

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2021

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Pope declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session and led the Board and attending audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Mordhorst and Commissioner Ainsworth were present.
2. **MINUTES:** **COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER AINSWORTH SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2021.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Jacqui Umstead, Public Health Administrator, reviewed the COVID-19 case data from the most recent review period for Oregon, Polk and Marion County. As of March 16th Oregon has a total of 159,788 COVID-19 cases and 2,324 deaths. Between February 28th and March 13th Oregon had a positivity rate of 3.2% and a case rate of 97.4 per 100,000 residents. For the same time frame Polk County had a positivity rate of 2.8% and a case rate of 90.4%. Marion County had a positivity rate of 3.4% and a case rate of 117.3. Ms. Umstead stated that Polk County is in a waiting week and if the numbers stay low she expects Polk County to be moved to moderate risk level next week.

The current Polk County case count is 3,142 positive COVID-19 cases, 4 hospitalizations, 46 deaths and there are 38 people who are currently being monitored for symptoms. Marion County has 18,878 positive COVID-19 cases, 9 hospitalizations and 290 deaths. Capitol Manor is the only outbreak in Polk County at this time with 4 cases.

The total number of people vaccinated in Polk County as of March 14th is 20,063 and we are currently 5th in the state for vaccination per 100,000 residents. This week's allocation is 900 first doses and 800 second doses. Polk County pharmacies that are currently receiving vaccines are Safeway- both locations, Walmart, Bi-Mart, Hi-School Pharmacy, and Walgreens. Public Health is planning for an increase in vaccine allocation to the state and county beginning the week of March 29th.

Dean Bender, Emergency Operations Manager, informed the Board that the only order filled last week was for 100 gallons of hand sanitizer to a local school.

4. DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICE UPDATE

Aaron Felton, Polk County D.A., introduced Robert Jung, Medical Examiner, and stated that he invited Mr. Jung to come speak to the Board about what he does as a Medical Examiner (ME). Mr. Jung explained that as the ME he has two main jobs when he gets on the scene. That is to determine the manner and cause of death. Mr. Jung reviewed a statistics sheet he provided the Board which details the number of calls the ME's took during 2020 and how many death certificates they sign. The sheet also reviewed how many calls came from each agency. Mr. Jung discussed what types of cases ME's get called on and which ones they respond to and why. If the death is found to be of natural causes the individual's Primary Care Physician (PCP) can sign the death certificate. Although there are times that the PCP will refuse to sign if they truly do not know what the cause of death was, in which case it would go to Dr. Steven Fletcher. If the cause of death is found to be anything other than a natural cause, including motor vehicle accidents, it has to be signed by the ME.

The ME's work under the DA's office and often work very closely as well. An ME typically has some sort of background that has given them the applicable knowledge to evaluate the body for cause of death, such as MET, Fire EMS, medical physician, or in forensics. There is also a

class to take to obtain the certification. DA Felton updated the Board on the trial schedule and how it will be modified. The courts will now be able to do out of custody trials and they will continue to hold jury selection at the armory. DA Felton informed the Board that he will be moving forward with a case against the state regarding an inmate that was sentenced to the state hospital and they have refused to take him into their custody. Commissioner Ainsworth expressed that he would like the county to bill the state for the cost of housing the inmate for so long after he was supposed to be in their custody.

DA Felton expressed his concerns with the commutations that have occurred and the fact that it appears that the state is now using this process to cut expenses in the jails. He stated that in the past commutations would only occur under the most dire circumstances and he is worried that moving forward it will continue. DA Felton discussed some legislation that would negatively impact their office and the ability to do their job in the most effective way.

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

a) Greg Hansen, Administrative Officer, announced that due to fact that Commissioner Ainsworth is retiring as of July 31st, the Board will develop a timeline for the appointment of another Commissioner to fulfill his term into 2022. Mr. Hansen reviewed a draft timeline for that process and let the Board know it can be modified any way but this was a first draft. Once the candidates are selected there will be a public meeting in which the candidates will be interviewed.

b) Commissioner Mordhorst followed up on a letter he was asked to support from eastern Oregon counties which asks that state to allow counties to govern themselves. Commissioner Pope expressed his concern with supporting the letter due to the fact that out Public Health Department has a working relationship with Oregon Health Authority and the state representatives. He feels that because the number of cases has dropped significantly and the county is continuing to have restrictions lifted he would like to continue the course we are on and does not want to jeopardize the relationship for fear that they could withhold vaccine because the state and OHA will still control vaccine allocation.

Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m.

Minutes: Ciera Atha
Approved: March 23, 2021