

STATE OF WYOMING)
) ss.
COUNTY OF FREMONT)

LANDER, WYOMING
OFFICE OF THE FREMONT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 16, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING

The Board of Fremont County Commissioners met in Special Session at 9:00 a.m. with the following members present: Chairman Travis Becker, Vice-Chairman Larry Allen, Jennifer McCarty, Clarence Thomas and Michael Jones. Fremont County Clerk Julie A. Freese was present.

Present in the audience were: Matt Strauss, Dr. Brian Gee, Tom Majdic, Ryan Lee, Traci Foutz, Becky Parkins, Robert Shellard, Tom Norwood, Shari Haskins, Anita Marple, Melinda Cox, Lorene Pagnoni, Penny Fahey, Kristi Green, Pat Hart, Alex Malcolm, Kassandra Weber, Rachel Fisk, Scott Goetz, Kevin Shultz, Margy Irvine, Christy Kraus, JR Oakley, Billy Meeks, Brad Meredith, Tara Berg, Angela Wilson, Mike Klaassen, Steve Baumann, Camille Woody, Mark Stratmoen, Mike Hutchison, Kathi Metzler.

County Health Officer Dr. Gee and Public Health Nurse Supervisor Becky Parkins provided an update. At this time there is one confirmed COVID-19 case at the Lander hospital, who is a patient at the Showboat Retirement Center. The Wyoming Department of Health Department has been in Lander all weekend. The assumption at this time is the virus was brought into the facility from a community member. They are waiting further testing to see where to go next. Becky stated there a wide number of options available as Dr. Gee has a lot of leverage as County Health Officer. The State recommended the closure of schools which has taken place. It is important to keep the 6' rule, stay home if at all possible, limit exposure to others at large gatherings, if you are ill stay home, etc. The Lander Mayor has put in restrictions for their staff.

Dr. Gee stated at this time there is moderate community spread and schools for the most part will be closed for two weeks and then the third week is the traditional spring break with school to resume April 6th. He expects a new Public Service Announcement later in the day from the Wyoming Department of Health. Stay at home if you are ill, avoid contact unless it cannot be avoided, check you temperature and if over 104 and have respiratory symptoms (cough) contact your physician. Wash hands frequently, use hand sanitizer, avoid touching your face, clean surfaces daily. The Centers for Medicare/Medicaid have issued strict precautions for nursing home facilities. As of yesterday the Center for Disease Control have asked for people not to participate in gatherings over 50 people for the next eight weeks. Be in the mitigation phase as a flat curve helps health care providers. Avoid foreign travel and consider the risk and personal situation before any significant travel within the US.

Clarence Thomas stated the Commission was told earlier that testing was available, and now he has been informed it is not. Dr. Gee stated testing is available but limited, it is given on a case by case basis. Commissioner Thomas asked again if other counties had been contacted to see what they are doing on the ground. He further stated the concern there is no vaccine available, that this is not like the flu. Clarence felt that gloves, masks and cleaning products should be made available to staff.

Dr. Gee stated the focus has been on super spreaders and the focus is on the prior to this initial risk of travel. There is a possibility they will never be found.

Becky Parkins stated the testing process is frustrating as there are prioritizations. She stated the importance of staying home if you are ill, the treatment is the same as for the flu. However, if elderly are involved that is another issue. Becky stated gloves do not solve all the issue, washing hands and using hand sanitizer is very effective.

Matt Strauss cautioned that even though gloves are being worn, they need sanitized and hands still need to be washed.

Julie Freese stated anybody can self-quarantine if they feel they have been in the same area as someone testing positive with the virus. If the Courthouse remains open to the public, there needs to be the 6' range but paper and money will be an issue. She recommended closing the Riverton Annex for the Clerk and Treasurer immediately.

Travis Becker stated common sense is essential during this time. He reviewed the All Fremont County Council meeting held on Saturday and stated at that time, nobody has declared a local Emergency Declaration as the State has already done so and that will open up funding opportunities. A Fremont Emergency

County Commissioners Meeting
March 16, 2020

Operation center will be activated and operated by the Incident Command System. Kim Lee had earlier expressed interest in the Incident Commander position and Travis will follow up. Undersheriff Mike Hutchison will act as Public Information Officer. We will have to wait and see what the Presidential Disaster Declaration may lead us. Services that are state mandated will be an issue (license plates, titles, taxes).

Commissioner Larry Allen stated the immediate need to determine what offices offer essential services.

Riverton Library Branch Manager Shari Haskins stated the Library Board voted to close the libraries to the public, effective today.

Museum Director Scott Goetz stated that Board has closed the Museums to the public effective today.

Weed and Pest __ Robert Shellard stated they have no seasonal staff on board at this time, staff is conducting business as usual. The District will follow whatever process the County deems necessary. The Weed and Pest District Grasshopper Management Meeting scheduled for later in the week has been cancelled.

Commissioner Mike Jones stated the Fremont County Solid Waste Disposal District is having their regular monthly meeting at this time so he does not know what protocol they will be following.

JR Oakley – It is not enough to post signs, people do not read them!

Travis Becker – don't give in to fear, keep the Courthouse open at this time and use common sense.

Clarence Thomas – we need to be transparent, need to take the threat seriously. The correct information needs to be put out there. People are not taking it seriously enough. Government need to be leadership position and take our duties seriously. Need a secure safety issue. Essential departments only need to stay open.

Jennifer McCarty – safety is paramount for employees.

Mike Jones – recommend to stay open.

Julie Freese – Walmart has issued a three phase approach that she reviewed to the group.

Tom Majdic – He cannot find any hand sanitizer anywhere. He is short staffed already. He agrees that the Riverton Annex should be closed as he cannot staff it at this time anyway. Tara Berg volunteered to give some hand sanitizers to his office.

J.R. Oakley – He does have a limited supply of hand sanitizer (23) and Julie has volunteered a small supply that the Election Department has (17).

Weed and Pest is open with regular staff, they will follow whatever the County decides to do. He asked if there was any idea of how long the Courthouse would be closed if it came to that. Dr. Gee said there is no concrete answer for that question at this time.

Pat Hart – Per their Commission liaison Larry Allen, all public gatherings have been cancelled. She has had a request for somebody to borrow chairs for a wedding and the group indicated that should not be granted.

Melinda Cox – stated we need to get better about communication.

Brad Meredith – stated the need for Sheriff Office and Ambulances to be decontaminated after use.

Mike Jones – the Incident Command Center will be formed today and information will be coming from that group on a regular basis.

Shari Haskins – The Library Board has voted to mirror action taken by the school districts in the County. Staff are working but they are closed to the public. She asked about guaranteed pay for employees if it comes to mandatory closure for staff.

County Commissioners Meeting
March 16, 2020

Julie Freese stated Phase 1 will require employees to take time off if they are ill (sick leave) or if they do not feel comfortable at work or other reasons (vacation, comp). Phase 2 will operate under that scenario as well. Phase 3 will be mandatory closure for employees so the Commissioners have stated they will get paid as usual. The Commissioners will waive the Sick Leave Policy provision that requires a doctor release after three days of sick leave, that again is waived, no doctor release required.

J.R. Oakley – the County is to remain open for business as usual, but some departments may determine they are going to decide for themselves if they are open or not.

Julie – think outside the box.

Clarence Thomas – as Elected Officials, have a responsibility and can make those decisions.

Matt Strauss – the Ambulance is handling the virus by all wearing masks, if the patient is experiencing certain symptom they are wearing gowns as well. They will follow standards put in place of fever, shortness of breath, cough. Protection of the front line responders is paramount (Police Departments, Fire Department, etc.). Masks should be adjusted appropriately for anybody using them.

Sheriff Lee stated they have a supply of masks but will need fit testing.

Traci Foutz asked about plexi glass for the customer counter spaces in the Clerk and Treasurer Office similar to what the Assessor has had done. This is not a quick fix but takes time and should be discussed moving forward from this crisis.

Larry Allen urged all meetings be cancelled if possible.

JR – Courts are business as usual as due process is required for criminal cases. Civil cases will be put aside.

Kevin Shultz – a large amount of employees working from home would cause a strain on the network system. This could cause potential problems as we don't have hardware resources at this time.

Penny Fahey – the Health Fair will be cancelled and rescheduled until the fall. She received approval to extend the date until later in the fall for new premium reduction forms and the approval that current premium reductions will stay in place until then.

Billy Meeks – had questions regarding FMLA and was asked to contact Margy for more information.

Margy Irvine – The Benefits Handbook Policy regarding a doctor release if an employee is home for three days ill was discussed. We need to trust our employees during this time.

Melinda Cox – There is a good possibility they can work remotely for their various duties.

Kathi Metzler – Any questions or complaints regarding COVID-19 should be logged. We are currently operating under the Continuity of Operation Plan and a new component for a pandemic will be added to the document.

Julie Freese – will be distributing a special voucher to be used for any COVID-19 purchase.

Larry Allen – The vouchering process will provide the County with documented costs relating to the virus.

JR – asked that any special requests be made to him directly (e-mail preferred) and not to his staff.

In closing, Travis stated Mike Hutchison is the Public Information Officer and he will be sending out press releases so that everything is coming from one voice through the County. This is very important to work through him.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.