

EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
December 15, 2021
BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES

The El Paso County Board of Health met at the Centennial Hall Auditorium at 200 S. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado, on December 15, 2021. Eight Board of Health members were physically present, none were absent.

Dr. James Terbush, President, called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m. and indicated conduct of the meeting would be guided by the Robert's Rules of order.

Board of Health Members:

Dr. James Terbush, President
Doris Ralston, Vice President
Councilmember Dave Donelson
Commissioner Cami Bremer
Ted Collas
Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez, Jr.
Kari Kilroy
Dr. Richard Vu

Directors Present:

Susan Wheelan, Director – in person
DeAnn Ryberg, Deputy Director – in person
Dr. Christopher Urbina, Interim Medical Director- in person
Carolyn Gery, Development Officer- Teams
Heather Graves, Community Health Promotion Director- Teams
Brenda Heimbach, Health Services Director- Teams
Michelle Beyrle, Public Health Information Officer- in person
Jared Verner, Deputy Public Health Information Officer- in person
Dr. Tarik Walker, Strategic Initiatives and Health Equity Officer- Teams

Others Present at Regular Session:

Vicki Bennett	Ashley Busch	Lori Cleaton	Colter DeWitt	Dr. Leon Kelly
Dee Lambert	Jordan Linder	Paula Linhares	Diana May	Samantha Montmeny
Lisa Powell	Melissa Seidenberg	Nikki Simmons	Summer South	Kelsey Tillema
Nora Todd	Christian Wright	Fadi Youkhana	Haley Zachary	

Two American Sign Language Interpreters from Sign Language Network
Approximately 48 members of the public

Board Member Roll Call

See above

Approval of Agenda

Dr. Terbush entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

MOVED: by Doris Ralston seconded Kari Kilroy to approve the agenda for the December 15, 2021 meeting.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr, Terbush proposed the Board follow Robert’s Rules of Order guidelines that allow for the limiting of Board member comments or questions to three minutes on any topic and no more than 30 minutes total discussion time for any action item. He asked for Board comments and none were brought forward.

MOVED: by Doris Ralston, seconded by Kari Kilroy to limit Board member comments to 3 minutes per Board member on each subject and a discussion limit of 30 minutes total per action item.

A Roll call vote was conducted:

Councilmember Donelson- nay

Commissioner Gonzalez- aye

Commissioner Bremer- aye

Kari Kilroy- aye

Ted Collas- aye

Dr. Vu- aye

Doris Ralston- aye

Dr. Terbush- aye

Votes in favor- 7

Votes against- 1

MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY VOTE.

Board of Health Comments

Doris Ralston acknowledged and thanked Dr. Robin Johnson for her years of service as Medical Director of El Paso County Public Health. She has built many bridges and relationships and has worked tirelessly on behalf of the county’s health. She was a key leader and member of the team and will be missed. In addition, she recognized Director Susan Wheelan for her unwavering leadership during this pandemic. She personally appreciates Susan and her team for all they have accomplished this year, not only with the achievements with the pandemic, but with all Public Health responsibilities. Through teamwork and partnerships, the county has succeeded in fully vaccinating 416,000 people out of an eligible population of 679,000. She also thanked Commissioners Bremer and Gonzalez for supporting the Board of Health budget appropriations at the Board of County Commissioners meeting on December 7, 2021, particularly the \$150,000 that was part of Public Health’s 5-year critical needs budget plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners several years ago.

Dr. Terbush also thanked Dr. Johnson for her service and dedication to help protect and promote the health of the citizens of El Paso County during the most severe public health crisis in a century. He stated his personal admiration for the selfless service Dr. Johnson has displayed during her tenure at El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH).

Approval of Board of Health Minutes

Dr. Terbush stated he would entertain a motion for approval of the October 27, 2021 Board of Health Meeting minutes.

MOVED: by Kari Kilroy, seconded by Doris Ralston to ratify the minutes from the October 27, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr. Terbush stated he would entertain a motion for approval of the November 10, 2021 Special Board Meeting minutes.

MOVED: by Kari Kilroy, seconded by Commissioner Bremer to ratify the minutes from the November 10, 2021 Special Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Finance and Budget

Samantha Montmeny, Budget Supervisor with El Paso County Financial Services, provided the November 2021 Financial Summary. The finances appear very similar to what was presented last month and there are no concerns at this time. No questions were asked by the Board.

Samantha brought forward the El Paso County Subrecipient Agreement: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) contract for review and approval. This contract details reporting and compliance requirements for administration of the ARPA funding.

MOVED: by Kari Kilroy, seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez to approve signing the El Paso County Subrecipient Agreement: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) contract.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Samantha presented the 2022 Original Adopted Budget for El Paso County Public Health. Changes from the preliminary balanced budget include an overall revenue increase of \$585,358 which consists of critical needs funding and additional support for personnel from the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners as well as a Radon Grant increase. The overall expenditures estimate increased \$561,680 in personnel costs for a 3.5% additional salary/benefits Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). Total revenue is anticipated to be \$29,560,943 and expenditures to be \$29,824,157, resulting in a deficit of \$263,214. The strategy remains to utilize \$263,214 of the Fund Balance to fund Critical Need positions over the next year; however, use will still keep the Fund Balance within the Fund Balance Policy minimum range of 18-21%.

Samantha stated the next item to address was the [Resolution to Adopt and Appropriate the 2022 Public Health Budget](#).

MOVED: by Kari Kilroy, seconded by Doris Ralston to approve the Resolution to Adopt and Appropriate the 2022 Public Health Budget.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Director's Report

Director Susan Wheelan thanked Dr. Robin Johnson for her outstanding service as the El Paso County Public Health Medical Director and welcomed Dr. Christopher Urbina as the interim Medical Director for El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH). Dr. Urbina has served as EPCPH Medical Director in times that Dr. Johnson has not been available and brings significant public health experience to this position. He is a 20-year veteran of public health systems in Colorado and New Mexico and is certified in family medicine and preventative medicine. He earned a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins in 1989, his MD from University of Colorado in 1980, and his Bachelor of Science in Biology from Stanford in 1976. He serves as Medical Officer for the Pueblo Department of Public Health since 2016, served as the Executive Director for the Colorado

Department of Public Health and Environment from 2011-2013 and was the Director for the Denver Public Health Organization from 2004-2011. He will remain on contract with El Paso County Public Health until a new Public Health Medical Director is recruited and hired.

Dr. Urbina introduced himself and stated he was grateful to serve the El Paso County Public Health team.

Director Wheelan stated EPCPH had completed a special edition Annual Report inclusive of a significant number of accomplishments during 2019 and 2020. She recognized the Public Health team for their steady and dedicated work serving the community.

Director Wheelan stated that with the recent uptick in emails directed to the Board of Health, a change has been made such that all incoming emails are now going to all Board of Health members as opposed to being reviewed and routed for appropriate response by Public Health staff and the Board President. Archived emails are also available for Board member review. Director Wheelan is researching Board of Health email best practices in Colorado. She is finding other public health organizations do not have established policies and will be looking to establish and share a policy. Director Wheelan stated there are multiple options for email management. She is happy to work towards implementing a process change and will be looking for direction from the Board on how they would like emails managed.

Dr. Terbush asked if there were Board questions or comments and Board members discussed existing processes as well as options for a new policy. Board members are requested to provide feedback to Director Wheelan and a policy will be proposed in January.

Director Wheelan stated guidance to school districts will be changing as we refine mitigation practices in our schools and she introduced Deputy Director DeAnn Ryberg to provide an update.

DeAnn Ryberg stated that Public Health has been meeting routinely with superintendents, nurses, and school leadership from public, private, and charter schools. Concerns have come forward from the school leadership regarding responding to co-occurring priorities for the school environment that include physical health and safety, social emotional welfare of children, mental health impacts, and academic progress schools are charged to support. As we plan for the next phase of pandemic response, the intent is to focus on targeted and sustainable mitigation strategies that support school operations and academic progress while still providing safe and healthy environments for students. A work group was convened with the Pikes Peak Area Superintendents Association (PPASA) to help inform school guidance. Feedback was also solicited from school COVID-19 coordinators and school nurses as well as members of the Educational Alliance of Colorado representing charter schools. DeAnn highlighted one of the larger operational changes in the latest guidance is a shift in approach to quarantine. To date, quarantine has been a standard approach for close contacts in the school environment. Moving forward the processes will change to more targeted quarantine for higher risk situations. New guidance will go into effect December 18. This will allow time for training, communication, and coordination with school partners. This timing also allows for parents of students ages 5-11 to consult with physicians and make individual informed decisions regarding vaccinations.

Director Wheelan added that a mobile vaccination van has offered vaccines at locations in school District 49, District 2, and District 14 where, with parental consent, many vaccinations were provided.

Director Wheelan asked Dr. Urbina to provide an update on the Omicron variant. Dr. Urbina stated Omicron is a new variant that first appeared in Southern Africa in November, and we are continuing to learn much about the evolution of this variant of COVID-19. The Omicron variant appears to be as contagious as the Delta variant. Method of transmission is the same and it seems to cause less serious illness, though it is showing up in younger people, those who are previously vaccinated, those who have had previous infections as well as those

who are unvaccinated. Preliminary studies indicate that three doses of the Pfizer vaccine are likely to neutralize the progress of the virus. This still needs to be studied and many companies and researchers are looking at this. Dr. Urbina stated the importance of getting vaccinated. If vaccinated with two doses, it is important to receive a third dose which will help with the Delta as well as the Omicron variant. He stated all protective practices continue to be important inclusive of vaccination -- social distancing, and not going to work or school while sick.

Dr. Vu asked if someone has had a COVID-19 infection and has natural immunity to the virus, would there be additional protection if that person gets vaccinated. Dr. Urbina stated multiple studies have shown the vaccine efficacy starts to wane at about six months following vaccination. Natural immunity from previous infection also wanes so it is recommended that people who have been infected receive vaccination.

Dr. Vu asked the advantage of the booster if one is fully vaccinated. Dr. Urbina stated that studies have followed those who have been vaccinated over the last two years and what they have found is, regardless of the type of vaccine received, the vaccine efficacy wanes, as does the waning of immunities from previous infection. Adding a booster has been shown in clinical trials to increase immune protection to those who previously received two doses of vaccine.

Dr. Vu asked if he were to get the vaccine, it would protect himself from severe illness, however would it protect those people with whom he is in contact? Dr. Urbina stated that yes, the vaccine would protect contacts. It reduces the amount of infection and viral load in an individual, decreasing the likelihood of transmission. While no vaccine provides 100% protection and no previous infection provides 100% protection, receiving the vaccine does reduce transmission to close contacts.

Councilmember Donelson asked if there has been a documented case of someone who has been infected and reinfected then infecting someone else. Dr. Urbina confirmed there has. Councilmember Donelson asked for those studies to be shared with him. Councilmember Donelson stated his understanding is that viral load of a vaccinated individual can be as high as anyone else's load. Dr. Urbina is not aware of that and invited Councilmember Donelson to share his resources. Councilmember Donelson asked if anyone has died from the Omicron variant. Dr. Urbina will follow up on those numbers. Councilmember Donelson asked if the cases in the United States were in immunized or non-immunized individuals. Dr. Urbina stated that data is still being collected. Councilmember Donelson asked how long natural immunity lasts. Dr. Urbina stated studies have shown natural immunity timeframes to be very variable. There are studies that suggest the sicker you are, the longer immunity lasts. He will share his resource studies with Councilmember Donelson and they will discuss further.

Director Wheelan introduced Fadi Youkhana, EPCPH Epidemiologist, to share milestones and the latest data. Fadi made note of the county commitment to transparency with availability of the COVID-19 vaccine and data dashboards. He stated we are nearing the one-year anniversary of receiving the first vaccination in El Paso County and since that time approximately 1,000,000 doses of vaccine have been received by El Paso County residents. Presently 69% of the county's eligible population are vaccinated and 62% are fully vaccinated. The higher risk group of individuals age 60 and over are 80% fully vaccinated. On November 10, we hit the year's high on incidence, and there has been a decreasing pattern since then. Hospitalization census remains high. The capacity description right now is that hospitals are strained, they are limiting adult non-emergency procedures, and they are experiencing resource limitations. Fadi indicated that over 100,000 individuals in the county have received a booster. Summary data was provided noting cases, hospital admissions, and deaths per month. The number of deaths in November exceeded that in October. During October and November there were four deaths per day. In the last 90 days, three of every four cases have been unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, four of every five hospital admissions were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, and four of every five deaths were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated.

Dr. Vu asked if deaths were among El Paso County residents. Fadi confirmed they were. He asked if the deaths were from COVID-19 infection or if they were individuals who died with infection. Dr. Kelly may be able to provide more information. Dr. Vu asked how many deaths have been caused by the vaccine in the county. Fadi stated he believes there have been none.

Councilmember Donelson asked if we had hospital admissions broken down by age. Fadi stated that most hospitalizations and deaths continue to be among the elderly aged 60 and above, but the unvaccinated and not fully vaccinated tend to be younger by about 5-10 years. Councilmember Donelson indicated concern that a blanket treatment is being suggested rather than focusing treatment to the group at highest risk, noting death numbers of elderly compared to younger age groups. Fadi confirmed hospitalizations by age group were available on the website data dashboard with flexibility to adjust observed timeframe.

Director Wheelan added regarding the elderly population, that it is significant that about 86% of the county's elderly (aged 60 and over) have been vaccinated. Her team has partnered with long-term care facilities to provide vaccinations and supporting the higher risk populations continues to be a focus of the Public Health team.

Commissioner Gonzalez commented that he was curious about the proportion of unvaccinated versus vaccinated in those most significantly impacted in the higher age groups to better concentrate efforts to the most at risk population. Director Wheelan stated this information comes from the hospitals and she can follow-up.

Dr. Vu stated his agreement that the older individuals are at higher risk for severe disease, hospitalization, and death, and highlights this as the reason El Paso County Public Health initially prioritized that group for vaccination. As he interprets Dr. Urbina's statements, to protect the elderly from illness, he understands the additional importance of vaccinating younger age groups that are in contact with older populations.

Director Wheelan noted deaths are currently at a rate of 2.5 per day and extended condolences to those that have experienced death from COVID-19 in the community. She asked Dr. Kelly, El Paso County Coroner and Chief Medical Examiner, to present an update to the Board.

Dr. Leon Kelly stated there has been one death reported due to the Omicron variant in the United Kingdom. They have not reported if that person was vaccinated or not. Most individuals who have the Omicron infection in the U.S. have been vaccinated, as most of those individuals are traveling from other countries and many of those countries have vaccine mandates. Councilmember Donelson asked how many Omicron cases there are in the U.S. and how many are vaccinated versus unvaccinated. Dr. Kelly stated that about 80% of cases were vaccinated as those were the ones exposed to the variant. Councilmember Donelson asked if the death was an individual with Omicron or a death caused by Omicron. That information has not yet been released.

Dr. Kelly reviewed the types of deaths investigated by the coroner's officer per Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) 30-10-606. He stated most COVID-19 deaths occur in hospitals in the care of doctors and nurses and would not be reviewed by the coroner; therefore he sees only a small portion of COVID-19 deaths; however, the information from this small portion can be illuminating. He stated that he has received many questions about how death numbers are tabulated, and he indicated a COVID-19 death is identified on an individual's death certificate where COVID-19 is noted either as the underlying primary cause of death or as a significant contributor to death. In Colorado, the only individuals that can sign a death certificate are a certified physician or an elected coroner. Dr. Kelly reported on information that has come through his office only, highlighting that the El Paso County Coroner's Office is the largest in the state, seeing many deaths from area counties that operate under lay coroners who cannot perform autopsies. His data represents regional data of approximately one-third of Colorado. For the year 2020, his office saw a total of 24 COVID-19 deaths. In 2021 from El Paso Board of Health Meeting Minutes (December 15, 2021) - Page 6 of 12

County and others, the coroner's office has seen 54 total COVID-19 fatalities. Of those, 49 (91%) were unvaccinated, three (5.5%) were vaccinated and two were unknown. Comparing those data sets in the coroner population, the vaccinated averaged 72 years of age and no individuals were under age 60. In unvaccinated, average age of death was 55 years, nearly 20 years younger, with a wider age range from 31 to 88. This information is as of mid-November as autopsy reports take 4-6 weeks to complete.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked about the data indicating more deaths of younger individuals. Dr. Kelly noted this as correct in the coroner's population due to the types of cases that come through his office.

Dr. Kelly stated his population skews younger than hospitalized populations generally because most people believe younger people are not as impacted by the infection. While that is generally true, it is not always the case. Often people are trying to manage illness at home with mild symptoms for several days then deteriorate rapidly. Some are individuals that do not utilize medical systems.

Dr. Kelly reported of the 54 cases in 2021, 45 had COVID-19 as a primary/underlying cause and 9 had COVID-19 as a significant contributing factor. Mechanisms of death included pneumonia or respiratory complications, pulmonary emboli, acute renal failure, co-infection with adenovirus, and contributing drug use while ill with COVID-19. He stated most common contributors to death were obesity, cardiac disease, and chronic alcohol use. Thirty percent had no listed comorbidities.

Images were shown of healthy alveolar lung tissue compared with the tissue of someone who died of COVID-19. During autopsy, full viral panels are completed on individuals suspected of possibly dying of COVID-19 to verify presence of a variety of possible viruses. Dr. Kelly reported a movement of the virus into more rural communities indicated by an increase in numbers of individuals coming to the Coroner's Office from outside of El Paso County in the second half of 2021 (nine) compared to the first half (four). The unvaccinated are an overwhelming majority of coroner investigated COVID-19 deaths. In individuals under 60 years old, there were no deaths among vaccinated individuals through his office versus 33 deaths of unvaccinated. Regarding the questions as to whether the vaccines work and are effective, he states the answers are yes. He stated everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but he has provided the facts he has witnessed as the coroner to allow individuals to make the best decision for themselves.

Dr. Vu stated he might interpret seeing three of 54 deaths being vaccinated to mean the vaccine does not work. He asked for an explanation. Dr. Kelly stated whether you have been infected or received the vaccine the goal is to protect your system from future illness. He stated not everyone's immune system can be equipped to combat the illness, no matter the actions taken. No mitigation effort is perfect, rather it is about making good choices for yourself and your family that limit risk.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if Dr. Kelly knew if any deaths were individuals who were previously infected then died with a re-infection. Dr. Kelly stated that for those who have been infected, this is an important question as they consider whether to become vaccinated, but he states the question is essentially impossible to answer. While he could look at the state databases of those who were tested and came back as positive, and he will at the end of the year, it is not possible to tell if someone had been previously infected and not tested, therefore the data would not have clear meaning. Whether all those infected had previous infections or none of them had previous infections, vaccination would be the strategy to reduce the worst outcomes. Immunity, either from natural infection or vaccination, wanes. The best option, while not a guarantee, is to prime immune systems for exposure.

Councilmember Donelson asked the age of youngest death among his cases. Dr. Kelly stated age 31 is the current youngest age, but the age will likely be 30 by end of year. Councilmember Donelson asked if Dr. Kelly was aware of any side effects of the vaccine. Dr. Kelly indicated he has seen no fatalities from the vaccine. He

stated there have been side effects of myocarditis in young individuals and the most significant risks of vaccination are anaphylaxis and arm soreness.

Councilmember Donelson stated concern with a broad recommendation for vaccination and suggested the Board recommend the vaccine more specifically for those at serious risk from the virus.

Doris Ralston stated justification for encouraging all to get vaccinated is that the illness is very contagious and not being vaccinated to a significant degree allows for the emergence of additional variants.

Kari Kilroy asked Dr. Kelly to explain herd immunity. Dr. Kelly stated that herd immunity deals with public health and the ability for a population to control an infectious disease. Historically, herd immunity builds barriers between those who have the infection and those at risk from the infection by putting large numbers of people who have previously recovered from the infection within the population. The problem with herd immunity is that dependent upon the organism, the cost to human life can be great as we move towards enough people surviving to create that barrier and limit spread. He stated we have never previously eliminated a virus through natural immunity. We have eliminated viruses through robust vaccination campaigns. Naturally acquired immunity and vaccination limit infection, and both at a price, however the cost of having a virus run through the population is much greater than the cost of vaccination.

New Business

Dr. Terbush indicated the Board Bylaws call for an annual election of a Board President and Vice President at each December Board meeting. The Secretary remains the Director of Public Health, Susan Wheelan, and the Treasurer remains the El Paso County Treasurer.

Dr. Terbush opened the floor for nominations of officers. Doris Ralston nominated Dr. Terbush for the role of President. She feels he has done a great job and thinks continuity is important at this time. Kari Kilroy seconded the nomination. Dr. Terbush stated his term ends in 2023 and he is willing to continue to serve the office of President.

Councilmember Donelson nominated Ted Collas for role of President. Commissioner Gonzalez seconded the nomination. Ted Collas respectfully declined the nomination and stated support for Dr. Terbush for President.

The Board discussed the nomination of Dr. Terbush for the Office of President and conducted a roll call vote:

Dr. Vu- aye
Kari Kilroy- aye
Doris Ralston- aye
Commissioner Gonzalez- aye
Commissioner Bremer- aye
Ted Collas- aye
Councilmember Donelson- nay

Votes in favor- 6

Votes against- 1

Dr. Terbush will serve as President for the coming annual term.

Dr. Terbush opened the floor for nominations for Vice President. Dr. Terbush nominated Doris Ralston to hold the Office of Vice President. Doris accepted the nomination. Councilmember Donelson nominated Ted Collas

to hold the Office of Vice President, who declined the nomination and seconded the nomination for Doris Ralston at this time.

The Board discussed the nomination of Doris Ralston for the Office of Vice President and conducted a roll call vote:

Dr. Vu- aye
Kari Kilroy- aye
Doris Ralston- aye
Commissioner Gonzalez- nay
Commissioner Bremer- aye
Ted Collas- aye
Councilmember Donelson- nay
Dr. Terbush- aye

Votes in favor- 6

Votes against- 2

Doris Ralston will serve as Vice President for the coming annual term.

Resolutions

Dr. Terbush stated there are three resolutions on the agenda for this meeting. The 2022 Sunshine Resolution and the Board of Health 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule will be reviewed first, followed by the Resolution in Support of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccines after a period of public comment.

Dr. Terbush read into the record the [2022 Sunshine Resolution](#).

MOVED: by Dr. Terbush, seconded by Doris Ralston to approve the 2022 Sunshine Resolution.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr. Terbush read in the record the [Resolution for the Board Health 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule](#).

MOVED: by Dr. Terbush, seconded by Kari Kilroy to approve the Resolution for the Board of Health 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr. Terbush stated the Resolution in Support of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccinations would be read, then public comments would be received. Public comment would be limited to one minute each. Individuals should state their name, affiliation, and if they are a resident of the county.

Councilmember Donelson asked to move that members of the public be allowed to speak for three minutes each. Commissioner Gonzalez requested the number of individuals signed up for Public Comment. Approximately 40 people had signed up to comment.

MOVED: by Councilmember Donelson, seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez that members of the public be allowed to speak for three minutes each.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilmember Donelson recommended reading of the resolution be followed by public comment. The Board would then discuss the resolution and the vote would follow. The Board members agreed this process was acceptable.

MOVED: by Dr. Terbush, seconded by Doris Ralston to remove the previous Resolution in Support of COVID-19 Vaccinations from the table and readdress it.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr. Terbush indicated that the Board has had an opportunity to review and suggest revisions to the Resolution in Support of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccinations three times since the meeting on November 10 and the resolution that follows is a result of those revisions.

Dr. Terbush read the [Resolution in Support of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccinations](#) into the record.

Public Comment

Jared Verner, Deputy Public Health Information Officer, indicated people would be called for comment in the order they signed up. Individuals who were not signed up but were present at the meeting may speak after the list of names has been called. Thirty-four members of the public commented.

MOVED: by Dr. Terbush, seconded by Kari Kilroy to listen to public comment uninterrupted until all public comment is complete before bringing the topic to the dais for discussion.

MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY VOTE.

Those commenting in favor of the resolution included: Dr. Erik Wallace, Dr. Martha D' Ambrosio, Lisa Noll, Shane McCarthy, Randy Royal, Paolo Barr, Tom McCarthy, MaryBeth Thomas, Meredith Jones (on Teams), Katy Haddock (on Teams), Dr. Sydney Rubino (Telephone)

Those commenting in opposition to the resolution included: Jim Zietlow, Kristy Davis, Chaim Goldman, Denise Kmilik, Tanya Regan, George A., Jeeny Rush, Karen Field, Alex Cullen, Charity McPike, John Giudice, Tim O'Connor, Anna Mitchell, Annie McCarthy, Laurie VanDermost, Kimberly Drosdzik, Mary Louise Fiddler, Pam Heyler, Andrea Nagy, Steven Spencer, Jennifer Bertram, Kathy Cleary (on Teams), Andrea Mercier (Telephone).

Meeting was recessed at 1:20 pm for a 30-minute break. Online and telephone comments were heard immediately following the break (noted above).

Dr. Terbush noted that Commissioner Bremer had an urgent need to leave the meeting and apologizes for her absence.

Before moving into Board discussion of the resolution, Commissioner Gonzalez asked for Public Health clarification around VAERS data and perception of that information. Dr. Urbina stated that VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Report System) is one part of the vaccine safety regulations that are required for all vaccines. It is an online system for reporting adverse effects. Reports can be submitted for any condition that someone experiences that is believed to be vaccine related. Anyone can report adverse events associated with any medication or vaccine and reporting is a very common practice. The FDA and CDC look for trends in the VAERS data, evaluate these trends, and conduct studies to understand if certain effects are associated with the vaccine or medication.

Dr. Terbush initiated the Board discussion stating the resolution is only concerning voluntary vaccines. He stated there is nothing in the resolution about imposing a mandate. The Board of Health and the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners have not and will not support mandates. He is optimistic that we are on the downward slope of this virus such that by the spring of 2022 COVID-19 will be a part of the background of viral diseases we encounter throughout our lives. He is not optimistic that this is the very last time we will see a novel virus sweep across the planet killing or sickening millions and he stated the lessons we learned from COVID-19 today will stay with us into the future.

Dr. Vu stated that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and save lives. He is in full support of this resolution. He wishes to emphasize the intent of the resolution is to support COVID-19 vaccination while recognizing vaccination as voluntary.

Kari Kilroy stated she has listened to comments and spoken with trusted contacts in the medical field, and she wholeheartedly supports this resolution.

Doris Ralston stated that prevention is a cornerstone of public health and she believes it is a Board of Health duty to advocate for and support policies and measures that positively impact the health of the population of El Paso County. She thinks side effects are minimal and vaccines save lives and prevent hospitalizations. She supports the resolution.

Commissioner Gonzalez thanked those that came out today and at the meeting in November to discuss this item. He also appreciates the Board and the work done by the community to mitigate COVID-19. He has been supportive of people making vaccination decisions for themselves and their families, however his perspective today on the resolution remains that it is an effort to counter the County Commissioners who stated opposition to state and federal vaccination mandates. He stated this resolution has become a greater polarizing item than most expected and to him it remains tied to that original pushback at the Board of County Commissioners. He recommends tabling the resolution as he will not be able to support the resolution put forth today.

Ted Collas thanked those that came to speak regarding the resolution. He is personally against vaccine mandates and would not support a resolution requiring mandates. He stated intentional language changes based on the comments heard at the last meeting were added to the resolution to support vaccinations as voluntary and encourage thoughtful consideration as individuals make their decisions. He supports the resolution.

Councilmember Donelson thanked everyone who attended and spoke to the resolution. He has given thousands of vaccines with his experience in the military. The vaccines then were different, and the recipients were adults. His concern is the broad recommendation that everyone get vaccinated, including those that are as young as 5 years of age. He read an email sent to Dr. Terbush stating his opinion that he does not think the resolution will influence anyone to get vaccinated, but it will increase distrust of the Board of Health. He feels VAERS data gives reason for reconsidering a blanket recommendation of the vaccines by the Board. He asks that the resolution recommending the vaccine for everyone not be passed, but that more thoughtfulness be used to separate out young children, and those that have had heart attacks previously.

MOVED: by Councilmember Donelson, seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez to amend the resolution to state the Board of Health does not and will not support COVID-19 mandates.

A Roll Call vote was conducted:

Dr. Vu- nay

Kari Kilroy- nay

Doris Ralston- nay

Commissioner Gonzalez- aye
Ted Collas- nay
Councilmember Donelson- aye
Dr. Terbush- nay

Votes in favor- 2
Votes against- 5

MOTION FAILED TO CARRY BY MAJORITY VOTE.

A Roll Call vote was conducted on the motion to approve the Resolution in Support of Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccinations:

Dr. Vu- aye
Kari Kilroy- aye
Doris Ralston- aye
Commissioner Gonzalez- nay
Ted Collas- aye
Councilmember Donelson- nay
Dr. Terbush- aye

Votes in favor- 5
Votes against- 2

MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY VOTE.

Public Comment

Dr. Terbush stated the floor was open for any additional public comments.

Additional Comments were made by: Chaim Goldman

MOVED: by Doris Ralston, seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez to adjourn.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Adjournment at approximately 2:30 pm

Next Board of Health meeting

The next Board of Health meeting will be:
Wednesday, January 26, 2022 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., located at Snow Conference Room at 1675 Garden of the Gods Rd.

15 December 2021- BOH/MSeidenberg