Van Buren/Cass District Board of Health
Minutes
4/8/2020

This meeting was by teleconference due to COVID-19

Meeting was called to order at 3pm at the Hartford facility. Roll call taken. Board members present were: Chairperson Dwight (Skip) Dyes, Donald Hanson, Roseann Marchetti, Dr. Vincent Cabras, Randall Peat and Robert Linderman.

Board Members Absent: Vicki Vaughn

Health Department Employees Present: Jeff Elliott, Dr. Frederick Johansen, Dr. Larry Wile, George Kilts, Julie Beeching, George Friday, Jennifer Zordan and Tina Cox.

Corrections to March minutes. Actual expenditures are $544,484.90. Difference of $9,033.95. Difference due to: HRA/FSA Plan Administration, Utilities, Data Logger Kit, Telecommunications, Server Temp Control Monitoring, Progress billing/Audit to Maner Costerisan, and Payroll. Motion by Hanson, 2nd by Marchetti to accept the minutes as amended. All voting yes, motion carried.

Cash Flow Report was discussed and reviewed.

Expenditures Report were discussed and reviewed. Motion by Hanson, 2nd by Marchetti to accept the expenditures in the estimated amount of $332,625.31 for payment. All voting yes, motion carried.

Administrator’s Report: Each board member was given a packet of 3 letters of new funding; 1st was from MDHHS informing the agency of an official notice of award for the special project titled “COVID” in the amount of $30,000 to be used to support staff time and supplies associated with COVID-19 response. 2nd letter was from MDHHS informing the agency of an official notice of award for the special project titled “Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Public Health Crisis Response” in the amount of $125,000 to support COVID related expenses related to the COVID-19 response in our communities and the 3rd was an email from MDHHS FY 2020 amendments requesting a budget amendment for funding through E-Grams within next 2 weeks. Jeff stated that George Kilts and himself have put together a preliminary budget that includes, but not limited to: staffing, communications, supplies, equipment and also included is an amendment to the amendment, which is allowed as long as we contact the state to inform them of what we plan to use the money for based on our allocations such as Food Service, Immunizations, Communicable Diseases, Water, Septic and other basic services. Jeff informed the board that he was recently informed the 2 week requirement has been extended to May 1st. He will get a copy of the budget to the board that will show per line item where the money is going that will best reflect what is needed in the community. This were discussed and reviewed. Motion by Hanson, 2nd by Peat giving Administration permission to amend the proposed budget as requested. Roll call vote taken: Dyes Yes, Linderman Yes, Peat Yes, Marchetti Yes, Dr. Cabras Yes and Hanson Yes. Motion carried.

Each board member was given a letter from Owen Ames Kimball (O-A-K) regarding suspending construction of the building project at VBISD due to COVID-19 and being considered a nonessential service. The suspension is subject to change based on changes to legislation. Originally was to resume April 13th but the Governor extended the stay at home order until April 30th. Jeff informed the board that O-A-K plans to routinely monitor the jobsite to ensure heat and security are safely maintained and equipment/supplies are secured. Jeff informed the board that both he and Jeff Mills of VBISD have met with the Director of Michigan Education to see if he could meet with the Governor about allowing construction/repairs of schools take place while schools are out. This was discussed and reviewed.

Each board member was given a letter from VBISD that was addressed to Dan Faulkner, Lawrence Village Manager outlining the partnership between VBISD and Van Buren/Cass District Health Department. This letter was used to request grant funding for Transportation Alternative Program through MDOT. It was successful and $672,485 was awarded for infrastructure components such as installation/repairs of sidewalks, curbs, repaving streets, installing signs and crosswalk striping.
Each board member had a letter from Julie Beeching regarding nursing report for COVID-19. Jeff stated the Communicable Disease nursing staff has been working 24/7, working weekends and are truly outstanding. Jeff stated he would like to see the board do something for the staff that continue to work and provide services to the community to show our thanks. This was discussed and reviewed. Linderman stated he believed the board should recognize the Communicable Disease Nurses as well as all other employees reporting to work during this pandemic. Motion by Linderman, 2nd by Hanson to provide a bonus of $2,000 to Communicable Disease Nurses and $1,000 bonus to additional staff from March 13th until the middle of May at which time the board will take a 2nd look for the possibility of a 2nd bonus. This was discussed and reviewed with Peat commenting on supporting this however he asked for clarification of the motion. He further stated that he believed it would be best to wait until the May meeting because things could change from now until then and the board would have a better idea of which staff have gone above and beyond their general duties and to recognize them accordingly, felt it is too early to support this motion at this time. Roseann suggested lunch be provided to staff that are currently working. Further discussion took place. It was suggested that the motion be rescinded or amended which Linderman stated to leave as is. Roll call vote taken: Dyes Yes, Hanson Yes, Peat No, Linderman No, Marchetti No and Dr. Cabras No. Motion denied. Peat requested that we look at the possibility of providing over time to those employees that have worked over their 40 hr. workweek. Jeff informed the board that we have exempt and non-exempt employees and those exempt employees cannot receive overtime in accordance to the Department of Labor. However Jeff would like to see the board make a motion for him to inform the employees, on their behalf, that they are appreciated and that their efforts will not go unnoticed. Motion by Peat, 2nd by Marchetti to have Jeff get a memo out to employees that are currently working to inform them the board is working on recognizing their efforts and appreciate them for all that they do. Roll call vote taken; Linderman Yes, Dyes Yes, Hanson Yes, Marchetti Yes, Peat Yes and Dr. Cabras Yes. All voting yes, motion carried.

Nursing Activities Report for March for both counties was unavailable.

Each board member received a nursing situation report for COVID-19. Van Buren County has a total of 17 positive cases (as of 4/6/2020 at 5 pm); 7 males, 10 females. 1 death was reported. Cass County has a total of 8 positive cases (as of 4/6/2020 at 5 pm); 5 males, 3 females. 1 death was reported.

Julie reported that Communicable Disease staff have been very busy monitoring and following up on all positive COVID-19 cases and reaching out to all of their contacts. Nurses have been working 7 days a week. Special recognition was given to Diana Baker, RN Cass County Lead for Communicable Diseases and Kimberlee Vogt, RN Lead Communicable Disease Nurse for Van Buren County. Julie also mentioned that not only are nurses working with families of individuals that tested positive but on the logistics of quarantine and self-isolation. Also working with grocery stores, apartment complexes, healthcare agencies, businesses, etc. to educate and help guide them toward resources on-line or physical resources such as masks for their employees and residents as needed.

Medical Director’s report: Dr. Wile expressed his gratitude with the Communicable Disease nurses, Jennifer Zordan, Danielle Persky and Dawn Rouse on all the work that has been done in in making sure information is made available to the community in a short amount of time and with continuous changes. Staff under a great deal of stress however working together to make sure things come together in a timely fashion. Dr. Wile informed the board that a plan is in place that would require nurses to be pulled from other health department services to help with the growing demand of COVID-19 if needed.

Dr. Johansen also expressed his thanks to the nurses and believes they are doing an outstanding job especially when it comes to communicating with neighboring counties and across state lines.

Dr. Cabras asked if anyone reached out to the Amish community to inform them about social distancing and the stay at home order. Dr. Wile stated he has been in contact with the Amish community in Bloomingdale as well as
Lawrence. He has talked with their community leaders as well as other members to discuss ways they can comply such as postponing weddings, schooling at home and keeping a distance between each other at church. Also their children are not getting in large groups.

Jeff informed the board that Intercare has received 1.5 million in COVID-19 funding and Family Health Center in Cass County received 1.2 million. Money is to be used to add staff, purchase test kits and protective equipment and anything else they need within their organization. Jeff stated he believed they should hire some field workers and they do Migrant Camp inspections instead of Public Health. This was discussed and reviewed with Dr. Johansen stating they are currently setting up testing sites plus educating migrants on the importance of social distancing.

Dental Report: Jeff reported that due to COVID-19, both the Mattawan and Dowagiac Dental offices were closed. All emergent care is being done out of the Hartford facility; averaging 8-12 patients daily. Emergencies consist of extractions, x-rays and antibiotics. These emergency dental clinics are offered Monday through Friday, with each dentist taking a day Monday through Thursday then they rotate on Fridays.

Dental Lab Report for March was unavailable.

Environmental Health Report: Jeff stated they are continuing to be busy.

Linderman thanked Danielle for providing the latest reports and keeping them up to date and he also thanked the staff for doing a great job during this pandemic and he is looking forward to May to see what the Board plans on doing to show their appreciation.

No other business. Motion by Hanson, 2nd by Marchetti to adjourn. All voting yes, motion carried. The next regular District Board of Health meeting is scheduled Wednesday, May 13th at 3:00 p.m. at the public health department facility in Dowagiac, Cass County.