

Madison County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2021

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, a meeting of the Madison County Board of Health came to order at 5:35 p.m. via web/phone.

Board Members in attendance were, Douglas B. Young D.V.M, Dayna Therghesen – CPNP, Molly Biehl – D.O., Whitney Marsh – RN Ennis Schools, Melinda Tichenor - MVMC Lab Director and Margaret Bortko – FNP, DNP Clinical Professor MSU. Also in attendance were Melissa Brummell – MCPHD Director, Jennifer Martens - Public Health Clerk, Van Puckett – Sanitarian, Bonnie O’Neill – Madison County Public Information Officer, Abbi Lee - MCPHD, Lyn Baughn – MCPHD, Jolene Palmer – The Madisonian, Joe Brummell – DES, Kendra Horn – Sheridan School Board, Ed Burke – Sheridan School Athletic Director, Mike Wetherbee – Sheridan School Superintendent and Fred Hofman – Harrison School Superintendent. Community members: Bill Koch, Paula Kinoshita, Kaleh Savage Willauer, Sheila, Darcy Dobb and various others phone numbers from the public that did not identify themselves.

Current COVID-19 situation in Madison County

Melissa Brummell reviewed slides on Madison County’s COVID-19 status. We are on day 326 into COVID-19 incident command. The current overall count for Montana stands at 92,160. The State of Montana currently has 128 active hospitalizations, recovered 86,733 and fatalities are at 1,185. Madison County overall count stands at 631 positive cases (20 in the past week) not including out of state residents that are temporarily residing in Madison County, active hospitalizations 3, total hospitalizations 39, active cases 33, recovered 592 and deaths are at 6 total. The state map has included vaccination reporting. Total doses administered in Montana to date is 81,157 with 15,888 fully vaccinated. Madison County has administered 395 doses with 31 fully immunized. There are approximately 7,454 residents of Madison County eligible for the vaccine. Madison County is currently in Phase 1B category.

For the current and up to date information we have the 9:30 am spot at the Tuesday County Commissioners meetings and also a Community COVID-19 update meeting Tuesday nights at 6:00pm via GoToMeetings. There’s also information on the Madison County Public Health Department Facebook page, county page and weekly press releases as needed. If you would like to review the Board of Health agenda or minutes please see the Madison County website under agenda & minutes. We also have weekly updates almost every Tuesday for The Madisonian newspaper.

For daily up to date numbers please check out the state map located:

<https://montana.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c34f3412536439491adcc2103421d4b> . It is usually updated between 10:00 am - 11:30 am.

Governor’s Directive

Montana’s new governor Greg Gianforte was sworn in on January 4, 2021. Melissa reviewed the new directive with the Board. On January 13, 2021 Governor Gianforte lifted the capacity limits and early closing times for businesses. He also stated that the mask mandate will remain in effect until further notice. Madison County has an order for group size limit of 25 or less per previous vote. *** After further review the Board of Health has an order in place for 50 or less**

Board of Health COVID Directives

The Board would like to follow the current Governor's directives. They would also like to continue the Madison County Board of Health directive regarding group sizes remaining under 25. *** After further review the Board of Health has an order in place for 50 or less**

Governor Gianforte has stated that he will lift the mask mandate sometime in the near future. The Board would like to continue the mask mandate for Madison County for the next 60 days. There was discussion on if schools are included in the mandate and various concerns. Some think it should solely be left up to the individual school boards. Unfortunately, Madison County is only allotted 100 vaccines per week and vaccinating the public is slow going. Until we catch up on vaccinations the Board thinks it is best to continue masks. Molly Biehl made the motion to extend the mask mandate for 60 days effective immediately for Madison County including schools. Margaret Bortko seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously. Questions arose regarding information push out for county COVID-19 vaccinations. The Madison County Public Health Department is coordinating with Ruby Valley Medical Center in Sheridan and Madison Valley Medical Center in Ennis. Both facilities have a waiting list. Madison County Public Health posts information via signage throughout the county, Facebook, our county website and The Madisonian.

Madison County Schools Basketball Tournament Plan

Fred Hofman reviewed previous basketball tournaments. It is still unknown where the tournament will take place at this time. The biggest change to the tournaments would be that nobody can mingle after their game and watch others. They must immediately vacate. Schools are doing their best to broadcast the games. There were numerous suggestions on how to make this event possible with reduced exposure such as eliminating overnight stays, eating out etc. Ed Burke and Mike Wetherbee went over the plans and would like the Boards approval to put their name in the hat for the potential to be selected for the tournament. Melissa commended them on the detailed plan. From a public health standpoint, the biggest concerns would be community impact with having so many out of towners in the community. Molly Biehl made a motion to approve the plan with no more than 50 spectators per team including the bus driver and administrators. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

DPHHS Cooperative Agreement – Van Puckett

Van Puckett summarized the DPHHS cooperative agreement. It is an offer from the state to help the Sanitarian office with inspections. There are no significant changes from the last agreement that was signed. Melinda Tichenor made a motion to sign the DPHHS Cooperative Agreement. Molly Biehl seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

PHEP Grant – Communicable Disease response plan & checklist

Melissa presented the PHEP Grant including the Communicable Disease Response plan and checklist to the Board. Melinda Tichenor made a motion to approve the PHEP Grant including the Communicable Disease response plan and checklist. Molly Biehl seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Additional Agenda Items

Fred Hofman with Harrison School thanked the Board of Health for all their volunteered time and efforts.

Approval of Minutes

Whitney Marsh made the motion to approve the December 08, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Dayna Therghesen seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Board Appointment discussion

Madison County Commissioners are asking the Board of Health for a recommendation to appoint Dawn Hagedorn to the Madison County Board of Health. After some discussion, Molly Biehl suggested that we table the discussion for now. There are concerns about comprehension of public health duties, recommendations and promoting. The Board will revisit at a later date.

Quarterly Meeting Schedule for 2021

The Board set a quarterly meeting schedule for 2021. They would like to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the last month of each quarter at 5:30pm.

Next meeting date:

The next quarterly meeting will be Tuesday, March 16,2021 @ 5:30 pm.

Meeting Adjourned:

A motion to adjourn was made by Margaret Bortko at 7:38 pm, Melinda Tichenor second the motion, all voted Aye, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Douglas B. Young, Chairman
Madison County Board of Health

Date Approved: March 16,2021
Minutes prepared by:

Jennifer Martens, Public Health Clerk