

Meeting Minutes from the TriCounty Board of Health Meeting

July 23, 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, Dr. Sterling Hawes, Director Kirk Benge, Darrin Brown, Bruce McKee, Raima Colledge, Sydnee Lyons, KayCee Asay, Joe Hadlock, Ashley Linschoten and Rob Grove.

VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

Jodi Tinker, Madeline George, and Doug Rasmussen.

EXCUSED

Emmett Duncan.

AGENDA

Call to order

12:12 p.m.

Approval of June 26, 2025 Minutes

Commissioner LeFevre made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 26 special meeting. Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

- Director Kirk Benge began by highlighting the department's employee of the quarter, Kailee Jones. Kailee is the care coordinator and targeted case manager for TriCounty Health. She was recognized for her professionalism, consistent work ethic, and going above and beyond in her service to clients.
- As Director Benge drew attention to the communicable disease dashboard on tricountyhealthut.gov, Dr. Mathis brought up that another measles case had been confirmed in southern Utah. Kirk acknowledged that this makes the 11th case in the state and that he anticipates it will be a matter of when rather than if we will see a case in the TriCounty area.
 - Dr. Mathis said he felt this to be a given as well considering that immunization exemptions rates in school-aged children continue to trend upward. Kirk pointed out that many parents may not realize that there is a condition in the exemption form that states that parents agree to keep their exempt children home in the event of an outbreak. Commissioner Killian asked what the exemption rate in our area is. KayCee Asay noted that TriCounty has one of the lower immunization rates in the state (being approximately 80% on average). KayCee also noted that some schools have upwards of 90% immunization rates while one is about 60%. Irene Hansen suggested putting out a press release to remind parents of their agreement to keep unvaccinated children home in the event of an outbreak ahead of the new school year.

- Director Bengé also highlighted the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) program and the seniors who were awarded scholarship money earlier this summer for their efforts in peer-to-peer tobacco prevention. The Foundation for Healthy Communities of Northeastern Utah awarded \$74,000 in award money.
- Director Bengé and Commissioner Asay then touched on the groundbreaking ceremony for the Daggett Community Center which will house a clinic to serve the community.

Approval of Check Register

Bruce McKee presented the check register for April through May of 2025. He drew attention to a few irregular charges on this register which were for:

- Creative Signs and Graphics for the digital sign in Roosevelt which had been approved by the board.
- Revize LLC for services to develop and design a new website.

Commissioner Killian motioned to approve the check register as presented. Irene Hansen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Bruce McKee then presented the financial report for all accounts as of June 30th 2025. He noted that we've started a downward trend in spending and that has allowed TriCounty to put more away into its rainy day fund.

- Dr. Mathis asked Bruce how much the department should have in its rainy day fund in his professional opinion. Bruce stated that legally TriCounty is allowed to have up to 25% of its budget stored (Which is about 9 months of operating costs) including the rainy day fund.
- There was discussion among board members about using funds which come from tax dollars this way while also being sure the department can sustain itself in event of a financial emergency.
- Dr. Mathis asked about the difference in expenditures vs reimbursement from DHHS. Director Bengé stated that TriCounty covers the difference of expenses that client fees don't cover for the department's services. Bruce explained that there has been lots of uncertainty amid federal and state contract changes. Kirk noted that most contracts have been resigned at about 75% of last year's totals. Dr. Mathis then asked if and how this was impacting employees. Kirk stated that we were looking at a RIF, but since the contracts have been resigned TriCounty has been able to stave that off. He also said that if some contracts don't increase, a RIF may be necessary in the future. But for now all programs are able to continue.

2024 Financial Audit

Doug Rasmussen joined the meeting virtually to go over the findings of the 2024 financial audit that was conducted earlier this summer. He began by going over the opinion at the start of the report which states that TriCounty Health is in good standing with the state according to audit requirements. He walked through the report answering any questions and clarifying the report where needed.

Irene Hansen made a motion to accept the audit as presented, acknowledging Bruce's diligent work as finance director, and to publish it on the department's website. Commissioner Willis Lefevre seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation of the Proposed 2026 Fee Schedule

Director Bengé then presented the fee schedule for 2026, highlighting the following changes in fees:

- A handful of vaccines would increase by a few dollars to better cover the cost to acquire and store them.
- A few Environmental health services would increase by \$50 to lessen the gap between what the department pays to render the service and what is paid by local contributions.
 - Kim Harding brought up past discussions regarding working to get an increase in passthrough money from DEQ to help offset department costs so that the fee could be lowered. Kirk noted

that the legislature has decided that DEQ needs to be more explicit in its terms regarding passthrough to local health departments to rectify the situation, but that TriCounty has yet to see any changes in cash allotment following the decision. Dr. Mathis then asked why the department subsidizes the cost. Darrin Brown stated that the board has never approved the proposal to make the costs 100% of the homeowner or client's responsibility. Darrin also noted that the decision of what percentage the clients pay for services is up to the board and that he would be in favor of increasing that percentage. Kirk suggested getting the percentage to 100% over the course of 5 years, but for now, to raise the fees by \$50.

- There was ample discussion about the process of deciding on fees which prompted Director Bengé and Dr. Mathis suggested creating a workgroup for additional discussion on this at a later date.

Kim Harding motioned to approve the fee schedule as presented and take it to public comment for further consideration. Tracy Killian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Fraud Risk Assessment

Bruce McKee went on to present the Fraud Risk Assessment noting that the score of 365/395 denotes that the department is at very low risk of committing fraud. He also stated that he is in the process of becoming CPA certified, which would increase scoring for next year and help to lower any fraud risk.

Irene Hansen motioned to approve the assessment and authorize the chair to sign it. Kim Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Contracts

Director Kirk Bengé went over new and amended contracts from DHHS and DEQ.

Additional Updates & Discussion

- Save the date:
 - NALBOH Annual Conference - Savannah, Georgia on October 6-8, 2025

Adjourn

Irene Hansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Tracy Killian seconded.

Tracy Killian

9-24-25