

**Minutes of the Nebraska City Board of Health
February 1, 2021
Rowe Memorial Public Safety Complex**

The Nebraska City Board of Health (BOH) met in regular session inside the Rowe Memorial Public Safety Complex, 1518 Central Avenue, Nebraska City, NE at 5:00 PM on Monday, February 1, 2021. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by posting in at least three public places, the designated method for giving notice, as shown by the Certificate of Posting Notice attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in advance to the media, the Mayor and BOH members of this proceeding and said meeting was open to the public.

Mayor Bryan Bequette called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. The Mayor publicly stated to all in attendance that he is required by law to inform the public that a copy of the Open Meetings act is posted on the wall to your right as you come in the door of the Rowe Building Gary White Memorial room. This meeting is being recorded. If you are present and wish to speak please come to the podium and state your name, address, and speak directly towards the microphone the entire time you are addressing the Board. We also have speakers joining the meeting via the zoom platform; we now have an Executive Order from the Governor that allows Board members to be present and voting via Zoom as well. If you are listening in via the zoom platform please keep your microphone muted; if you wish to make a comment, please click on the "Raise Hand" button, for those joining us through the call-in feature, please press *9 (star nine). This will notify our moderator; Andrew Snodgrass (A. Snodgrass), there is a comment from one of our virtual attendees. When you speak please state your name and address.

Upon roll call the following answered present: Wendy Snodgrass, David Lacy, Gregg Goebel, Dr. Brad Vasa, and Mayor Bryan Bequette. The following City Officials were present via zoom and in person: City Administrator Lou Leone, Construction and Facility Manager Marty Stovall, City Attorney Drew Graham, Utilities General Manager Jeff Kohrs, Library Director Donna Kruse, Finance Commissioner Gloria Glover and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Patricia Moore.

Mayor Bequette noted there are 2 items on the agenda this afternoon. The 1st item of business is the approval of the BOH January 18, 2021 meeting minutes. Wendy Snodgrass moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 18, 2021 as provided. Gregg Goebel seconded the motion. With no further discussion, upon roll call the following voted YES. Dr. Brad Vasa, David Lacy, Gregg Goebel, Wendy Snodgrass, and Mayor Bryan Bequette. Voting NO: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Bequette noted the 2nd item on the agenda is discussion/action regarding a status update on the CoVid-19 situation; potential tasks, logistical needs and communication.

Mayor Bryan Bequette asked Grant Brueggeman, Director of the Southeast District Health Department for an update. Brueggeman advised the Southeast Health District has a cumulative case count at 3,373 cases with 443 of those in the last 30 days. He advised we have seen a fairly consistent downward trend in the past few months with an incident rate of new disease at 18.5/100,000 on a 7 day average; last time we were below 20 consistently would have been the end of September. Otoe County specifically has 1,213 total cases; 179 of those in the past 30 days. The Counties current incident rate is at 28.6/100,000. Last time the County was in that range consistently was end of September, early October. The case count from last week, ending Saturday, for the District we had 68 total cases. He would caution by saying even though we are seeing lower case counts, etc. we still need to continue the non-pharmaceutical interventions that we've been practicing since last year. The last thing he reported is on the vaccination front. As of this morning, the District has allocated 4,552 total vaccines, 1st and 2nd doses across all 5 Counties. There have been 1,253

people that have received the full series of the vaccine course which equates to about 4% of the entire population.

Mayor Bequette asked for an update from Dr. DeFreece of CHI St. Mary's. Dr. DeFreece advised he echoes what Grant has said, they are seeing decreased cases and overall the trend is down. They have seen a significant decrease on the TestNebraska site so they've actually backed off the testing to 2 times a week from 8:30-9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays; frees up staff to see patients. They continue to work closely with the health department on the vaccination process; they have a fairly good system worked out now where the health department is registering patients and delivering the list to them to be able to vaccinate based on the supply they receive. The system seems to be working well and has taken the load off of the clinic to a certain extent. They will be utilizing the State system that Governor Ricketts has promoted; the health department has done a great job in building their system with the State system together. They would love to have more vaccine but that is out of their control. Overall things are going very well. As Grant said and he is sure Dr. Vasa will say as well it's not the right time to let off in regards to the mask wearing and the hand washing with this secondary side effect if you will. With that, we have seen very minimal if no flu as well as your typical cold virus. Good health practices not only prevent CoVid but they prevent other potentially serious diseases. Not a time to let off even though things have been relaxed as you'll hear later in the meeting. Suggests all take personal responsibility and do the right thing for our fellow citizens.

Mayor Bequette asked question of Dr. DeFreece or Brueggeman, if I'm 65 years old, I haven't contacted anybody and nobody has contacted me, what am I supposed to do if I want a vaccine. Wendy Snodgrass advised they are supposed to sign up on the State website. Dr. DeFreece noted one of his big concerns is how do we reach those who don't have computer access and have a hard time navigating the phone. He advised that a couple last week fell through the system on this front. He has great concern for the elderly vulnerable as well as the minority second language population; he is concerned this population will be missed and notes any thoughts from the City would be greatly appreciated. Brueggeman advised he has 4 staff in his office who are dedicated to answering phone calls, helping people get registered, so if there is somebody in the community who is having a hard time navigating the online platform please have them call the Southeast Health District and they will transfer them to one of those lines that are being monitored. In the event nobody is able to answer due to the call volume just have them leave a message with their name and phone number; we will then call them back as time allows. We have had a backlog of voicemails but are working through them as quickly as possible. They have translated a lot of their messaging for the registration process into Spanish that went live Friday. He does have a call out to another partner to help reach the English second language groups; she will help register some of those populations.

Mayor Bequette asked of Grant are any of your phone operators bi-lingual. Brueggeman advised the ones in the office, no. However, on their Spanish translated forum, the number that goes straight to their office is directed towards one of their bi-lingual volunteers. Mayor Bequette asked additional question, if someone doesn't have a computer device, they don't really want to get out of their house; can they get registered over the phone. Brueggeman advised yes they will register them at their office, over the phone. Mayor Bequette asked further question, right now if they go on the State website, the numbers published there he's assuming will take them to State assistance but if they go to the Southeast Health District website that will take them to your numbers. Brueggeman advised it will have their office numbers when they call; there will be phone prompts to get them to the correct extension or we will help register locally. Or if someone is computer savvy, the links they have on their communications will be directed to the State's site, it will direct them to their State's registration platform as well. Bequette asked if they need help registering it is just your regular office number. Brueggeman advised yes but they will be prompted to dial the appropriate extension (105, 109 or 110). Per prompt of Mayor Bequette, the TestNebraska dates/times are reiterated by Dr. DeFreece.

Mayor Bequette asked Dr. Vasa for an update. He added he believes we are on the right trend; if you look at the numbers they are definitely going down but it's still out there, we still see it in the emergency room. The number of ICU beds is becoming less of an issue, there are less people in the hospital, all the indicators are headed in the right direction but it's still there. He advised a couple of weeks ago we are all getting sick of wearing the masks but we still really need too at this point. He believes if everyone were to throw their masks out today we would see another spike. The message is until we get people immunized we need to keep wearing masks.

Mayor Bequette prompted Police Chief David Lacy for an update. He advised there are no changes for the Police Department, we continue to precaution the officers to use social distancing, answer calls via the phone if they can, and to wear masks when they do have to meet with people. No problems in last couple of weeks with staff being healthy.

Mayor Bequette asked Gregg Goebel for an update. Goebel advised the County is still encouraging everyone who comes into the building to wear masks. The current numbers for States in close proximity are as follows: MO has 459,597 positive cases, 6,748 deaths; IA has 319,812 positive cases with 4,906 deaths; KS has 276,668 positive cases with 3,809 deaths. All 3 States are showing the same trends as Nebraska in that the numbers are slowly going down.

Mayor Bequette asked Wendy Snodgrass if she has an update from the State. Wendy advised DHHS did launch their website late last week to have people register for the vaccine. If people register on either their local health district or the State, they don't need to register on both; it's one or the other. Those who are 18 to 65 with a high risk medical condition are asked to register with the State to best insure proper prioritization in Phase 1B. DHHS held a Facebook live session last week to discuss the vaccine registration website and ask questions; that has been archived on the DHHS Facebook page. She added there is one change to the Dashboard; it was updated this past Saturday to report daily positive cases based on the date the test was taken instead of the lab reporting date. Mayor Bequette asked is that from this point forward or has it shifted all of the dates. Wendy advised forward she would assume.

Mayor Bequette asked Lou Leone for an update from the City. Lou advised status quo for the City.

Mayor Bequette asked Donna of the Library for an update. She advised she has been in conversation with the health district last week and they are looking to do a push for Libraries and making hours known for access to computers. They have been working towards trying to get a regular computer station set up which they've now done. Then, they got a notice on Friday that it was changing over to the State system. She just wants to confirm you can still sign on and register at the district site but it's just putting you into the State system; there is no longer a district registration, is that correct. Brueggeman advised that's correct. She further asked do we have any idea on how long it takes to get through the State application. She advised she noticed you have to have your medical info and things like that. Brueggeman advised he hasn't filled it out so is unsure on her question. Kruse advised further she was told with the district application it would only take a few minutes; she is asking due to reservation concern for second computer station, it was just going to be for vaccine registrations. If the State system is the only one available now and it looks more in depth than what she was told about the District's application, they will start taking reservations for both computers. She is hoping they can get done in 30 minutes and have their information with them. The limit is 1 per day for 30 minutes up to 5 pages of printing. She asked of Brueggeman do they need a number after you get through the State application. Brueggeman advised not at this time. Kruse advised they are asking when folks come in to wear masks and for all to use hand sanitizer; they will clean after they are finished with the computers. They are also advising in print and if they call in, if they are not tech savvy to bring a family member/household member with them who is. She advised

they will work on getting a second station up in the Kimmel Gallery; they are not doing browsing at this time however. As of today they have recommenced having computer access.

Mayor Bequette prompted A. Snodgrass for a Rescue update. He advised he wanted to reiterate what Chief Lacy said earlier, on the Fire/EMS side, those who respond to a call are still mandated to wear a mask; we are highly encouraging at least on EMS side to wear the N95 mask for the majority of the runs. He advised no staff is sick to the best of his knowledge. He further added several meetings ago we were at 40% CoVid rate for calls of service, now we are less than 10% of calls. They have seen a big fall off over the last month or so with their responses for CoVid positive cases. He believes they are 2-3 a week now.

Mayor Bequette asked Jeff Kohrs to provide an update for Utilities. Kohrs advised from the operations standpoint we are the same; however, they do have two employees who are in quarantine right now as a precaution.

Mayor Bequette prompted Graham for an update as he moved the agenda to tasks. Graham advised the State has moved to green level of restrictions so as of the 28th we have a new DHM, #19 (effective January 30 through February 28); again, they just set it for the month. The prior DHM removed almost all of the restrictions. The changes now are for extra-curricular youth activities which are at 100% for indoor capacity; any indoor gathering is also at 100% of the rate of capacity so no limitation there. No restriction, adherence to the State guidance is strongly recommended. Mayor Bequette made clear that the Opens Meeting Executive order should remain in effect through the end of April, 2021. Graham advised yes. He further advised the City has adopted an Emergency Sick leave policy, which we discussed previously; it has now been adopted and effective back to January 1, 2021 to go ahead and cover all City employees through the end of March. It represents one full year of that coverage.

Mayor Bequette asked A. Snodgrass for a logistics update. He advised we have not had any concerns for several months. To the best of his knowledge all are handling through their own departments and are doing well. He advised at the last meeting Patty reported about the Cares Act reimbursement; he added the Police, Fire, and EMS portion is what we have received already, the add on where they did the second round and added dispatchers, correction officers, that is still pending and has not been acted upon yet. Contact had no estimated date on when the State was going to move forward with that.

For communications, Mayor Bequette noted at the last meeting we discussed going to monthly meetings by meeting the 1st Monday of the month. So for March, that would be March 1, 2021. Mayor Bequette advised he was unable to participate in the last State teleconference meeting due to conflicts. Gregg Goebel advised the next Unified Command meeting will be March 2.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 PM.



Patricia Moore, Deputy City Clerk-Treasurer