



Municipality of Anchorage

Dave Bronson, Mayor

Health and Human Services Commission

MEETING MINUTES ~ January 12, 2022

5:30 p.m. – Teams Meeting

Attendance

Commissioners present: Kati Ward-Hamer (Chair); Donna Mears (Vice Chair); Matthew Thomas, Gabe Garcia, Gerry York

Commissioners absent: Jocasta Olp (E), Stephanie Berglund (E), Shawn Degler (E), Sarah Slater (U)

Guests: Kathleen Easley, BSN RN; Jessica Parks, RuralCap, Penny Goodstein, Jasmine Boyle

Staff: Judy Atkins, Administrative Support; Joe Gerace, Director; Dave D'Amato, Deputy Director

Call to Order

Chair Ward-Hamer called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. with a quorum.

Roll Call - Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Chair called for approval of the agenda as presented. Motion to approve by Commissioner Mears, seconded by Commissioner Garcia. **Hearing no objections, motion passed.**

Approval of Minutes

Move to approve the November 10, 2021 and November 15, 2021, minutes as presented, Commissioner Mears; seconded by Commissioner Thomas. **Hearing no objection, the motion passed.**

Public Comment

Kathleen Easley, Anchorage School District nurse, spoke about various covid testing issues that families in the school district are experiencing. Although there is much appreciation for the 24/7 site opening next week, more are needed. She inquired about commission vacancies.

AHD Staff Report – Joe Gerace

Director Gerace thanked everyone for attending the meeting, offering special recognition for healthcare workers. AHD is aggressively trying to find more COVID-19 testing sites; community partners are interested but sites must support up to 500 cars; Capstone at Airport Park will be 24/7 as of Monday, Jan. 17, 2022. As of Jan. 1, 2022, the homelessness issue will be addressed through the Anchorage Health Department. As the AHD Public

Information Officer position is vacant, media are now addressed through Corey Allen Young who is working temporarily to assist AHD. Home test COVID kits are not available in Anchorage as shortages remain nationwide.

Old Business

New Business

Retreat/Planning Session – Topics to be addressed during a retreat/planning session should be identified; what is important to the commission; which community issues should be addressed; should the commission be more proactive. Concerns about in person meetings during the omicron surge were brought up; 100% of those present agreed on not meeting in person at this time. Motion to continue conversations around a retreat at next meeting by Commissioner York; seconded by Commissioner Thomas. **Hearing no objections, the motion passed.**

Reforming Committees – Due to commission member turn over, the idea of reforming the committees is overdue. Commissioners need to think about what they would like to work on individually and together. A suggestion was made to not address homeless issues at this time because others in the community are doing so.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Mears commented that in the past, reports provided by AHD program supervisors or managers at this meeting are of great value and can help identify an issue and where they, as a Commission, can be of help or support.

Commissioner Thomas expressed his concerns about healthcare in Alaska and that the general public does not truly understand what kind of crisis we are in. Community members are unable to find testing, people contracting omicron, huge staffing shortages in healthcare facilities, quarantining.

Commissioner Ward-Hamer commented on being five nurses short for a recent shift; things are getting worse in her facility and her fear is that she will get sick and make her patients sicker. She commented that the lower 48 is experiencing a lot of pediatric cases. She additionally commented that it has been good to share this information with her peers.

Comments that teachers are experiencing burnout as well as those in the childcare field.

Commissioner Garcia has conducted research on vaccine confidence. He will send out an announcement on four trainings offered and share his findings when complete.

Next Meeting

Move to adjourn, Commissioner Mears; seconded by Commissioner Thomas. **Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm;** the next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 9, 2022, Microsoft Teams from 5:30-7:00 pm.