

Meeting Minutes from the TriCounty Board of Health Special Meeting

June 26, 2025

LOCATION

TriCounty Health Department - 133 S 500 W - Vernal

ATTENDEES

Chairman Dr. John Mathis, Commissioner Randy Asay, Commissioner Willis LeFevre, Commissioner Tracy Killian, Shanna Wheeler, Irene Hansen, Kim Harding, Director Kirk Bengé, Bruce McKee, Raima Colledge, and Sydnee Lyons.

EXCUSED

Emmett Duncan, Dr. Sterling Haws, Jodi Tinker, and Darrin Brown.

AGENDA

Call to order

4:08 p.m.

Approval of May 28, 2025 Minutes

Kim Harding made a motion to approve the May 28, 2025 minutes. Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

- Kirk shared that there have been 3 confirmed measles cases in Utah and that he expects this number of cases to rise now that the disease has made its way into the state. He shared that the department is working with the hospitals, healthcare providers, and disease surveillance groups to monitor and mitigate the spread.

Consideration of a One-Time Retirement Incentive

Kirk directed the board's attention to the proposed incentive that was initially presented during the May 28th regular meeting. Kirk stated that the intention behind the creation of the incentive is to avoid a reduction in workforce (RIF) later on amid federal funding uncertainty. TriCounty executive leadership believes that this incentive is beneficial to staff members nearing retirement age and younger staff members who hope to stay with the department long term.

Kim asked how many positions would be cut should all of the eligible employees take the incentive. Kirk informed him it would be six positions total. Kim expressed that he saw the proposal as a sign of efficient thinking on the part of TriCounty.

Irene voiced her concern of how this incentive would be perceived by other federally funded organizations; that if TriCounty offers an incentive to retire early with six months of pay while others may be laying off staff due to funding decreases, it may cause resentment among peer organizations.

Kim stated that he felt the board should keep its focus on what's best for TriCounty, rather than other organizations, and that he felt this may be an investment in the longevity of its workforce.

Tracy voiced his opposition to the incentive based on his feeling as though it would be targeting certain staff members.

Dr. Mathis, Tracy, and Irene expressed that they didn't believe the incentive to be vital, but that it was worth consideration.

Bruce mentioned that the incentive might be less disheartening to employees than an involuntary RIF later on. Randy, Tracy, and Irene stated that they thought the opposite, and that a RIF might be easier to accept.

Kirk stated that the incentive was never meant to be controversial and that he would feel much more comfortable if the board felt inclined to approve or deny it unanimously. Given the controversy, he felt that the board should scrap the proposal.

Raima noted that in the early ideation phase the civil attorney was consulted and that he didn't find the proposal to be discriminatory.

Shanna pointed out that she saw the incentive as a potential way to hold on to staff members given the fact there has been considerable turnover in the past.

Willis noted that he has been on both sides of a decision like this and that he feels performance evaluations would be a better way to go about handling a RIF. Kirk brought attention to the fact that there is a performance evaluation in employee contracts and that it would be considered in the event of a RIF.

Irene Hansen made a motion to table the incentive. Commissioner Willis Lefevre seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Performance Evaluation of the Health Officer

Shanna motioned to move into a closed session to evaluate Kirk Bengé's performance. Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*Kirk and Bruce left the room so that the motion could go into effect.

*Roll was taken and included: Dr. Mathis, Commissioner Randy Asay, Commissioner Willis LeFevre, Commissioner Tracy Killian, Shanna Wheeler, Irene Hansen, Kim Harding, Raima Colledge, and Sydnee Lyons.

Tracy Killian motioned to move out of the closed session. Kim Harding seconded the motion. The open session resumed.

*Kirk and Bruce were invited back into the room to resume the meeting.

Adjourn for a Field Trip to Ashley Spring

Kirk proposed a resolution to establish a committee to review circumstances related to deaths involving substance abuse, suicide, mental health, or children and adolescents. This comes after the concept being introduced to the board in a Sept. 2024 meeting and further evaluation with legal counsel to ensure this complied with applicable laws.

Shanna Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 p.m. Tracy Killian seconded.