

FREMONT COUNTY SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
November 15, 2021

The Fremont County Board of Health Special Meeting was held on Monday, November 15, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Fremont County Administration Building, 615 Macon Avenue, Room 207, Canon City, Colorado. The following Board members were in attendance:

Kevin Grantham – Commissioner
Debbie Bell – Commissioner

The following Board members were excused:

Dwayne McFall – Commissioner

Staff Present:

Brenda Jackson – County Attorney
Kayla Marler – Public Health Director
Sarah Miller – Communicable Disease/EPR Coordinator
Shannon Espinoza – Minutes Secretary

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting was called to order by Debbie Bell with Roll Call following at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Bell called for any changes or additions to the Agenda. Kayla Marler requested that New Business be moved to follow the Director's Report. Commissioner Grantham made a Motion to approve the Agenda with the requested change. Commissioner Bell seconded the Motion. Call for Vote; all Ayes. Agenda is approved.

CITIZENS NOT ON THE AGENDA – TIME TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kayla presented a slide show to the commissioners that covered the current COVID-19 rates of Canon City. There are 360 positive COVID-19 cases in the last 7 days. There are 666 cases in the last 14 days. There are seventeen total hospitalizations with nine of them in Saint Thomas More Hospital (STM). There has been an increase of positive COVID-19 cases in the 0-20 age range and the 40-50 age range. STM is facing staffing barriers to care for additional cases. Kayla and the public health Medical Officer are staying in contact with STM to keep abreast of the situation.

Fremont County Department of Public Health is seeing an increase in the RE-1 school district of both COVID-19 and RSV in elementary students. Commissioner Bell asked to what the Public Health department is attributing the increase. Kayla responded Covid fatigue and not following best practices, specifically in RE-1 schools. RE-2 and RE-3 schools, as well as Headstart, are doing a good job following best practices and are seeing fewer cases.

Kayla indicated that FCDPHE had a call with CDPHE to provide help and information with local best practices for the RE-1 school district.

Superintendent George Welsh with the RE-1 school district is concerned with putting a Public Health Order (PHO) in place, so Kayla, RE-1, and the state have decided to do a mutual agreement with individual schools. When certain thresholds are met, the schools will act on that agreement.

Commissioner Grantham made a Motion to accept the Public Health Director's report. Commissioner Bell seconded the Motion. Call for Vote; all ayes. Report is accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Kayla would like to create a Mutual Agreement with RE-1.

There is concern regarding communicable spread from RE-1. CDPHE posited a mutual agreement, of which RE-1 would be the enforcer. According to Kayla, it does not change what is in place, but holds RE-1 accountable, as the importance of reducing the spread is being minimized in favor of a power struggle.

The Mutual Agreement would be in effect until January 24, 2022, which allows for the holidays and the two week incubation period of COVID-19, during which students will return to school.

Commissioner Bell asked if it would be better to hold 1-on-1 conversations with the school board and Kayla replied that those conversations could definitely happen, but the district already has the power to act and George has agreed to the Mutual Agreement. The Agreement would not be up for discussion and would be as written.

Commissioner Bell consulted with legal counsel as to the efficacy of the Mutual Agreement. Attorney Brenda Jackson stated there is no consequence or enforcement of a mutual agreement. A Public Health Order would solve that issue.

Commissioner Bell asked if we could do a PHO for just RE-1, from where the bulk of the issue stems and Brenda confirmed that this is possible.

According to Sarah Miller, this could be tracked by numbers. Parents are tired of their children getting COVID-19 and are reporting the cases to Public Health.

Kayla posited that the Agreement could be in place for all districts. Sarah agreed and stated that schools who aren't above the threshold won't be held to the agreement.

Commissioner Grantham questioned what informs the threshold and Sarah responded that the old dial that informed thresholds from last year would be put into place for this purpose.

The RE-1 district nurse sent numbers that included an increase in RSV cases as well. Kayla indicated they are working with the state on this dual issue and Sarah mentioned we have the first RSV/CPVOD-19 mutual outbreak in the state.

Commissioner Grantham made a Motion to Approve the Mutual Agreement between FCDPHE and the RE-1 School District. Commissioner Bell seconded the Motion. The Mutual Agreement was Approved.

Meeting is adjourned at 9:45 a.m.