

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 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 was present and Commissioner Ainsworth was excused.
2. **MINUTES:** **COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER POPE SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021.**

MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE QUORUM.

3. COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Jacqui Umstead, Public Health Administrator, reviewed the COVID-19 case data from the most recent review period. As of February 23rd Oregon had a total of 153,464 COVID-19 cases and 2,155 deaths. The test positivity rate for February 7th through February 20th was 3.4% with a case rate of 137.3 cases per 100,000 residents.

For that same time from Polk County has a positivity rate of 5.2% and a case rate of 194.1 per 100,000 residents. During that time Polk County has 3,001 cases, 5 hospitalizations, 44 deaths and there are 76 people currently isolating. This is the number of positive cases identified within the past 10 days.

Marion County has 18,209 cases, 31 hospitalizations, and 281 deaths. The positivity rate in Marion County was 4.8% and they had a case rate of 136.6 cases per 100,000 residents.

The only active COVID-19 outbreak is currently at Blue Haven Residential Care. They have 24 positive cases. Salem Health has total of 179 positive cases according to the February 18th OHA Weekly report. WOU is still managing all of Polk County's contact tracing and they are currently monitoring 117 people. The next testing event will take place on February 23rd at the Polk County Fairgrounds.

Based on data from February 7th through the 20th, 10 counties in Oregon are currently in the Extreme Risk Level category including Polk County. Oregon overall has a case rate of 137.3 per 100,000 residents and a positivity rate of 3.4%. Polk County had 161 cases during that same time frame. That gives Polk County a case rate of 194.1 cases per 100,000 for that time frame and a positivity rate of 5.2%. The percentage of cases traced to a known source was 59.8%. Schools in the county should all be preparing or already in on-site and hybrid transition.

Oregon has vaccinated 542,923 individuals and of those 272,970 have been fully vaccinated. Polk County has vaccinated 13,189 people and of those 7,475 have been fully vaccinated. Polk County is 3rd in the state for vaccination per 10,000 population. Last week's vaccinations did not arrive until February 22nd due to the ice storm so there were no first doses offered last week. West Valley Hospital received last week's allocation as well as this week's allocation. On March 1st phase 1B group will be eligible for the vaccine, which includes people who are 65 and older.

Dean Bender, Emergency Operations Manager, informed the Board that PPE orders continue to decrease every week. They will be doing a detailed inventory of all PPE in stock and it they will likely send a lot of the hand sanitizer and masks to schools. Commissioner Pope asked that Mr. Bender look into what an adequate amount of PPE should be kept on hand in the event of another outbreak or pandemic.

4. STORM RESPONSE

Todd Whitaker, Public Works Director, gave the Board a review of the plan for responding to the ice storm and the debris issue all throughout the county. The Polk County road system was heavily impacted by fallen limbs, trees and damaged overhead utilities, including downed communication and electrical lines. Governor Kate Brown declared an emergency on February 13th, subsequently, the Board of Commissioners declared a County-wide emergency on February 17th.

During the next several months, Polk County Public Works (PCPW) will be working on debris cleanup. He is making this information public by posting it on the County website and is intended to inform property owners and citizens outside city limits of the PCPW debris removal plan. If an individual lives inside the city limits of Salem, Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Willamina or Falls City, they should call the local City Hall or Public Works Department for specific information on debris removal in that area.

The main priority of PCPW has been and will continue to be creating and maintaining open lanes of travel on all county roads. The clean-up will happen in four phases. Mr. Whitaker reviewed the phases for the Board. He also noted that it is important to understand that trees located in the County right-of-way are considered private property and belong to the landowner. PCPW will make every effort to set aside trees or branches 6-inches in diameter and larger for collection and removal by the landowner. However, if this debris cannot be relocated away from the road and present a significant danger to the traveling public, it can be removed without notice in accordance with ORS368.271(c). Polk County will not be establishing a County-wide storm debris collection/disposal site for public use.

Mr. Whitaker also said they were still waiting on guidance from FEMA on specifics on how they can or cannot dispose of the debris. GIS was able to develop a survey map that categorizes the damage by severity and the type of damage including pictures as well. This map will make it so PCPW can strategize to create an efficient plan for clean-up.

Mr. Whitaker also gave the Board a brief review of some of the transportation projects that are happening throughout the county. The Clow Corner project is in the design acceptance phase and the comments are due today. The Board also discuss the Highway 22 & 51 project and were informed that ODOT is suggesting that they just focus on the interchange and want to remove the backage roads. The Board is not happy with this because the businesses would be cut off and that would negatively impact their business. The Board would like Mr. Whitaker to try and push back on ODOT to include the backage roads.

5. FAIR BOARD APPLICANT

Paul Thompson of Independence appeared for an interview for a seat on the Fair Board. Commissioner Mordhorst asked why he chose to apply for a position on the Fair Board and what strengths does he have that will benefit the annual fair and year round operations. Mr. Thompson stated that he has used the facilities for auctions many times and volunteered during the wildfires and seeing the community coming together to help each other made him want to be a part of it and give back more. As a user of the fairgrounds he is familiar and wants to help improve it while still keeping the integrity of Polk County's way of life. Commissioner Pope asked if he feels the annual fair is important to the community. Mr. Thompson answered that yes he does believe it is important because it brings people together and his son has been in FFA. He enjoys watching families enjoy the fair and spending quality time together. Also gives kids the opportunity to get involved by raising animals and working there. The next question was Do you feel that making the facility available to individuals and groups to use for functions

on a year round basis is important. He does because it brings those types of public events to the community for the community to enjoy. Commissioner Mordhorst asked if he was appointed to the Fair Board what his suggestion would be to enhance the operation and management of year round activities and the annual fair. Mr. Thompson stated that he would have to attend meetings to get a firm grasp on the direction and vision the existing members have and then he could make recommendations to enhance that vision. He would like to support the expansion of the Fairgrounds while also ensuring that it doesn't change into something that doesn't fit well in Polk County.

The Board thanked Mr. Thompson for coming and informed him that there is one more applicant to interview and that they would be in touch within a few weeks.

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

Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Minutes: Ciera Atha
Approved: March 2, 2021