

MASON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
January 9, 2007

Attendance: Board Members Lynda Ring-Erickson; Ross Gallagher; Tim Sheldon.

1. Commissioner Tim Sheldon called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.
2. **Cmmr. Ring Erickson/Gallagher moved and seconded to adopt the agenda as published. Motion carried unanimously. S-aye; G-aye; RE-aye.**
3. Correspondence – None
4. **Cmmr. Ring Erickson/Sheldon moved and seconded to adopt the regular meeting minutes of November 14, 2006 as presented. Motion carried unanimously. S-aye; RE-aye; G-abstained.**
5. Administrative Issues
 - 5.1 **Cmmr. Ring Erickson/Sheldon moved and seconded to elect Commissioner Gallagher as the 2007 Chair of the Board of Health. Motion carried unanimously. S-aye; G-aye; RE-aye**
 - 5.2 **Cmmr. Ring Erickson/Sheldon moved and seconded to adopt the 2007 Board of Health meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried unanimously. S-aye; K-aye; RE-aye.**
 - 5.3 Departmental Name Change - Ms. Betty Wing, Director of Central Operations, stated the Health Department did not need to have a name change. The correct department name is already listed in the Mason County Code. Ms. Wing acknowledged what the department called themselves was different than what its official title is. She stated all letterhead would be changed to department's correct title.
 - 5.4 Betty gave an update on the hiring of the Health Department Director. She announced that after a careful review of the applicants, she felt the position needed to be re-posted.
 - 5.5 Health Officer's Report – Dr. Yu presented the current health issues relevant to Mason County including information about the arrival of influenza in Mason County and the locations that the vaccines are available.

Dr. Yu asked if the Board would like her to hold off on sending out invitations to join a Health Advisory Board until a new department director is hired.

The Board agreed they would like to hold off on recruiting for the Health Advisory Board until a Health Director is hired.

6. Personal Health Issues
 - 6.1 Ms. Lydia Buchheit, Interim Personal Health Department Manager, gave an update on the Health Challenge.
7. Environmental Health Issues
 - 7.1 Oakland Bay and North Bay – Mr. Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish, along with John Konovsky, Squaxin Island, sent a letter to the Commissioners expressing their concerns about water quality in North Bay and Oakland Bay.

Mr. Dewey of Taylor Shellfish, spoke about his concerns with the North Bay sewage spill that occurred in December. His concern was that he had not been notified in time to stop the harvest and inadvertently had shipped much of that product out to many locations as Christmas orders. He stated that when a product has to be recalled it is damaging to his company's reputation. He requested the County find an engineering solution to resolve the design failure that allows the pump to fail. He also requested that in the future if a spill occurs his company is notified immediately.

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Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated that she had met with Mr. Tom Moore, Utilities & Waste Deputy Director, several times over the past year about repairs needed at the North Bay sewer system and has discussed several solutions that may help. Mr. Moore is compiling the costs associated with the repairs and will be seeking grants to make the repairs.

Mr. John Konovsky, Environmental Program Manager at Squaxin Island Tribe, stated he was in attendance on behalf of Andy Whitener, Natural Resource Director at Squaxin Island Tribe, and the Vice Chair of the Tribal Council, as they are currently both away from the office. Mr. Konovsky expressed concerns with the sewage spill and how it effects the tribe. He discussed Oakland Bay and how it is a huge resource for commercial shellfish industry and the tribe. He encouraged the Board to think in immediate and long term to ensure that shellfish can be harvested in Oakland Bay for many generations to come. He urged the Board to form a shellfish protection district, and to designate marine recovery areas.

Dr. Yu reflected on the letter and the information shared with her by Mr. Dewey and Konovsky. She expressed her concerns and the actions of the Environmental Health Department and discussed a solution that would expedite communication and actions taken when an emergency occurs. Dr. Yu felt it would be in the best interest of the Board to meet with the Department of Ecology to discuss the permitting and placement of large onsite systems and sewage treatment plants on large bodies of water, such as North Bay.

Cmmr. Sheldon recognizes action needs to be taken to stop the contamination of the waters. Community meetings need to be held right away and enforcement needs to be moving forward to stop the sewage flow into the waterways.

Dr. Yu questioned the policy level that the Board would like to see.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated that community education meetings need to be held. The property owners need to cooperate and enforcement actions need to be taken in order to protect the water and solve the reoccurring issues.

Dr. Yu stated she would work with Mr. Konovsky on how to present the data at community meetings in a non-scientific way in order for them to understand it.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson stated the community meetings are great but enforcement needs to be upheld. In the past two years evidence and documentation has been collected. Now it is time to use enforcement on those that have been educated and their systems have not been corrected. She talked about people in North Bay, Allyn and Russlewood paying \$80-\$85 per month for sewer fees, which is a monthly contribution to keep those bodies of water clean in order to have recreation, beauty and a very viable industry. To expect less of others because they are in a more rural area, or on a different kind of system, is not an acceptable of any community.

Cmmr. Ring Erickson requested a through briefing with staff reports with information on protection districts and any other options, recognizing all pros and cons of each approach.

Dr. Yu stated she would have staff and prepare the reports requested.

Cmmr. Gallagher questioned what had been done to resolve the lack of communication to the Department of Health during the power outage.

Mr. Tom Moore, Deputy Director of Utilities and Waste Management, stated he was unable to get to the North Bay sewage alarm because fallen trees had blocked all access to the sewage plant. At the time of the spill there were 56 utility alarms going off at the same time, and because the access was blocked he had worked on the other alarms until the road had been opened.

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Mr. Moore said the situation at Allyn was unique because it was a mechanical error caused by debris from the storm. He has found a solution, which will allow for an additional six hours of operation during a mechanical error.

Mr. Moore discussed the communication break down that occurred during the storm and a solution in the event a storm like that happens again.

7.2 Environmental Health Waivers/Variations were provided to the Board for information only.

8. Public Comment –

Mr. Bob Woolridge, Shellfish and Water Protection employee at the State Department of Health, clarified the closure of Oakland Bay and the management of it. The testing showed only two areas where human sewage was identified, one being the North End and the other being Chapman Cove. The Bay is managed by the amount of rain. If there is more than an inch of rain the Bay is closed for five days. The reason there is a five-day closure is to provide time for the shellfish to take in and also purge the pollutants. He feels confident under that management plan that safe shellfish are being sold and that the public is not at risk when eating shellfish from Oakland Bay.

Ms. Chris Hempleman, Department of Ecology, thanked the Board for their support. Her concern is that the emphasis always goes to the shellfish, when in fact the amount of pollutant in the water is a health risk for anyone in the water.

Mr. Steve Bloomfield, shellfish grower in the Oakland Bay area thanked the Health Department and the Squaxin Island Tribe for their support in keeping the water clean, not only for the shellfish, but also for the people that swim in it.

9. Public Hearing

10. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

HEALTH OFFICER

Diana T. Yu, MD MSPH
Mason County Health Officer

BOARD OF HEALTH
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Ross Gallagher, Chair

Tim Sheldon, Commissioner

Lynda Ring Erickson, Commissioner