



**AITKIN
COUNTY**
EST 1857
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 27, 2020

Attendance

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 27th day of October, 2020, at 9:07 a.m. as the Aitkin County Health & Human Services Board, with the following members present: Commissioners Bill Pratt, J. Mark Wedel, Don Niemi, Anne Marcotte(Via WebEx), and Laurie Westerlund(Via WebEx). Others present included: H&HS Director Cynthia Bennett, Accounting Supervisor Carli Goble, Public Health Educator Brea Hamdorf, Assistant to the H&HS Director Shawn Speed, County Administrator Jessica Seibert (Via Webex), and Jennifer Eisenbart, Aitkin Independent Age (Via Webex).

Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the October 27, 2020 Health & Human Services Board agenda.

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Wedel and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the September 22, 2020 Health and Human Services Board minutes.

Bills

Carli Goble, H&HS Accounting Supervisor noted that there were no notable bills this month.

Motion by Commissioner Marcotte, seconded by Commissioner Wedel and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the bills.

Directors Update

Cynthia started by discussing the ongoing preparations for the 2021 legislative session.

Within the last week, she noted, a few notable items that had transpired.

1. AMC held its annual district meeting where the legislative priorities for the upcoming year were discussed and they voted on what the top priorities would be. She noted that she had not seen the results of the voting but would forward it on to the members once she had received that.
2. The legislature passed the bonding bill last week.

She then passed on her time to Brea Hamdorf, Disease Prevention and Control Public Health Nurse, to brief the members on the results of the COVID-19 Testing Event that was held October 13-15 and to give some information on the pilot home saliva testing that the county was selected to participate in along with 23 other counties in the state.

Brea started by stating that the community testing event was a huge success and that of the 557 samples that were collected there were only 9 positives found and that of those 9 only 3-6 of them were Aitkin county residents.

She told the members that there were a lot of complements and thank yous from the public for the event being held in Aitkin and that she had passed that on to the National Guard members and to the State.

She relayed that many of the people who were tested were able to preregister for the event even though there is poor internet connectivity widespread throughout our county and that was very helpful.

A couple of challenges that she briefed the Board on were:

1. Some people thought that it was going to be a drive through event so were confused when they showed up as to what to do, so it was suggested that the team use more signage to inform and direct people who are coming to the events in the future.
2. The incident commander from the state was called and informed on the morning of the second day that he had been in close contact with a person who had tested positive so he was told he had to leave immediately and go home and quarantine, as such the event was left without an incident commander, but they made it through without many issues that we were not able to solve.
3. Lastly the State Emergency operation center and MDH did not realize how rural Aitkin County is and had planned to have everyone's results emailed back to them. However not everyone in the county has email so the testing company provided their email address for all of the results to go to and they then called or emailed all of the participants with their results.

Next Brea advised the members that Aitkin County and 23 other counties in the state, had been chosen as pilot sites for the state's new at home saliva COVID-19 test and that the main concern to be figured out during it is the logistics of UPS and USPS and how effective overnighting test kits from rural Minnesota would be.

She went on to go through the actual process of getting, taking, and returning the tests through the program.

1. A person goes onto the state's MDH website and enters their home address and email.
 - a. If a person does not have internet there is a plan to have the availability for them to come into HHS and have someone help them send for the test kit.
2. The person receives a confirmation email and answers a few more questions.
3. The test kit is sent to the person's address.
4. The person then does a telehealth visit to get instructions on how to administer the test.
5. The person packs the test back up in the box and takes it to a UPS drop off point to be overnighted back to the lab for results.

The plan, if the pilot works, is to have at home saliva testing available statewide by the end of November.

Financial Reports, Carli Goble

Carli went through her Quarter 3 Health & Human Services Financial Report Presentation.

During the presentation the following questions were asked:

1. Commissioner Marcotte inquired as to whether or not the bills we receive from the treatment centers are itemized for each client or not?
 - a. Carli noted that they are not and Cynthia added that through MACSSA they are working on getting the state to do a breakout of expenses for the daily rate.
2. Commissioner Wedel asked whether the properties that were sold to pay outstanding Medical Assistance bills had had liens placed on them and followed up by asking how much of what is actually owed are we getting from the sales?
 - a. Carli said yes there were liens placed on the properties and that most MA bills are hundreds of thousands of dollars and that we were only able to sell the properties for around \$50,000. The focus is to, mitigate the loses as much as we can and keep the property out of a forfeited status.
3. Commissioner Pratt commended Cynthia and all of the HHS staff for all of the work they have done during the COVID-19 response and how much they are all appreciated for everything they have and continue to do for the county.

Cynthia thanked Commissioner Pratt and reiterated her appreciation for all of the county employees who have gone above and beyond in response to COVID-19.

Committee Reports

Community Health Board Report

Commissioner Westerlund updated the members that they had gone through and approved the Joint Powers Agreement and that the Board should be seeing it here soon for our approval.

She added that there was a lot of discussion on how everyone is fairing with COVID-19.

Cynthia added that the annual audit report for the CHB had come back and that it showed no deficiencies in the internal controls, accounting standards were being followed, and privacy laws adhered to

HHS Advisory Committee Report

Commissioner Wedel commented that the last meeting was October 7th and that they had welcomed a new member, received an update on COVID-19 from Erin Melz, and a presentation from Northland Counseling Center on the Clubhouse in Aitkin.

AEOA Committee Update

Commissioner Westerlund said they had met and the main topic of discussion was the head start program and what they could do to help that program.

CARE Board Update

Commissioner Westerlund stated that they had received a couple of grants and that Lynne had joined the HHS Advisory Committee and had attended her first meeting earlier this month.

Lastly Commissioner Westerlund asked if the Board could get an update from NEMOJT about what they have been up to during the COVID-19 response.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Next Meeting – November 24, 2020