

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting
Online/Telephonic Meeting
March 8, 2021**

BOH Members: President Gregg Thomas; Vice President Jorge DeSantiago; and Board Members Morgan McMillan, Brooke Harrison, and Landrey Fagan.

BCPH Staff: Public Health Director Jeff Zayach; Deputy Public Health Director Lexi Nolen; Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika, Interim Director of Administration & Finance Maryel Barron; Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski; Communicable Disease & Emergency Management Division Manager Indira Gujral; Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell; Interim Family Health Division Manager Melinda Morris; Health Equity Coordinator Sheila Davis; Air Quality Program Coordinator Bill Hayes; Air/Climate Team Lead Collin Tomb; Administrative Assistant Rita Mangeyn; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

Boulder County Staff: County Administrator Jana Petersen and Deputy County Attorney Trina Ruhland.

Meeting Called to Order.

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and asked all participants to identify themselves for the record (see above). He declared that a quorum was present, that notice of the meeting was posted on the Board of Health website, and that call-in information was included to allow for public participation. Due to COVID-19, President Thomas said the meeting was being conducted virtually.

ITEM 1. Public Comments (on unscheduled agenda items).

Alan Meyer, 245 Coffman Meadows Road, Boulder, Colorado, said he was a member of the Social Justice Working Group of the Nederland Community Presbyterian Church, which recently sent a letter to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and Board of Health. The letter expressed concern regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly its effect on people of color. The church praised the efforts of Boulder County to address COVID-19 and offered its support of immunizing communities of color to erase racial inequities. Mr. Meyer said the church recently made a donation to El Centro Amistad to assist COVID-affected families. President Thomas thanked Mr. Meyer for his comments.

Jenelle Vail, DVM, said Governor Polis has announced veterinarians can help to vaccinate people for COVID-19, so she offered the assistance of Chapter 5, the local chapter of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association, to assist Boulder County, as needed. President Thomas thanked Dr. Vail for the offer.

ITEM 2. Approval of February 8, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Harrison, to approve the February 8, 2021, Board of Health minutes, as presented. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.

ITEM 3. Designating Climate Crisis as a Boulder County Public Health Strategic Priority.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach said Climate Action was added to the agency's Strategic Plan, and last year staff intended to request BOH approval to make Climate Action an agency strategic priority. However, that was tabled when the agency's focus shifted to COVID-19 response.

Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski and Air Quality Program Coordinator Bill Hayes acknowledged the work Air/Climate Team Lead Collin Tomb has devoted the past several years, collaborating with air quality partners and ensuring that an equity lens was added to all climate work.

Ms. Tomb said discussions emphasizing climate change began in 2018 following several national reports on the current climate crisis and how it was affecting human health. This included more extreme weather, rising sea levels, increasing CO₂ levels, and rising temperatures. These lead to increased air pollution, severe weather, extreme heat, environmental degradation, water and food supply impacts, water quality impacts, increasing allergens (e.g. asthma), and changes in vector ecology (e.g. West Nile virus). In the western U.S., climate change has resulted in increased drought conditions, decreased snowpack, declining reservoirs, rising temperatures, and increased and more devastating wildfires.

To address climate change, BCPH added Climate Action as a new agency strategic priority, joining Health Equity and Mental Health. Staff has been working to develop strategies that address climate change and include awareness, mitigation (i.e. decreasing greenhouse gas emissions), and adaptation efforts.

The BCPH Climate Action Team includes representatives from throughout the agency who work together to develop program dialogues to increase awareness and help inform the public, as well as detail how clients are affected by climate change and what people can do to affect change. Ms. Tomb noted that climate change disproportionately affected populations already marginalized by a variety of factors that ranged from socioeconomic to racial injustice.

BCPH is working with internal Boulder County partners that include, but are not limited to, the Office of Sustainability, Climate, and Resilience (OSCAR); Boulder County Policy Team; Parks and Open Space; etc. Climate Action Team (CAT) goals are to act on climate change through: a) Awareness – informing the public and leaders about climate-related health impacts; b) Adaptation – increasing community capacity for responding to climate impacts; and c) Mitigation –reducing climate change by reducing GHG emissions. The cross-cutting theme is “collaboration.”

Ms. Tomb reviewed the 2021-2022 Climate Action Team Workplan, which involves conducting work in several areas, such as climate and health metrics/data, air quality, extreme heat, mental health impacts, clean transportation, climate change mitigation through local/state policy, monitoring and syndromic surveillance, messaging, policy support, and increasing resilience. The focus will be on areas that can best address equity concerns, leverage collaborations, and dovetail with channels already created through COVID-19 response.

Board Member McMillan thanked staff for the update and said she appreciated the work already done to add Climate Action to the Strategic Plan. She said she was pleased to see that equity was a key component of the plan. She asked how staff was partnering with and engaging grassroot groups that worked with vulnerable populations. Ms. Tomb said several CAT members served disproportionately impacted communities in their normal program work and have provided guidance to CAT on how best to engage all community members. They work closely with community partners like the City of Longmont that provide guidance how to serve disproportionately impacted communities, and they also rely on the State of Colorado for guidance.

President Thomas said air quality was a very important subject to him. He commended BCPH staff for providing a high level of expertise and for the support they provide to other metro Denver area public

health departments. Mr. Zayach echoed President Thomas, saying BCPH staff provided a tremendous level of leadership at the local and state level.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member McMillan, to add "Climate Crisis" as a Boulder County Public Health Strategic Priority. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.

Ms. Tomb asked the Board to amend the motion to specify "Climate Action" rather than "Climate Crisis." ***Board Member Harrison made a motion, seconded by Board Member McMillan, to revise the designation of the Boulder County Public Health Strategic Priority from "Climate Crisis" to "Climate Action." With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.***

ITEM 4. Update on Current COVID-19 Pandemic.

A. Approval of Public Health Order (PHO) No. 2021-02, Amending PHO No. 2020-05, Which Requires Facial Coverings in Public Where Social Distancing Cannot be Maintained.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach introduced this item and asked Deputy County Attorney Trina Ruhland to present. Ms. Ruhland said the Board of Health adopted a local public health order in May 2020 requiring facial coverings in Boulder County where social distancing could not be maintained. The Board subsequently approved Boulder County Public Health Order 2020-05 in July 2020 to mirror new State of Colorado facial covering requirements in public indoor spaces; the local order also required facial coverings outdoors when social distancing was not possible.

Since that time, the State modified statewide facial covering requirements to include specifics for some individual sports and provide an exemption for people actively swimming, even in public pools. Ms. Ruhland said BCPH's facial covering requirements were more protective than State requirements for some sports like wrestling. She said the State also implemented and amended a 25' exception for performers in certain situations. She said proposed Public Health 2021-02 clarified local facial covering requirements to better align with revised State requirements.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, to approve Boulder County Public Health Order 2021-02, Amending Public Health Order 2020-05 and local facial covering requirements. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.

B. Update on COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution in Boulder County.

Mr. Zayach introduced Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell, who gave an update on current COVID-19 vaccine distribution in Boulder County. Mr. Campbell said a great deal of progress has been made to vaccinate community members, including: 88% of people 70+ years, 66% of those 65-69 years; and most pre-K-12 educators and early child care workers. He said 60,000 community members 60+ years, frontline essential workers in grocery and agriculture, and people 16-59 years with 2 or more high-risk conditions became eligible for vaccinations on March 5, 2021, and another 150,000 community members would become eligible in late March/early April, followed by the general public in April.

Boulder County currently receives 6,000-8,000 vaccines per week on average, although most recently it received 11,000 doses, which included 2,000 of the 1-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. There were currently 66,362 vaccinated community members (20.3%), which included 28,644 (8.8%) with at least 1 dose and 37,718 (11.6%) who were fully vaccinated. He highlighted that 87% of all residents 70+ years are vaccinated, and 66% of people 65-69 years have received at least 1 dose. He said 3 of 4 people 70+

years in the Denver Metro Area are now vaccinated. Mr. Campbell noted that Boulder County had the capacity to provide 25,000 doses/week throughout the community.

In addition to vaccines provided by traditional clinics for priority populations with computer or mobility access, Boulder County was supporting equity clinics consisting of: A) mobile clinics (<250 doses) for individuals with limited mobility (e.g. independent living, homebound individuals who are 65+ years, and those living in mountain communities); and B) community clinics (<250 doses) for priority populations and racial/ethnic minorities.

Mr. Campbell said there have been fewer vaccines administered in the Hispanic community 70+ years. Staff was working to strategize and focus on implementing equity strategies to eliminate vaccination disparities. He said addressing vaccine hesitancy was a long-term focus, and staff was working to leverage trusted community partners and ambassadors to operationalize vaccinations through shared leadership and engaging such trusted providers and community ambassadors.

Board Member McMillan asked if staff collected data on reasons for vaccine disparity. Communicable Disease & Emergency Management Division Manager Indira Gujral said it could be vaccine hesitancy, but it could also be limited access to vaccine information and vaccine safety concerns, among other reasons. Health Equity Manager Sheila Davis said traditional strategies were rooted in the dominant culture, so vaccine disparities were likely a combination of access to rapidly changing information translated in a timely manner into Spanish, concerns about public charge, mistrust of Public Health, and a host of other concerns.

Board Member McMillan asked if Latinx communities who wanted vaccines had access to them, but more focus was needed to address the information gap; or if there were access gaps. Dr. Gujral said that answer was unclear, so staff has been relying on community ambassadors to identify community concerns and issues. She said data suggested that social determinants of health did have an impact on underserved populations having access to COVID vaccines.

Mr. Campbell said staff was collaborating with numerous community partners to address vaccine disparities. The Vaccine Equity Coordinating Committee (VECC) has been formed, which is a grassroots group of community partners and trusted community ambassadors who were collaborating to address vaccine disparities in Boulder County. Dr. Sheila Davis was coordinating and conducting COVID-19 vaccine town halls throughout the community, as well, to share information and answer questions and concerns.

Staff will work with community partners Salud, SCL Health, and Clinica in the coming weeks to schedule community clinics. Mr. Campbell said 40 mobile clinics have also been conducted to vaccinate over 650 community members with mobility challenges, and 2 vaccine equity clinics were scheduled in Longmont during the next few weeks.

Mr. Campbell said staff met weekly with a network of providers, which has been successful in ensuring that local providers had the capability to scale up in early April to administer the anticipated increased vaccine allotment. He said the county had the capacity to provide 35,000 vaccines/week through that provider group. Mr. Campbell said staff was also working to evaluate vaccine finder tools to help residents locate vaccine appointments.

Board Member McMillan asked if someone having problems locating and/or signing up for vaccines could call anyone. Mr. Campbell said the Boulder County Call Center (720-776-0822) was providing that assistance.

Board Member Harrison asked if there were protocols to ensure no vaccines were wasted. Mr. Campbell said each provider had plans and backup lists in place to ensure no vaccines were ever wasted. Dr. Gujral said providers were required to report wasted doses to the State, which was monitoring those numbers.

The Board thanked staff for the update and expressed its appreciation for the remarkable work being done. Mr. Zayach agreed and said he's heard from many, many organizations throughout the state that Boulder County Public Health was more advanced in COVID-19 response than many other public health departments.

C. Update on Current COVID-19 Trends.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach gave an update on current COVID-19 trends and said Boulder County was doing well regarding data. He said COVID cases were decreasing throughout the metro Denver area, and numbers were starting to stabilize. While numbers have been slowly declining, public health officials preferred to see a more rapid decline. He said public health officials throughout the state were monitoring increased circulation of COVID-19 variants in communities, and he stressed the importance of people continuing to practice public health measures (i.e. wearing facial coverings, maintaining social distancing, avoiding gatherings, and practicing cleanliness measures).

On the Colorado COVID-19 Dial, Boulder County remained in "Level Yellow" and likely would not improve to Level Blue anytime soon with children on spring break and University of Colorado students now attending in-person classes. He said staff did expect fewer hospitalizations and deaths, which could be attributed to increased vaccination of high-risk populations.

Mr. Zayach said cases were trending downward, with CU cases only accounting for 35% of all cases of people 18-22 years. The rate of hospitalizations was declining (i.e. 11 hospitalizations currently), and death rates were consistently down, including an 84% reduction in long-term care facilities, which was likely due to increased vaccinations. It was estimated that 1 in 194 Coloradans were infectious.

Social distancing adherence has dropped, so Mr. Zayach encouraged everyone to be patient and continue practicing suggested public health habits, to get tested since 50% of infected people are asymptomatic, and to get vaccinated when they had the chance.

The Board thanked staff for the update.

ITEM 5. Retirement and Transition for Public Health Director.

A. Tribute to Retiring Public Health Director Jeff Zayach.

Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika said Mr. Zayach, who began at BCPH in the summer of 1989 doing mosquito control, has been a catalyst for the leadership of staff and directing innovative public health work in Colorado. She said public health director members of the Metro Denver Partnership for Health (MDPH) consistently looked to Mr. Zayach and BCPH staff for guidance and leadership on public health issues.

Mr. Zayach opened an appreciation gift from BCPH and expressed his deep appreciation to BCPH, its staff, and the Board.

President Thomas said he began his term on the Board of Health nine years ago. As someone who also worked for a public health department, he said Mr. Zayach helped to educate him on the variety of public health programming items and guided him in his role as a Board Member. He said Mr. Zayach was a

strong role model and was always “cool as a cucumber.” He said Mr. Zayach was always quick to deflect accolades and acknowledge the contributions of his staff. President Thomas said he will miss Mr. Zayach’s leadership and wished him a happy, healthy, and prosperous retirement.

Vice President DeSantiago thanked Mr. Zayach for his hard work and for taking BCPH to the next level. He referenced how many others around the state held BCPH in high esteem, which he attributed to Mr. Zayach and his staff. He admired how easy Mr. Zayach was to talk with and how he always intently listened to everyone. He wished Mr. Zayach the best in retirement.

Board Member McMillan thanked Mr. Zayach for his tireless energy and work, especially this past year during COVID-19. She thanked Mr. Zayach for his 30 years of service with BCPH and said she was especially appreciative of his courage and leadership to address health equity. She said BCPH was a leader in Boulder County, and she thanked Mr. Zayach for his hard work. She said he left big shoes to fill but promised BCPH would continue connecting with community partners to do the “hard work.”

Board Member Fagan echoed the sentiments of the other Board Members and thanked Mr. Zayach for his contributions and guidance.

Board Member Harrison said she unfortunately never had the opportunity to meet Mr. Zayach in person, as she became a Board Member during COVID-19. She said Mr. Zayach has been an inspiration this past year during COVID-19 and thanked him for his calm, cool manner while listening to the broad range of opinions from everyone.

Mr. Zayach thanked the Board for their kind words. He said he worked with public health directors from around the state throughout the years, and most were not as fortunate to have such an incredibly supportive Board of Health. He said the next public health director for Boulder County would be successful due to the tremendous amount of support the Board provides to BCPH and its staff.

B. Update on Recruitment of New Public Health Director.

Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden provided an update on recruitment of the next Boulder County Public Health Director position. She said per Colorado Revised Statutes §25-1-501, Public Health Act of 2008, the Board of Health was responsible for hiring and managing the local public health director. As such, the Board’s been working closely with Boulder County Administrator Jana Petersen, Boulder County Human Resources, and a recruitment firm to facilitate the hiring of the public health director, ensuring that Boulder County’s equitable hiring principles were integrated in the process. The deadline for applications was March 8, 2021.

C. Appointment of Interim Public Health Director.

Due to the gap between Mr. Zayach’s retirement and the hiring of the next Boulder County Public Health Director, the Board of Health needed to appoint an Interim Public Health Director. Mr. Zayach said he recommended the appointment of Deputy Public Health Director Lexi Nolen, Ph.D., MPH, for that role. He said Dr. Nolen has served as BCPH Deputy Public Health Director the past six months. He outlined her qualifications and said Dr. Nolen has been an incredible asset to the agency. He confirmed that Dr. Nolen was not a candidate for the Public Health Director position.

Dr. Nolen thanked Mr. Zayach for the endorsement and said she was deeply committed to equity. She said BCPH was a strong agency with an incredible staff. County Administrator Jana Petersen echoed Mr. Zayach’s endorsement of Dr. Nolen and said she also had full confidence in Dr. Nolen’s ability to lead the

organization. She said Boulder County was happy to support Dr. Nolen and the Board of Health to ensure a smooth transition for BCPH and the community.

Mr. Zayach said he would be returning to BCPH on a temporary basis starting in May to help support the transition to the new Public Health Director.

Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Harrison, to appoint Deputy Public Health Director Lexi Nolen as Interim Public Health Director. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.

- D. Scheduling Upcoming Executive Sessions Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f) for the Purposes of Discussing and Conducting the Public Health Director Recruitment Process:**
- a. Immediately following March 8, 2021, Regular BOH Meeting.**
 - b. 5:00 p.m., March 17, 2021.**

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, for the Board of Health to adjourn into Executive Session at the end of the meeting, pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), to discuss the public health director recruitment process. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried

Board Member Harrison then made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member McMillan, to schedule an Executive Session for 5:00 p.m., March 17, 2021, pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), for purposes of discussing the public health director recruitment process. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried

ITEM 6. Director's Report.

There were no additional comments from the written Director's Report.

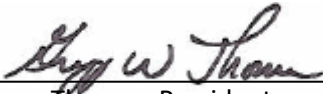
ITEM 7. Old & New Business / Announcements.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach announced that Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika would be retiring from BCPH effective April 9, 2021. He expressed his deep appreciation for Dr. Motika's support and thanked her for her six years of service at BCPH. Prior to coming to BCPH, Dr. Motika worked five years at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment in policy work.

Mr. Zayach said a special Board of Health meeting would be scheduled for March 17, 2021, to formally recognize Dr. Motika's contributions to the community.

ITEM 8. Adjournment into Executive Session Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), for Purposes of Discussing the Public Health Director Recruitment Process.

There being nothing further to discuss, Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Harrison, to adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), for purposes of discussing the public health director recruitment process. With all Board Members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.



Gregg Thomas, President



Jeffrey J. Zayach, Public Health Director