

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
August 18, 2020

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Ainsworth declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session. Commissioner Pope and Commissioner Mordhorst were present.
2. **MINUTES** : **COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER POPE SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 11, 2020**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Jacqui Umstead, Public Health Administrator, reviewed that Covid case data for the state of Oregon. Currently Oregon has 23,451 total cases, and has had 388 deaths from Covid. Polk County had another death this past week and the individual was elderly and did have underlying conditions. Hospitalizations in Polk County are still at zero, and Ms. Umstead clarified that there is a typo on her handout which reads three deaths in Polk County. Currently Polk County has 368 positive cases and has had 13 deaths. Marion County has 3,234 positive cases and has 73 deaths. The state has changed from measuring testing per 10,000 people and have increased that to 100,000 people.

Capitol Manor is still being considered an outbreak with 10 positive cases. Dallas Retirement Village has 4 cases and testing stated August 5th. Prestige Orchard Heights has 2 positive cases and 1 positive case pending. Salem Health has a total of 34 staff members who tested positive.

Jacqui reviewed the current staffing levels in Polk County Public Health (PH). They have 10 contact tracers, 2 coordinators, and 2 professors providing insight from WOU. They are currently monitoring 101 people for symptoms. The MOU with Willamette Workforce has been revised and sent back and are now they are waiting on getting it signed and active. Polk County Public Health had 2 workers start last week, 1 other had started and then resigned and now PH is working on interviewing 1-2 more candidates. They also have 2 Communicable Disease RN's and another RN who has been cross trained and another who acts as a backup. There is 1 more PH worker who was hired through the modernization grant and has also been cross trained who. Ms. Umstead reviewed the handout she provided with the breakdown of age groups and the number of cases in each group.

Marion and Polk County combined are doing well with the number of ED visits however there is an uptrend in the percent of tests that have been positive in the last 7 days. The percentage of cases not traced to a known source in the last 7 days is at 29% which is under the 30% goal. There has been an uptrend in hospitalizations over the last 14 days and the percent of cases in the last 7 days with follow up within 24 hours is at 99%. Polk County alone has a downtrend in the percent of tests that are positive in the last 7 days. In the week of July 26th there were 469 tests done in Polk County and 23 of them were positive and the week of August 2nd there were 615 tests done and 31 of them were positive. We have a -25% increase in the number of positive cases from the week of July 26th through August 1st to the week of August 2nd through August 8th.

Marion County's ED visits are below the target at .3% and their trend in percent of tests that are positive in the last 7 days is up trending at 7.9%. The week of July 26th they tested 2,959 of which 259 were positive and then the week of August 2nd they tested 2,602 of which 210 were

positive. Marion County currently has a decrease in cases at -4% and 29% of cases not traced to a known source in the last 7 days. They have had an uptrend in Covid-19 hospitalizations over the last 14 days.

Dean Bender, Emergency Operations Manager, informed that Board that last week that he filled 9 PPE orders and he estimates that they still have over \$281,000 worth of PPE. Last week they shipped out just over \$3,000 worth of PPE. He also received a shipment in with gloves which he will need to order again because they were sent out in the orders he filled. There was a slight uptake on the 3 week average and next week Mr. Bender expects to see an even bigger uptake. The reason for the increase is because Mr. Bender contacted all of the agencies that he has filled orders for previously and let them know that we had supplies such as KN95's and hand sanitizer and he received 18 orders after that.

Commissioner Pope discussed the decision the Oregon Emergency Board made to spend \$105 million on PPE against the advisement of the Association of Oregon Counties, League of Oregon Cities, Special Districts Association, and 47 Legislatures. The money to purchase the PPE was supposed to go to local governments and he expressed his frustration that they made this decision without consulting or having any conversations with the local government about how that money could be used to best meet the needs of our county.

4. FAIRGROUNDS UPDATE

Tina Andersen, Fairgrounds Manager, and Tim Ray, Fair Board member, attended the meeting to update the Board on the recent events and upcoming events at the Fairgrounds. They had to cancel the Fair this year due to the state guidelines surrounding Covid-19 but were able to put on a Fair Food Day, which was very successful. The vendors made money as well as the Fairgrounds due to some people driving by just to make a donation.

Last weekend they held the Market show and auction which was done quite a bit different than it normally would be. They had no trouble getting people to follow the rules and were able to manage the number of people as well. The auction went until 6:00 p.m. and 137 Lots were sold, which generated almost \$250,000.

Year round usage is down due 104 events from the year before and 6 fundraisers. They had 83 public and private events cancelled and 103 4-H, FFA, & youth events since March. They are currently working on putting the Craft Festival together for November and the gun show together in December. These events are dependent on restrictions that may or may not be in place at the time but are still getting a lot of positive feedback from the vendors who understand that they have to limit gatherings. The vendors have also been informed that if they are not comfortable participating in the Festival this year they will not lose their table spot for when it opens back up. They opened up storage and have already received several requests for space. Last year they had a record year in storage and did just under \$30,000 and they are expecting to see that again this year.

The Maintenance worker has been keeping very busy during the shutdown. The Fairgrounds has been able to secure grants for most of the work they have been doing and recently finished the LED lights for building B and floral with a grant of \$13,000 that completely covered the costs. They received another grant from the Fair Foundation to add another camera for security reasons as well as a \$500 grant from PCL to take out the old concrete in Building B where the old scale was and get it re-floored. They received money from OSU to repair the beef and horse wash racks, and all of the labor and equipment is donated for that. The Capitol City Exchange Club resurfaced the floor in the kitchen and added stainless steel counter tops and a new food

warmer. Overnight camping at the Fairgrounds is picking up again and the dump station has become very popular, and they have struggled to keep people from staying longer than the 14 days allowed.

Ms. Andersen provided the Board with a form that the Oregon Fair Association requires them to keep which shows their loss of revenue. It shows the contracts that were canceled between March and October, which is a loss of \$114,335. There is a bill right now that is an agricultural fair rescue act that is in the next round of emergency funds which is looking for \$500 million for fairs, state, county and local fairs and festivals and hopefully they will get some of that money.

The Fair Board has three members whose terms expire at the end of this year and she asked the Board if they wanted to reach out to them or if they wanted her to. The Board would like Ms. Andersen to reach out to them. The Fair Board personnel committee will be meeting and she expects that there will be some more staffing changes at the Fairgrounds. The Commissioners thank Ms. Andersen for being so resilient during these times and for working so hard to keep our Fairgrounds running.

The Courts will be holding trial at the Fairgrounds in September in order to ensure social distancing. They are still figuring out how they will provide the security required but she feels it will go smoothly and meet the needs of the court.

5. COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY & FCO PARTNERSHIP

Brent DeMoe, Family and Community Outreach (FCO) Director, Stephanie Gilbert, Early Learning and Family Engagement Supervisor, and Jimmy Jones, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) Executive Director, attended the Board meeting to discuss the partnership between Polk County FCO & MWVCAA. Mr. DeMoe thanked Mr. Bender for providing them with personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as thermometers for Family Building Blocks. Mr. DeMoe also thanked Matt Hawkins, Admin. Services Director, for helping get the gym cleared out to make space for distribution of supplies. Mr. Jones provided the Board with a comprehensive report on FCO's partnership with MWVCAA that specifically focused on Polk County.

The reason they came was to discuss the emergency funding that MWVCAA is the fiscal agent for that is for Covid, especially for utilities, emergencies and rental assistance for Polk County residents. Commissioner Ainsworth stated that he hopes that the newspaper would do an article on MWVCAA to highlight all of the good they have done for the Community. Mr. DeMoe agrees and believes that the focus get so drawn away due to the homelessness in Salem which is completely different than the prevention program that Polk County has to keep families from becoming experiencing homelessness. Mr. Jones pointed out that when he took over as the Director of the ARCHES program he and Mr. DeMoe met and discussed the fact that they had not invested as much as they could in rural Polk County. The year prior ARCHES spent approximately \$75,000 on all of Polk County and three years later they have been able to increase that by 15 fold, which he credits the staff in FCO for providing a pathway to get that money out to the communities.

Mr. Jones stated that they have expanded on the relationship that was built with the Resource Center and have since been able to help fund other projects in Polk County such as Sable House and the warming centers among several others. In the last year MWVCAA has provided 514 rent months paid for Polk County residents and there is an additional \$5 million available to them that has to be spent before the end of the calendar year, which is federal CARES Act

dollars. They would like to improve marketing in Polk County especially Independence and Monmouth.

For the last year and a half MWVCAA has been trying to acquire the RV Park in Falls City hoping to put modular homes on it. They are working with United Way and Polk CDC and have hit a road block because the property owner believes it is worth a lot more than they have to spend but they are continuing to work the Mayor Jeremy Gordon and Mac Corthell, City Manager.

Mr. Jones explains that the City of Salem made a decision to enact a camping ban through the City and unfortunately that kept people from sheltering and putting up a tent anywhere around town. The unintended consequence was that people were then congregating under the overhangs downtown and the Public Health conditions deteriorated very quickly. When Covid hit MWVCAA's recommendation to the City of Salem was to suspend the camping ban and allow people to go into parks. The City chose to isolate that to two parks only, Wallace Marine and the Cascade Gateway Park which resulted in the surge in those parks especially Wallace Marine. Mr. Jones has expressed his concern to the City of Salem that come the winter the water will rise and most of those camp sites will wash away. His primary purpose is to keep the homeless population in an environment that they can shelter themselves and socially distance to avoid spreading the virus and also to keep from having them dispersed because the likely scenario would be for them to go into neighborhoods.

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that at the Academy Building they have two Resource Officers who work almost exclusively with clients that are referred through MWVCAA or self-referred. Since July they have done 44 financial requests which totaled approximately \$90,000 which all came out of MWVCAA. That money has paid not only back rent but also helping families pay forward through the end of the year. In addition to that funding they have spent about \$10,000 in other funding to help with things that don't qualify for the MWVCAA funding such as internet bills so kids can do their schooling along with tech needs. They worked with IS to build a new data tracking system so they can see real time data broken down by day, month and quarter. It also lets them go in and out of cases and also getting up to speed information which allows them to work on 20 cases at any given time. The Resource Center has also gotten 300-350 food boxes a week for approximately 10,000 people, along with 3,000 lbs. of produce from the Dallas Youth Garden. MWVCAA has the largest funding stream right now so FCO is working really hard to get everybody qualified for all of the resources they need.

Commissioner Pope expressed his concern about a call to action with the Oregon State Housing and the policy work that was supposed to have happened. Mr. Jones stated that about 3 weeks ago they received notification from the Oregon Housing Community Services that they intended to change the state statute which had made MWVCAA as the primary mechanism to which state and federal anti-poverty funds were distributed statewide. They were no longer going to use their formula to prioritize geographic equity and instead were going to focus on creating equity based on social and racial justice and was primarily a response to all the conditions in Portland. Mr. Jones felt that is a rash decision to tear down the formula that has been successful for 30 years in moving resources to people in poverty across Oregon to deal with this one time situation up north. The statute was prepared by the Justice Department and it was sent by Oregon Housing Services to the Speakers office. MWVCAA had 5 days to notice to resist this change and were able to organize state legislatures to reach a compromise with the Speakers office to allow a onetime exception for a percentage of the Emergency Solutions Grant to be distributed statewide on a competitive basis but to keep the network for anti-poverty funds in place permanently. He anticipates they could come back in the spring session and try again but for

the moment the geographic equity that has been in place continues to exist. Commissioner Pope would like to be proactive and prepare for the 2021 session. Mr. Jones will provide a report like the one he provided today annually.

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

Commissioner Ainsworth adjourned the meeting at 10:13 am.

Minutes: Ciera Atha
Approved: August 25, 2020