

Meeting Minutes from the TriCounty Board of Health Regular Meeting January 17, 2024

LOCATION

Uintah Conference Center - 313 E 200 S, Vernal

ATTENDEES

Chair Terry Nelson, Commissioner Randy Asay, Commissioner John Laursen, Commissioner Tracy Killian, Dr. John Mathis, Dr. Richard Jolley, Shanna Wheeler, Keith Goodspeed, Kim Harding, Jon Stearmer, KayCee Asay, Joe Hadlock, Sage McMickell, Ashley Linshoten, Director Kirk Bendge, Bruce McKee, Raima Colledge, Nathan Hall

Virtual Attendance: Jodi Tinker

EXCUSED

None

AGENDA

Call to order

12:06 pm

Chair Updates

Chair, Terry Nelson announced that he is resigning from the TriCounty Board of Health. He introduced his replacement, Kim Harding, a representative for Duchesne County.

Approval of November 29, 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Tracy Killian made a motion to approve the November 29, 2024 minutes. Shanna Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Director Kirk Benge reported on the following infectious diseases in the TriCounty area:

- Influenza: There were 35 hospitalizations reported in December and 14 so far for January, which is higher than average for the past five years.
- COVID: There were 20 hospitalizations reported in December and 3 so far for January, which is average for the past three years.
- Adult RSV: There were 6 hospitalizations in December and 7 so far for in January, these are not reportable and harder to gauge.

In addition, there have been measles outbreaks in various parts of the world, including 8 cases in Philadelphia, some reported in New Jersey, and about 300 cases reported in the UK. This is concerning as measles is among the most contagious diseases.

Director Kirk Benge announced that the TriCounty Health Department has moved to .GOV emails and website domain. TriCounty will keep all of the .COM domains that will be redirected to .GOV domains. In addition, all current inspection reports can now be found on the TriCounty website.

Lastly, the DHHS audit has been completed and was positive. TriCounty is now considered a low-risk entity and will undergo less frequent audits

Overview of District Engineer

Nathan Hall presented an overview of the District Engineer role at DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality).

Approval of Check Register

Bruce McKee reported the November check register.

Commissioner John Laursen made a motion to approve the check register as presented. Shanna Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Bruce McKee presented a snapshot of the cash summary, DHHS monthly expenditure report, and TriCounty annual budget for 2023.

Resolution to Add Funds to the Restricted PTIF “Rainy Day Fund”

Director Kirk Bengé and Bruce McKee recommended moving \$200,000 into the PTIF “Rainy Day Fund.”

Dr. Richard Jolley made a motion to approve the resolution to add \$200,000 to the PTIF “Rainy Day Fund.” . Keith Goodspeed seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session to Discuss Opioid Litigation

Commissioner Tracy Killian made a motion to move into a closed session. Commissioner John Laursen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Shanna Wheeler made a motion to move out of a closed session. Commissioner John Laursen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner John Laursen made a motion to approve the Milan Drug Company settlement agreement, the Sun settlement agreement, and the distribution of funds agreement as presented in the closed session. Kim Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Compensation and Merit Plan

Raima Colledge presented the annual review of the compensation and merit plan. The board needs to approve new wage scales for a few positions created in 2023. Raima proposed a new merit increase of 6% for employees who complete a Bachelor's or Master's degree directly related to their position, but not required, and a 3% increase for a certification that requires a Utah state exam. Chair Terry Nelson raised concerns about potential liabilities, but Jon Stearmer clarified that offering the increase to all employees would eliminate any issues.

Commissioner John Laursen made a motion to approve the compensation and merit plan with changes. Commissioner Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session for Evaluation of the Health Officer

Shanna Wheeler made a motion to move into a closed session. Dr. Richard Jolley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner John Laursen made a motion to move out of a closed session. Commissioner Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kim Hardinger made a motion to approve a 3% merit increase for Director Kirk Benge. Commissioner Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Contracts

Director Kirk Benge went over new and amended contracts.

DHHS

- Disability and Health Program 2023 Amendment 1
- COVID-19 - Vaccine Supplemental Support Funding Amendment 3
- PH Infrastructure 2023 Amendment 1
- PDG B-5 Activity 6- 23-25 Amendment 1
- OVR and Statistics Data Sharing Agreement
- COVID-19 PPPHEA Expansion 2021 Amendment 2 (pending)

OTHER

- BanCorp - Vehicle Lease Renewal for 2024

Amendment of Bylaws

During the November meeting, Director Kirk Benge suggested adding a seat on the board to be appointed by the Ute Indian Tribe. This proposal was brought back for a second reading and potential adoption. Terry inquired whether the Ute Indian Tribe had reached out to TriCounty or if it was the other way around. Director Kirk Benge explained that he had initially tried to contact the Tribe, but in the end, they approached him during a Tribal Business meeting. Dr. Richard Jolley expressed concern about having an even number of board members. However, Director Kirk Benge pointed out that according to the current bylaws, a motion can only pass with a majority vote. In the event of a tie, the motion would not pass.

Commissioner Tracy Killian made a motion to approve the amendment of the Bylaws as presented. Dr. John Mathis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Appointments and Elections

As stated in the bylaws:

The Chairman and Vice-chairman of the board shall be selected from the current Board of Health members who are elected by a majority vote of the board members. If the elected Chairman is not a county commissioner, the Vice-chairman must be elected from the county commissioners. Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall serve a term of one year beginning January 1 and ending twelve months later on December 31. The Chairman shall preside over and conduct all meetings and act as the legal representative of all board transactions. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the board.

Commissioner John Laursen made a motion to appoint Dr. John Mathis as the Chairman and Commissioner Tracy Killian as the Vice Chairman of the Board of Health for 2024. Dr. Richard Jolley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Appointment of Representative to Serve on HCNEU Board of Trustees

[HCNEU.org](https://www.hcneu.org) bylaws designate a board seat appointed by the Board of Health. This seat is currently filled by Terry Nelson. The Board of Health members discussed whether to have the current Board Chairman fill this seat or select a different member of the board.

Dr. Richard Jolley made a motion to have the current Board Chairman fill this seat. Commissioner John Laursen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of a One-Time Payment to HCNEU to Meet 10% Match Requirement for Septic Tank Remediation Revolving Loan Fund

The Foundation for Healthy Communities of Northeastern Utah ([HCNEU.org](https://www.hcneu.org)), formerly the TriCounty Public Health Foundation, is a 501c3 registered nonprofit created by TriCounty Health and working in close partnership. HCNEU has received a USDA Grant for “Establishing Revolving Funds for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects”. HCNEU’s proposal is to provide low-interest loans to households with failed wastewater systems.

Director Kirk Bengé stated that the project needs a \$6,000 match in funding to continue and start providing services to households in need of low-interest loans to fix their septic systems and asked the board if they would consider making the one-time payment. There was some discussion on the process of receiving and paying back the loans. There will be an application process for a loan with 1% interest rate. HCNEU will appoint a loan officer to distribute and collect the loans.

Kim Harding made a motion to make a one-time payment of \$6,000 to the HCNEU for Septic Tank Remediation. Commissioner John Laursen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Additional Updates & Discussion

Director Kirk Bengé reminded the board of both the 2024 UALBOH and NALBOH Annual Conferences and asked them to contact Raima Colledge with any interest in attending. There was also some discussion of TriCounty’s Board of Health Retreat and there was a consensus to visit a facility in the TriCounty area. Director Kirk Bengé will look into finding a location and tentative date.

Adjourn

Shanna Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:32 pm.