**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

Dr. Wells called the meeting to order at 8:31 am via Zoom. Present were: Dr. Wells, Shelley Bickel, Bill Byrns, Penny Fetters, David Rhodes, Tom Swearingin, Susie Gibbs, Clayton Merritt, Susan Moore, Linda Stanley, and Berdette Davis with the State of Iowa.

Dr. Wells said he moved Number 4 on the Agenda (Update on COVID) to Number 2 on the Agenda. Clayton made a motion to approve the agenda. Susie seconded it. Motion carried.

Dr. Wells gave an update on Covid. The hospital is seeing lots of people test positive across the board, in all age groups. They are doing a lot of quarantines and isolations; that has become the norm. They have seen a lot of people recover, some recover quickly, others are still recovering a couple of months later. He also stated the vaccine meeting at the courthouse went very well.

Shelley said we currently have 117 confirmed cases, 107 recovered, 7 active, 3 deaths and 10 positive serology tests. We are getting about one new case a day, most recent cases have been at the elementary school. We feel there is a surge coming. We have a lot of kids quarantined-probably 40 kids right now. Shelley is also putting together the dispensing clinics for when the vaccine comes out. Shelley plans to have Dr. Wells do a recording and put it on Facebook, similar to what he did at the courthouse. Dr. Wells talked about how people are not wearing masks and just want the pandemic to be over. Clayton talked about how the ‘Recovered’ number we post on Facebook might be misleading, because some of them are not fully recovered. Shelley said we use the terms the state uses. But we don’t actually put them in the ‘Recovered’ category unless they are pretty much recovered. Shelley said we could explain that on our page.

We moved on to the Cares Funding discussion. Berdette said this is a Federal program, and the details seem to appear as we go. We are getting guidance on this about 6 months after the money is awarded. This is an emergency fund for individuals, families and businesses affected by Covid 19. There is an overview of this on the state website. This money is for things not planned for in the budget, like PPE. It can also be used for salaries, overtime, salaries for contact tracers, time that employees had to be off due to Covid, and vaccine clinics. The money is like a loan. We pay for the expenses, and are then reimbursed. It is very important that we have documentation for everything we claim, such as time studies and invoices. Shelley reported that Covid is costing approximately $10,000 a month. We discussed Susan’s position. Most of her salary is paid by Marion County, except for Immunizations and Jail and things like that. We are not currently receiving funds from Marion County, due to the Covid restrictions. She is primarily working on Covid. Shelley and Susan are pretty much the main ones working on Covid. Shelley had applied for a lot of grants, and has been awarded a lot of grants. She found the Cares money, applied for it, and was planning on using it to pay for salaries due to Covid. Tom reported the money comes into the county, then they dispurse it to the departments. The county has not received any Cares money yet. Hopefully we will receive it before December 31. Dr. Wells mentioned Shelley has been keeping very good documentation and encouraged her to keep it up. Dr. Wells and Berdette talked about planning on how to plan for Covid from this point forward. We need to amend our budget. Berdette talked about overtime and Pandemic Fatigue. The hospital has kept very good records too, and spent a lot on PPE, and may ask to be reimbursed for part of this, out of the Cares money. Shelley reported that Bill got a lot of PPE for free. The majority went to the hospital. Public Health also got free masks, gloves and other things. Bill has a grant to get other things he is stockpiling for the winter. Bill reported he got 23 or 24 loads of things from the state. He took things to the care center, hospital, and Public Health. This was all free. Shelley stated she thinks the hospital might have gotten some Cares money too. Clayton stated he feels we will need to discuss the hospital receiving part of the county’s Cares money at a later date, with more people involved. Shelley said she does not care who gets the money, but the Board needs to decide how much the county wants to put in. We are budgeted for $150,000 a year. It is up now because Shelley is contracted to work 24 hours a week, and Susan is contracted to work 32, but they are both working more of that. Shelley and Susan have pretty much stopped working at nights, but they are still working weekends. We had two contact tracers, but one quit because it became too hard. Berdette recommended Shelley provide a projected budget. Dr. Wells and Tom agreed. There are two options in regard to the contact tracing. You can give it up to the state, and all we do is the vaccine, or we can keep doing what we are doing. It all depends on the money. A lot of agencies gave it up to the state. Susan stated that if we decide to give it up, we need to be very transparent to our community. They are used to calling us day or night, and if they don’t have that option any more, they need to be notified of that. Dr. Wells stated that as of yesterday, Wayne County, per capita, with our 3 Covid deaths, is in the lowest 3 counties of Iowa. That number says we have done a good job. This Health Department has made a difference. Dr. Wells suggested having the hospital and/or the pharmacies do the vaccines. Susan pointed out we can also use some I-4 money to help with vaccination clinics. Shelley might put together 2 types of budget. Penny wondered if we can make more use of our contact tracer. Shelley will talk to her. As soon as Deidre gets her business transferred to the new owner, she can help with contact tracing on the weekends. She is very seasoned and will be very good at it. Penny asked how the hospital will do the vaccinations and not be overwhelmed. Dr. Wells said they are just brainstorming at this point.

We moved on to the Dedication/Hazard pay discussion. Shelley said this would come from the Cares money. Clayton said there needs to be a reasoning for the bonus amounts. Shelley said she can gather data on who worked nights and weekends. Shelley talked about contact tracing. She has been threatened and had to call the sheriff twice. Tom stated they are struggling to make the Cares money stretch. He said he cannot do the bonuses. Susie suggested a shift differential. Penny wondered if shift differentials might add up to more than the bonuses. Shelley will calculate out the nights and weekends she and Susan have worked. She will get this within the next week. She will also do a projection of the budget, with Shelley at 24 hours at Susan at 40 hours. Tom suggested Shelley come to the November 2 Board of Supervisors meeting and present the budget to maintain the level we are at. Clayton stated that every department that feels they’re entitled to the money should be at the Board of Supervisor’s meeting. Clayton asked if there was any way to maintain our contact tracing with Shelley at 24 hours and Susan at 40. Susan said her contract is actually 32 hours a week. She also does I4, Jail nursing and some First Five things at the moment. So she cannot dedicate 40 hours a week to contact tracing. Shelley has noticed we get more cases on Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Giving up weekends would cut Shelley and Susan’s hours, but the reason Shelley and Susan work weekends is to get contacts isolated quickly. Dr. Wells stated they need to renegotiate Shelley’s contract because the premise she was hired under no longer exists. Dr. Wells said we need to run this by the attorney. It was before Covid and Shelley was an IPERS employee. Shelley was a good deal for the county. But things changed and it wasn’t a good deal for Shelley, considering the amount of hours she has worked. Susan was a similar situation. Susan is an essential employee. Tom stated according to his conversation with the auditor, he does not think we can go backward, we can only go forward. Dr. Wells said we should fix her contract and make it right. And Susan’s too. Susan stated that it is really not feasible to not work weekends because they might have lots of kids at school on Monday that should be quarantined. We cannot let the school go over the weekend. Shelley stated it will cost about an extra $10,000 a month, starting in August, to keep on at the level they are going. Clayton said he thinks we should turn over contact tracing in entirety, to the state of Iowa. Susan said we need to speak to Appanoose County. The state takes 4 or 5 days to get contacts contacted. She would hate to see schools shut down because we have handed that over to the state. We talked about the budget Shelley is going to put together again. Shelley will also put together a list of hours she and Susan have worked over 40 hours a week. Tom said he agreed with Clayton when he said he thinks we should give up contact tracing. Susan stated if the Board decides we need to give up contact tracing, they need to issue a statement to our community as to why we are doing that, because there is going to be a lot of backlash. Shelley suggested David and Bill help contract trace, but Tom said we would still be in an overtime situation. Berdette said the state is not doing a great job at contact tracing. They are 3-5 days behind.

Dr. Wells summarized the meeting:

Working backwards, there are some hitches. Going forward, we have to come up with a plan that involves Shelley and Susan’s contracts, and the budget. Shelley will submit actual figures going forward on what our cost would be on a couple of scenarios, Tom suggested with and without the contact tracing. We will break the budget down into shorter segments. Tom suggested budgeting for the worst case scenario, thru the end of June. Shelley’s budget will include the premium for nights and weekends. Tom will contact the county attorney about what our previous contracts really meant based on what was going on when they contracted Shelley. Tom will forward the attorney’s email to Shelley and Dr. Wells when he replies. Tom will put Shelley on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 2. Dr. Wells said he would come to that meeting with Shelley. Clayton is going to try to come too. Shelley will email her data out before that meeting. After that Board of Supervisors meeting, Shelley will set up a meeting with all 3 supervisors and the Board of Health so we can move forward as quickly as possible. Clayton added that any other entities that feel they are entitled to the money should come too.

Next meeting will be at 8:30 am, Wednesday, November 4, 2020 in person at the courthouse.

Tom made a motion to adjourn and Clayton seconded it. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:51 am.

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 Dr. Joel Wells, Chairperson Date