inform the state of their intentions related to enforcing the Governor's Executive Order to wear masks. If the LPHA does not respond to the state by noon tomorrow, the Oregon Health Authority will assume the County will be enforcing for entities we do not license as well as the required enforcement on establishments that we do provide licensing to.

Commissioner Ainsworth adjourned the meeting at 9:52 am.