

**KALHD Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2021**

Board Member Attendees

Aften Gardner, President
Dan Partridge, Secretary-Treasurer & KAC Representative
Jennifer Cure, District 1 Alternate (joined 10:12 am)
Paula Bitter, District 2 Representative
Tammy Von Busch, District 3 Representative
Rayna Maddox, District 4 Alternate
Lynnette Redington, District 5 Alternate
Betha Elliott, District 6 Representative (joined 10:07 am)
Arlene Doll, Member-at-Large #1 (joined 10:03 am)
Adrienne Byrne, Member-at-Large #2 (joined at 10:03 am)

Non-Board Attendees

Dennis Kriesel, KALHD
Diana Parke
Bobbi Koerperich
Erin Kibbe
Rita McKoon
Angie Kahle
Karen Winkelman
Shalei Shea
Sara Hodges
Lisa Goins, KDHE
Rebecca Adamson, KDHE
Cristi Cain, KDHE
Aaron Davis, CPHI
Renee Wagoner
Dana Rickley
Teddi Van Kam
Renee Lucas
Emily Strange
Leslie Campbell
Ladonna Reinert

Call to order

Aften called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Board roll call

Dennis ran through a roll call of online board members. There was no quorum at first. They looked briefly at the minutes until more board members joined. He then confirmed a quorum was present.

Approval of agenda

Paula moved to approve the agenda. Tammy seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of April 2021 minutes

Paula moved to approve the April 2021 minutes. Tammy seconded. Motion passed.

Monthly financial report: April 2021

Dan walked through the April 2021 financial report.

Arlene moved to receive and place on file the April 2021 financial report. Paula seconded. Motion passed.

KDHE updates

Cristi Cain gave the KDHE update.

She brought up the Kansas Workforce Assessment, last done in 2017. Should have happened in 2020 but was put off due to the pandemic. De Beaumont Foundation is doing their national assessment, PH WINS, in September for all state and local health department staff (takes 20-30 minutes to complete). KDHE wanted to do its assessment prior but want to avoid doing it at the same time as PH WINS as a priority. KDHE is ready to go. Wanted to know if best to go now or wait until Winter 2021 and asked for feedback.

Dana Rickley said the sooner the better for the KDHE assessment. Arlene agreed, as did Aften, Rayna, and Diana Parke.

Cristi moved on to the Kansas Grant Management System (KGMS). KDHE is working on the next build which would allow reports and exports by users. KDHE wants LHD feedback, ideally from small, medium, and large department perspectives. Cristi asked for volunteers to let her know if they are interested.

Aften mentioned the KALHD Informatics Subcommittee and asked Cristi if she'd talked to Aaron Davis about it. Cristi said she'd reach out to Aaron to see if the subcommittee can help.

Shalei Shea volunteered to help.

Cristi then discussed the Lougene Marsh Public Health Scholarship, and discussions with Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA). KPHA is willing to host and track the scholarship fund. An application process and promotion of the scholarship still needs to happen but Cristi said she thinks it can be developed relatively quickly, with June or July possibly viable for receiving contributions.

Cristi moved on to the Local Health Department Capacity Project (LCaP). Based on local feedback the decision is five areas of focus split around the HCC regions, other than K.C. Metro which would be merged in with the rest of the Northeast region so that there are six. Epidemiologists are already approved and the hiring process is underway. Communications specialists will also be one per region.

For data specialists KDHE is in the process of identifying who would manage them. Health equity hiring is dependent on other grant funding that is yet to be approved. Environmental health specialists have been a struggle in terms of identifying a funding source as the COVID funding sources are not seeing the link. They are looking at adding more regional public health nurses as well, with a goal to hire six more to bring the total to nine; this part is new and Cristi wanted feedback.

Aften said she'd like seeing more regional public health nurses and that it could help with mentorship and the turnover struggles; her concern is the longevity and future funding. Cristi said KDHE's initiative is to keep it going post-COVID but that is not solved yet. Cristi did indicate that conversations with a philanthropy have revealed conversations are going on at the federal level about restructuring how public health is funded.

Renee Lucas asked if the public health nurses would be able to help with any events the LHD is coordinating. Cristi felt that they would be able to help.

Shalei Shea said more public health nurses would be great but she too is concerned about funding after COVID response goes away.

Rayna asked how long the funding is guaranteed for the regional nurses. Cristi said the COVID funding is through 2024.

Arlene asked what would the qualifications be for the regional public health nurses. Cristi said they must be RNs ideally with a public health background. Cristi said while most of the other positions may end up being remote she does expect these nurses to be based in the assigned region.

Betha spoke about a favorable experience with Rebecca Adamson providing help to the LHD.

Bobbi Koerperich said it would be helpful if someone could come out in person and help and that some things are hard to learn on the phone or computer.

Renee Lucas talked about a huge youth COVID event they are planning for this Thursday and their hope to vaccinate up to 1,000 youth.

Cristi shared a map regarding the LHD losses of administrators and health officers. Leslie Campbell noted two health departments had administrators that returned to service during the pandemic. Cristi talked about some MPH project work she's doing on this topic. She wanted to know about thoughts why only one urban county lost a leader.

Aften noted that there's no anonymity in rural areas so the pressure may be higher on those administrators. Emily Strange agreed and pointed out the more specialized staff to help in the urban areas.

Arlene asked if some left because they were planning to retire versus being driven out by COVID. She also talked about the staffing differences. Cristi said it is a great point and part of the challenge is

wording things to indicate what the information does or doesn't convey, such as a retirement already planned versus an early retirement driven by COVID.

Betha noted Crawford County saw an administrator return to help.

Shalei said the job duties of administrators in bigger health departments probably greatly differ from what an administrator must do in a small or medium LHD.

Aften noted Wallace County's loss of the health officer was due to COVID.

Tammy asked if the information includes those who were let go from their position. Cristi confirmed it does but the information is only as good as what KDHE received so the circumstance of departure may not always have been known to KDHE.

Dan said he didn't think it was really about anonymity or the other speculated reasons but rather more the political environment and how different the political landscape is in the urban areas. He himself never felt anonymous during the pandemic. Aften agreed that was a good point.

Cristi then asked why those at today's meeting have stayed on the job.

Aften said she's stubborn and that this will pass and benefits of getting through this will come and she wants to be present for that. She doesn't see it as something that can really be run away from and she knows a lot about the pandemic and wants to use that knowledge.

Adrienne says her big thing is she wasn't personally threatened and she knows others who were threatened or their family was threatened.

Renee Lucas noted she is new and started during the pandemic (in September).

Arlene said at her age she didn't want to leave and start new somewhere else and felt it better to stick it out.

Dana Rickley said she'd have probably lost her staff if KDHE hadn't provided the contact tracers and disease investigators. Aften, Betha, and Jennifer Cure agreed.

Shalei said she doesn't really know why she's stayed but part of it is she didn't like the idea of leaving her staff behind and that she's relatively new to the role.

Betha noted she was much like Arlene and at her age it makes the most sense to stay in her current role.

Aften asked if KDHE has any data on support staff losses at LHDs during the pandemic. Cristi said she thought the State Formula survey was getting at it but the question wasn't phrased in the proper way to measure that. To know would require another survey. Adrienne said such a survey would be helpful. Aften agreed. Discussion ensued regarding staff retention and resiliency.

Dan said he'd be interested in a strengths-based survey focusing on things like why staff stayed.

Arlene thanked Cristi for always being there for the LHDs.

Shalei said we need a public health retreat. Something in-person, multi-day, that is focused on figuring out how we bounce back together.

Leslie Campbell asked if there is anything that could be used to help quantify staff needs in public health. Her county has kept downsizing over the years and it is a challenge to grow it back as commissioners don't understand the need.

Lynnette said she is all for a retreat but they would need to consider how to keep the offices open. Aften said a low-key conference that doesn't have a lot of stress would be nice.

Jennifer asked about tuition reimbursement for those wanting to further their education in public health as a way that might engage individuals to stay in the field.

Adrienne noted the local health officers had a retreat and it was a breath of fresh air.

Aften thanked Cristi for sticking with public health during the pandemic.

Rebecca Adamson mentioned KDHE used to have a program to certify nurses as public health nurses but maybe something like that could be brought back. Arlene liked the idea.

Discuss Concept of KALHD Donating to Lougene Marsh Scholarship Fund

Dennis noted that efforts were underway to establish a scholarship fund in former local health administrator Lougene Marsh's name through KPHA. If there is desire for KALHD to donate to the scholarship fund board action would be appropriate to determine an amount.

Aften said she is very much on board with KALHD contributing. Dana Rickley suggested a minimum of \$500. Diana Parke agreed \$500. Several questions came in about how much can be paid and the status of KALHD's budget. Dennis indicated KALHD budgetarily is in a strong place because additional dollars not budgeted for have been flowing in but to also keep in mind that the organization is still restoring cash surplus that was lost due to 2019's six-figure loss to the association. Dennis stated the association could cover a \$1,000 contribution without issue.

Arlene moved to have KALHD contribute \$1,000 to the Lougene Marsh Scholarship Fund. Paula B seconded. Motion passed.

Dennis said he would place something in the 2022 budget to do a payment next year that the board can consider, or that he would bring up the notion again during the budgeting process for the board to weigh in on. Dan suggested a round-up approach as an option that LHDs could do when paying their

KALHD dues. Dennis noted any contribution would come out of the general fund using unencumbered funds and that it wouldn't be tied to any specific grant project.

A question was raised about the number of scholarships and Cristi said that's still being worked out with KPHA.

KAC update – if any

Dan noted at the last board meeting there was a presentation by a lobbyist around ARPA funding and property tax abatement for businesses impacted by COVID and what it might mean for county property tax income. Dan suggested Dennis may explain more on it. Dennis said at least one of the bills is still before the Governor for consideration.

Dan also noted the KAC Annual Conference will be in-person this year.

Executive Director's Report

Dennis ran through his written executive director's report. Aften asked about the Mid-Year Meeting and Dennis provided some planning details.

Open discussion

Aften asked about schools and any new guidance that LHDs might need. Cristi said she'd check with Ashley Goss about any new guidance.

Aften asked if there are any new updates about the need for boosters for COVID. Dennis said Pfizer has been saying publicly they expect a booster to be needed. Adriene noted CDC has now removed the need to quarantine for those vaccinated without regard to how long ago they received the vaccine so boosters might end up not being needed. It's still unknown.

Jennifer asked about any updates on the courier service. Paula said June 1st is what the courier service told her is when they'd start. Cristi Cain said she'd contact the lab to find out when the boxes would be installed and confirming the June 1st start date.

Aften asked about if the school navigating document is going to be revised. Cristi said she'd check with Ashley.

Dennis said he is meeting with Secretary Norman on Thursday and people can email him if there are any areas of concern they'd like him to raise in the meeting.

Adrienne noted they'd like to do COVID vaccine like flu, and a desire for single-dose vials.

Dennis reminded people that hotel block needs to be reserved by Monday for the Mid-Year Meeting if people want the group rate.

Adrienne asked if anyone else is struggling with providers transition to providing vaccinations versus the LHD. Renee Lucas said yes.

Adjournment

Aften adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.