Tacoma-Pierce County
Board of Health

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Regular Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2024
3 - 5 p.m.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department - Auditorium
Hybrid Format with in-person and remote attendance

Dial in: 253 215 8782 Meeting ID: 852 6383 2261
Passcode: 038473
Webinar Link:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85263832261?pwd=a1crSUJscWFkTFhJcGl0N0VkSjZDZz09

Call to Order
Vice Chair Hitchen called the March 6, 2024 Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health Regular meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call
Board of Health Members Present: Catherine Ushka, Jani Hitchen, Marty Campbell, Kiara Daniels, Paul Herrera, Nicholas Rajacich, Bryan Yambe. Alternate Board Members: Joe Bushnell, Stephen Cook, Steve O'Ban.
Board of Health Members Excused: Bruce Dammeier.

Comments by the Public (not related to a specific agenda item)
There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the meeting minutes for **January 31, 2024, February 7, and February 21, 2024.**

Vice Chair Hitchen read the title into the record. Board Member Yambe moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Alternate Board Member Bushnell.

The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Regular Agenda

Resolution No. 2024-4833 – Authorization to contract with Maxim Healthcare Staffing up to $100,000 to provide qualified temporary staffing for the period of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. The Clerk read the title into the record. Bord Member Yambe moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Alternate Board Member Bushnell.

Darlene Mendoza, Human Resources Director presented an overview of the resolution. There were no questions from board members.

There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Resolution No. 2024-4834 – Authorization to increase the aggregate 2022-2023 biennial budget by $35,402,220, from the amended budget of $122,599,461 to a final budget of $158,001,681. The Clerk read the title into the record. Bord Member Yambe moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Alternate Board Member Bushnell.

Jaime Paulson, Fiscal & Budget Manager presented an overview of the resolution. Vice Chair Hitchen advised that board members had the opportunity to review the aggregate 2022-2023 biennial at the February 15, 2024 study session. There were no questions from board members.

There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

COMMENTS BY INTERIM DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

[Cindan Gizzi, Interim Director of Health]

Jessica Gehle, Environmental Health Division Director presented on behalf of Cindan Gizzi, Interim Director of Health. She shared the following information with board members.

Director of Public Health and Health Officer updates

Ms. Gehle shared the official news that both the Pierce County and Tacoma City councils confirmed Chantell Harmon Reed as Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's new Director of Public Health. She will start March 18. Ms. Gehle shared they are working on plans for staff to meet with Chantell in larger and smaller team meetings.

The Health Department is closing in on hiring a Health Officer. Finalists for that position are interviewing this week with Health Department staff. Ms. Gehle shared that the Department expects Chantell to appoint the health officer by the end of March.

Invisible Shield

A 4-part documentary series called The Invisible Shield will premier March 26 on PBS, focusing on public health's response to COVID-19.

The filmmakers spent time with the Health Department's then Director of Health, Dr. Anthony L-T Chen, and followed the Health Department's local response.

Ms. Gehle advised board members they can watch a preview on PBS' website. The series will air locally on KTCS, with one episode airing each week. All 4 episodes will be available March 26 online.

Ms. Gehle shared that they were told Dr. Chen and Tacoma-Pierce County will be featured throughout.

Help stop drinking and driving

Ms. Gehle informed board members that in 2021, drunk drivers killed an average of 37 people a day in the United States. That is one person killed every 39 minutes.

She advised board members that with their help, we can prevent every one of these tragedies.

Ms. Gehle advised board members alcohol reduces the ability of your brain to function, impairing thinking, reasoning, and muscle coordination. All these abilities are essential to operating a vehicle safely. We can all save lives in Pierce County by not getting behind the wheel after having a drink.

Board members can learn more about how to help in a recent blog on the Health Department's website.

Discussion followed on information about the 39 deaths. Sebrena Chambers, Division Director Strengthening Families advised board members this number is specifically related to alcohol.

Healthy Communities Awards

Ms. Gehle informed board members the Health Department recognized three agencies last month with Healthy Communities Awards for showing leadership to improve community health outcomes: Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Tacoma, and Pierce County.

She advised board members the Health Department honored these agencies virtually Feb. 15 at the Pierce County Regional Committee General Assembly. Each recipient's plan addresses social, economic, and environmental factors that make people healthy.

Peaceful Tomorrow: Youth Firearm Violence Prevention

Naomi Wilson, Community Assessment Director; Jennifer Halverson Kuehn, Health Promotion Coordinator II; Ingrid Friberg, Epidemiologist II and guest Kaitlan Ohler, Imagine Justice Project advised board members on youth firearm prevention grant work.

Ms. Wilson advised board members on how this work links to the Health Department's 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan. She gave a project overview and shared goals. Ms. Wilson advised on the Health Department's commitment to bring vital resources to Pierce County and its participation in Washington's Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention.

Ms. Wilson advised board members on the Health Department's commitment to building upon the groundwork laid by dedicated teams in the community such as Tacoma Boat Builders, Big Homies Program, and Imagine Justice Project. She advised on Peace Point Plan an initiative which over a 9-month period engaged to examine, understand, and identify strategies for reducing youth violence in Tacoma and Pierce County.

Ms. Wilson advised board members on the definition the team used for youth violence. She explained it is a common definition between their internal team as well as the definition used by the Peace Point Plan. The definition comes from the CDC.

Youth violence is the intentional use of physical force or power to threaten or harm others by young people ages 10 – 24 years old. A young person can be involved with youth violence as a victim, offender, or witness.

Team members Jennifer Halverson Kuehn, Ingrid Friberg, and Kaitlan Ohler shared three main components of the grant activity.

Ms. Halverson Kuehn advised board members on how they bring stakeholders together, communication, planning and coordination. Ingrid Friberg informed board members on analyzing existing data, the ability for everyone to access the same information, and bringing people with different perspectives together. Ms. Friberg advised board members the Health Department's role is bringing together information and analyzing traditional and non-traditional data sources to achieve this goal.

Kaitlan Ohler advised board members Imagine Justice Project connects and uplifts community driven efforts to create safe and just futures for young people in Pierce County. They partnered with Tacoma Boat Builders and the Big Homie Program to spearhead the Peace Point Report research project which they are now calling their Peace Point Movement. She shared they are doing a lot of connection, advocacy, and information sharing.

Ms. Ohler advised board members on Imagine Justice Project's request for proposal (RFP) process. She shared they have $120,000 total to subgrant out to communities, organizations. They received 35 applications. They anticipated they would give out up to 10 awards but in response to the many qualified applications received they adjusted their funding strategy, so they are able to fund some organizations at the full amount and fund some organizations at a reduced amount to make sure they are engaging as many community partners as possible. The grant period for community partners is April 2024 through June 2025.

Naomi Wilson thanked internal staff for their efforts on this work: Jennifer Thompson, Project Manager; Malik Dreher, Injury and Violence Prevention Coordinator; Emily Turk, Senior Program Analyst; Cody Carmichael, Behavioral Health Epidemiologist; Cam Solomon, Senior Epidemiologist; Leah Ford, Community Health Program Manager. Vice Chair Hitchen shared her appreciation for their work and the benefits to our community members.

Discussion followed on responsibly securing firearms, coupling with education, data and how are we tracking outcomes. Further discussion followed on the impact of teen youth violence.

Board members discussed how the impact to all communities in Pierce County and are there proven strategies on reducing gun violence that have worked other places that could be effective in Pierce County. Board Member Daniels advised board members on gun violence prevention conference coming to King County. It is a three-day symposium. Put on by Cities United.

Vice Chair Hitchen shared her appreciation for the definition of youth violence being used in public health and her excitement to see it go on.

COMMENTS BY BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS

Vice Chair Hitchen asked health department staff about SB5290 Permit Review Timelines. What are the thoughts of the Health Department and what we are doing. She asked that staff flag this topic for future conversations.

Vice Chair Hitchen thanked the Communicable Disease Control team for participating in a meeting with Aids Housing and Affordable Housing and Treatment (AHAT). She shared Aids Healthcare Foundation will be taking on HIV testing and work in the county after Pierce County Aids Foundation (PCAF) shut down. Vice Chair Hitchen advised we must do better around vulnerable populations in Pierce County dealing with HIV.

She shared that she appreciates the work and getting systems in place so that those seeking help can access it.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

ATTEST:

Catherine Ushka
Chair, Board of Health
April 3, 2024
Date of Adoption

ATTEST:

Patricia Darden
Clerk, Board of Health