



OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

Knox County Health Department • 140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917-6413

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES Special Called Meeting, June 17, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Held virtually via Zoom

Present:

Martha Buchanan, MD, Secretary
Dianna Drake, PharmD
Jack E. Gotcher, Jr., DDS, Chair
Maria Hurt, DNP
Glenn Jacobs, Knox County Mayor
Patrick O'Brien, MD
Marcy Souza, DVM
Lisa Wagoner, RN; representing Superintendent Bob Thomas, Knox County Schools

Absent:

James Shamiyeh, MD

Others Attending:

KCHD: Mark Miller, Katharine Killen, Charity Menefee, Dena Mashburn, Kelsey Leyrer
Wilson, Kevin Parton, Jennifer Valentine, Danielle Davis and
Narda Cappuccilli (recorder)
Knox County: Brad Hair, Zack Webb, Daryl Hobby, Myers Morton, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Jack Gotcher called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Dr. Gotcher announced the presence of a quorum, following roll call by recorder, Narda Cappuccilli. Dr. James Shamiyeh was absent.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions of all meeting participants:

- Jack Gotcher, Jr., DMD, PhD, University Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, Professor, The Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine
- Dr. Dianna Drake, PharmD, President, District 2, Tennessee Valley Pharmacists Association

- Lisa Wagner, RN, Health Services Supervisor, Knox County Schools, representing Superintendent Bob Thomas, Knox County Schools
- Dr. Patrick O'Brien, Col, USAF, MC, FS, Chief Medical Review Officer, NGB/SGOH, EMS Medical Director, City of Knoxville Fire Department
- Dr. Marcy Souza, DVM, MPH, MPPA, DABVP (Avian), DACVPM, Associate Professor, Director of Veterinary Public Health, University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine
- Narda Cappuccilli, MS, Executive Assistant to Dr. Martha Buchanan, Knox County Health Department
- Dr. Maria Hurt, DNP, MSN, FNP-BC, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee, College of Nursing
- Dr. Buchanan, MD, KCHD Senior Director and Public Health Officer, Knox County Health Department, Board of Health Secretary
- Glenn Jacobs, Mayor of Knox County
- Daryl Hobby, Senior Information Technology Project Manager, Knox County
- Katharine Killen, Deputy Senior Director of Strategy, Knox County Health Department
- Dena Mashburn, MS, RN, APN, Director of Nursing, Knox County Health Department
- Zack Webb, Chief Technology Officer, Knox County
- Myers Morton, Esq., Knox County Law Office
- Bryan Hair, Chief of Staff, Knox County

IV. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Dr. Gotcher stated the purpose of the meeting is to review and consider how Knox County reopens following COVID-19 closures at the county and state levels.

V. BACKGROUND OF REOPENING PLANS

Dr. Martha Buchanan thanked everyone for their participation and guiding the board through making these important decisions to be determined for our community, during this pandemic, which is new territory of all of us.

The basics of a reportable infectious disease that the Knox County Health Department responds to, including identifying cases and contacts and placing those people in isolation or quarantine, is not new. The all-encompassing impact of COVID-19 has had on our community is what is new. This is an outbreak that touches every aspect of our lives and requires unprecedented decisions during extraordinary times. The very difficult decision to shutdown was not nearly as complicated a process as reopening. Dr. Buchanan, with the assistance of Mr. Buuck from the Knox County Law Department, wrote the Stay At Home order. Once issued, the health department began working on the data-driven reopening process. In order to provide guidance for our community, a taskforce or coalition of community members who have expertise the health department does not have, including the business community, was assembled. Bringing together stakeholders is a proven method in public health work and is a standard practice required for national public health accreditation. Dr. Buchanan stated that the

local plan is a very comprehensive guide for reopening that she stands behind. Through executive order from Governor Lee, he gave six metropolitan areas, including Knox County, permission to have their own plans. The plans could be more or less restrictive than state guidance, so the health department moved forward with the taskforce model. After several meetings, the health department was informed in mid-May, that we needed to sunshine and open the taskforce meetings to the public. We attempted to do so, but prior to the meeting discovered that it had not been done properly. Therefore, the meeting was cancelled in the interest of transparency. Upon further discussion with the Knox County Law Department, the health department was advised that the Board of Health needed to be the body that reviews and approves any guidance on reopening since it is a policy under the current declaration of an emergency in our state. This was a change from the historic precedence for the Board of Health, which had always acted in an advisory role and not as a policy-making body. The Knox County Health Department has not been a policy-making body either, so this was new territory for us as well.

Dr. Buchanan stated her purpose for calling today's meeting is to leave this meeting with a clear path on how to provide guidance on reopening that helps reduce the risk and minimizes the impact of COVID-19 in our community.

Dr. Gotcher requested a brief synopsis from Dr. Buchanan regarding the reopening plans from the state, assessable at this link:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/governorsoffice-documents/covid-19-assets/Pledge_General.pdf and from the local plan, assessable at this link:

<https://covid.knoxcountyttn.gov/reopening.html>. Dr. Buchanan sent these links to the reopening plans prior to the meeting for everyone to review as both are lengthy documents that provide guidance. One reopening plan was created locally, and the other plan was created by the economic recovery group at the state level. Some overarching guidance for the community about wearing face masks, washing hands and staying home if you are sick, are all in both reopening plans. There is some specific business guidance for specific types of businesses. There are situations where the Tennessee Pledge is less restrictive than the local plan and other places where the local plan is less restrictive than the state plan. The local plan is based on benchmarks, similar to what the state is using to guide them including case counts, public health preparedness, hospital preparedness, deaths and testing.

Dr. Marcy Souza thanked Dr. Buchanan and the Health Department for their work and impressive low number of cases compared to other metropolitan areas. She asked how the health department plans to use these five benchmarks moving forward.

Dr. Buchanan referred to the health department's website, with current information as of 6/11/20: https://covid.knoxcountyttn.gov/case-count.html#reopening_benchmarks

Dr. Buchanan started by explaining the reason the health department developed more than one benchmark: to ensure decisions are well-informed and based on a variety of information and data. Public health decisions don't happen in a bubble, they happen in

the community. The health department knows that the decisions they make have economic and life impacts for everyone. The first benchmark is sustained reduction or stability in new cases for 14 days. When the benchmark was developed, the health department reviewed the caseload and expected it to increase as the community began reopening. For this benchmark, the health department closely examines the trend, whether it is sharply going up, leveling off, etc. The second benchmark is community-wide sustained and increased diagnostic testing with consistent or decreased test result reporting turnaround time. When the health department looks at testing capacity, they look at the trend as well as how quickly test results are available, which has improved with time. An important factor in reopening is that public health officials expected cases to increase and wanted a fairly quick turnaround time to support effective contact tracing. The third benchmark is sustained or increased public health capability. The health department recently refocused this benchmark on how quickly the Epi support team can contact positive cases and their contacts; as this is a key component to breaking the chain of transmission. In contact tracing, the health department informs the positive COVID-19 person of their status and instructs them on safety procedures; they also inquire who else they had been in contact with. Then the health department notifies the case's close contacts to provide guidance. The fourth benchmark is health care system capabilities remain within current and forecasted surge capacity. Hospital capacity is one of the reasons we initially shut things down. This allowed hospitals to build their capacity and surge plans. Knoxville is very fortunate that all our local hospitals work together and coordinated a shared surge plan. We are well within our current hospital capacity. The fifth benchmark is sustained or decreased COVID-19 related death rate for identified positive or probable cases. We have been very fortunate that we have as few deaths as we've had in Knox County, but that can change. The death rate has been stable.

To date, we've considered all these factors together to help decide how we as a community, move forward or not. We moved into Phase Two, because the benchmarks supported it. At last Friday's update, the health department noted that overall the benchmarks were looking good with the exception of case counts, which as expected, had gone up. Dr. Buchanan stated that they are grateful that we are not seeing the large spikes that other counties in Tennessee are experiencing. Again, it is a combination of all the information, not just one piece, that is needed to make an informative decision.

Dr. Gotcher referenced the other large counties in the state; Davidson County, Nashville area, as having a greater degree of problems. They are going to be slow to progress in their opening because they've starting to see an overwhelming load. He asked how we compare with them.

Dr. Buchanan replied the answer is nuanced and referenced several theories in her response: Davidson County has a much larger population than Knox County, so their per capita or their population caseload is higher than ours. When Knox County put the Safer At Home Order in place, we had about 13 to 15 cases; when Davidson County put their Safer At Home Order in place, they had about 100 cases. They started from a different place than we did and Nashville is also much more densely populated, where people

can't socially distance well either. We may never know for sure what the differences are. When this pandemic is over, we will have time to review the data, as we have discussed with our staff and the State Department of Health, as well. Chattanooga is puzzled as to why their numbers have gone up as well; they have experienced some larger clusters, related to industry, but also, they have had widespread community spread. It is interesting how this illness looks so different in communities, even within the same geographic areas. She was sure Shelby County, Memphis area, did not move to Phase Three, because their case count have gone up so dramatically since Memorial Day. Ours in Knox County has increased, but not as dramatically. Dr. Buchanan stated that they are concerned about the case count increasing, especially when we get more than 20 cases a day. She recommended everyone continue the five core principals, wearing a mask, washing your hands, staying home if sick, cleaning surfaces regularly and maintaining social distancing, for us to move forward, no matter what is decided tonight.

Dr. Gotcher followed up with a question about hospital capacity, in the event of a large increase in cases, he stated that our local hospital capacity is well buffered.

Dr. Buchanan agreed; the state hospital capacity remains pretty good, because everybody pushed the pause button and built up their capacity, created plans to allow more capacity. The hospitals also coordinated, in the event hospitalized cases increased, they could course correct quickly. In addition, the option to stop elective procedures if needed would further increase hospital capacity.

Dr. Buchanan referred to the website again, the second graph under the hospital benchmark. This graph reflects the folks who are waiting for test results. They may be sick, and in the hospital, they may be waiting to return to a nursing home. She also referenced our available capacity, currently all beds are at almost 26%; beds were at almost 11% and ventilators at 63%, which are pretty good. Important to note this data is not just Knox County, but our entire region. It includes non-Knox County patients in the data, because that's how this data is available to us, through the hospital resource tracking system.

Dr. Gotcher asked another question about hospital beds and ICU beds: If the numbers reflect specific acute care beds designated for COVID-19 or are the numbers showing all ICU beds?

Dr. Buchanan stated the graph shows full regional capacity, not specific to COVID-19. The first graph under this benchmark shows positive patients: *COVID-19 Positive Regional Hospital Inpatients (hospitalized), ICU and Ventilators*. The second graph indicates the patients waiting for labs results: *Pending COVID-19 Labs for Regional Hospital Inpatients (hospitalized), ICU and Ventilator*. The final graph is about full regional capacity, not specific to COVID-19: *East Region Hospitals*.

Dr. Gotcher asked if all hospitals have a dedicated area for COVID-19 patients.

Dr. Buchanan replied that every hospital has their own internal way they are managing COVID-19 patients. The plans are based on the facility's infrastructure and staff capacity. She noted our hospitals are doing a great job managing and fortunately, we've had a very low caseload in the hospital.

Dr. O'Brien questioned if Benchmark number one, has had problems, that's in the red. He asked if it has ever been yellow or green.

Dr. Buchanan stated that yes. Before we moved into Phase Two, it was green for several days. She noted an increase in cases was expected. We were getting such a small number of new cases each day, less than 10 each day; and now we have approximately 15 to 20, with the average of 15ish. She also stated that with such small numbers, any change is significant. She wants it to level off over time, continued flattening of the curve. If the rate of increase gets too high, we run the risk of overwhelming our hospital system and more deaths from COVID-19. The health department continues to watch the data. One of the issues to discuss this evening is how do you want to use that data to guide our community moving forward.

Mayor Jacobs requested the review of the hospital capacity and the fourth graph that indicates: *ADDITIONAL Surge Capacity: All Hospital Beds*, *ADDITIONAL Surge Capacity: ICU Beds* and *ADDITIONAL Surge Capacity: Ventilators*; and an explanation of how that works.

Dr. Buchanan stated that if all the existing hospital beds are full and hospitals must reduce surgeries and reduce the use of other areas in the hospital, to put patients in those beds, that's activating a surge plan. The hospitals have the additional capacity to add 4,389 hospital beds, 543 ICU beds and 374 ventilators. She noted we have not gotten close to tapping into the additional capacity yet; and that is why we continue to feel positive about where we are and being able to allow our community to reopen with guidelines. We focused in Phase Two on how we can help the community open back up safely, because we know businesses need to get back to business and what guidelines can be put in place. She stated she thinks the community is doing a great job.

Dr. Gotcher mentioned the five core actions we need to control the spread of COVID-19, and asked how effective are we at actually performing that in the community as businesses open up, as citizens start to relax and try to return to the way things were. It is a precipitated problem and an underlying fear he has.

Dr. Buchanan stated this is a reasonable fear, but the data will show us if people are following the five core actions. We have experienced excellent cooperation from our business community. Knox County has been very responsible in their responses to this serious situation. We do not have a way of tracking how many people are wearing masks and social distancing, but we do know the data will provide insight.

Dr. O'Brien stated he is concerned as we move forward that the public are becoming more relaxed. He suggested the Board should encourage everyone that we are all in this

together; and to emphasize when one wears a mask you are protecting others and others wear their mask, they are protecting you. He stated he has noticed fewer folks are wearing masks, of late. He referenced that North Carolina is looking at mandating masks statewide.

Dr. Buchanan followed up by saying that people have an option, they can socially distance, wear a mask or they can do both. It is not the person you pass by that will infect you. Talking less than six feet apart for several minutes without a mask is going to have the potential to spread COVID-19. She agreed that we all need to carry the message, other community leaders need to as well. We want to empower our community members to take a role in making sure our community moves forward, they can choose to be a part of the mission, everybody can make that choice for themselves.

Dr. O'Brien is asking what Phase Four looks like, if we are even to the point of discussing next steps.

Dr. Buchanan stated one of the needs we have tonight is to decide the path forward, reviewing the local phase two guidance and the state plan, which are very similar. In the beginning in April, there was much less guidance from the state. We were not certain what information would be available from the state. We felt responsible to our community to provide written guidance so people could start doing things safely; and we did that. Currently there is a lot of guidance from the state. If moving under the state's plan, there are some things that would have to change locally. For instance, the health department has assembled a group of people who are providing guidance for Knox County businesses and organizations because we know people want support and have questions as they move forward. An example is that this group would have to learn the state guidance.

As a board, she said they will need to decide how to use the benchmarks, to provide information to the community, and what plan do we move forward with. Due to the similarities between the local phase two guidance and the state plan, in addition to acknowledging that several business and organizations have locations in multiple counties, it makes sense for us to follow the state plan. The law office has advised that as well.

Myers Morton stated that there are no orders currently in effect, no recommendations, no phases, no benchmarks, no local plan; only this board has the authority and power to issue those plans and benchmarks for reopening. He stated it has been the Law Department's recommendation to the Health Department to not exceed the Governor's plan from a legal liability standpoint.

Dr. Souza asked if in other metropolitan areas across the state, if they also had taskforces that worked on similar plans that were implemented at the county level.

Dr. Buchanan responded that they have assembled a taskforce in both Shelby and Davidson Counties and have their own local plans. Other metropolitan counties have

not. Davidson and Shelby County have taskforces that are meeting and advising periodically, some more fluid than others or more formal.

Dr. Souza asked if it was safe to assume their similar Boards of Health had to approve those plans, which were put in place.

Myers Morton stated there are only six counties in the state with a Board of Health.

Dr. Souza restated her question: Were the Boards of Health in Shelby and Davidson Counties involved in the discussion, approval process and voting; she was unclear what the health departments have the authority to issue.

Dr. Buchanan responded that not all taskforce meetings have been Sunshined, so she is unsure, but she had discovered that their taskforces were operating differently, and it appears their local legal guidance differs from ours.

Dr. O'Brien noted that Davidson County recently decided to remain on Phase Two, and probably reevaluate in another week.

Dr. Buchanan stated that it is her understanding if we choose to remain with a locally written plan, this would require the Board of Health to review, approve, create guidance and meet more regularly. If the Board chose to move as effectively to the state's plan for Phase Three, they need to provide that guidance. The health department would continue to support the local reopening process. She noted she is here to advise and provide information to the Board, Myers will advise the Board on legal aspects.

Myers Morton stated this board is not going to review Phase Three, but this board will create Phase Three. He stated it is the only authority in Knox County to decide how this community reopens.

Dr. Buchanan stated she sent an email to the board this afternoon from a gentleman who wanted her to share his email with the Board. She asked if there was anything from a legal perspective that needed to be done to enter the email into the record.

Myers Morton said there is nothing wrong with sharing the email if discussion occurs in the public meeting only.

He interjected our schools are owned by the state, so this board probably does not have the authority to make decisions on the schools and the athletic events.

Dr. Buchanan said it has been our recommendation when the schools reach out to the health department, that they follow the Department of Education guidance, coming from the state.

Dr. Drake inquired if we can be more stringent regarding the wearing of facemasks.

Dr. Buchanan responded that the Board could if they so choose, but per Myers Morton, the Law Department's legal guidance is to refrain from being more stringent than the state. The state continues that wearing a mask is simply a recommendation, throughout their plan. This is one of the differences between our plans, there are a few places where we say you must wear a cloth face covering and the state says, you may, and that would be a change.

Dr. Gotcher had an additional question regarding one of the benchmarks and what it has to do with contact tracing. He asked if we are equipped in terms of funding and numbers of people to do contact tracing.

Dr. Buchanan gave some background to her response, the Knox County Health Department is operating in its Continuity of Operations Plan, so that means most of the health department's normal services are being provided on a very limited scale. The health department has pulled a considerable amount of staff into the response. One challenge is that some health department staff are funded by grants, and we must continue to fulfill those grants requirements. We had another conversation with the state yesterday regarding how we can access some CARES Act funding to hire additional staff, to backfill as those positions so staff can go back to previous work. We have plans to execute so we can reopen our services more readily for our community over the summer, hopefully we will receive that funding. Also, Knox County has been very generous in supporting our testing efforts, so they can be provided at no cost to our citizens, which has taken down barriers for many. If the state is not able to provide the funding, we will look at alternatives as we will not be able to get pre-pandemic public health services back to 100% in the near term. The health department's local response is one of the keys to our case counts. Dr. Buchanan stated that her staff is very quickly identifying those at risk and getting them in isolation or quarantine and having great cooperation in the process. This makes a huge difference for our community.

Dr. Gotcher assessed the agenda and asked for any further discussion for items five or six.

Dr. Souza asked Dr. Buchanan if we decided to go with a local plan, what role she envisions the taskforce would have going forward.

Dr. Buchanan stated that if the decision is to advise Knox County to follow the Tennessee Pledge, the taskforce could remain in a consultation mode for businesses. They are already helping with answering questions, they would stay engaged, although not an official role unless the board wanted to keep that. She believes the advantage currently to moving to the Tennessee Pledge, is that they have the capacity and the depth at the state level to keep writing guidance and keep changing it, especially for the multitude of various businesses. Moving to the Tennessee Pledge makes sense logically, time wise and it would allow the health department administration and staff to focus more on contact tracing, housing issues, etc. We need to work with our partners in the community to help those families continue to have housing when the rent forgiveness goes away and the day-to-day responses.

Dr. Buchanan asked the board how they want to use the benchmarks and providing guidance to the community.

Myers Morton reiterated that this board has the sole authority to decide how the community goes forward.

Dr. Souza asked if we decided to go with the Tennessee Pledge, the statewide plan, do we still have the ability to use those benchmarks to step forward and backward away, apart from the rest of the state or do we have to stick with what the entire state of Tennessee does.

Myers Morton reiterated their legal advice, which because of the immunities is to not exceed what the Governor and the state is doing.

Dr. O'Brien asked if we decided on the Tennessee Pledge, would 14 days period be enough time for the health department to make the adjustments to transition into the Tennessee Pledge and to confirm we are aligned to follow the plan.

Dr. Buchanan stated yes, she can commit to the 14 days turnaround, although there are many moving parts to this adjustment.

Dr. O'Brien said if our situation locally changes, it is the board's responsibility to be aware of the trends and benchmarks, to make modifications, if needed.

Dr. Buchanan stated it is up to the board how often they want to meet, knowing that the meetings must be sunshined, and that takes time to put into action.

Dr. Drake inquired about Davidson and Shelby counties and the frequency of their meetings.

Dr. Buchanan stated it is her understanding that both of those counties are not required to sunshine their meetings, so she is unaware of the exact frequency and since they are not holding open meeting, they have more agility to call a meeting more quickly.

Dr. O'Brien made the motion that we as Knox County move to the Tennessee Pledge as our plan for the county to be implemented 14 days from today, and to remain in the current phase two of the local plan until then.

Mayor Jacobs asked Dr. Buchanan to explain where we are now, in Phase Two moving to Phase Three, where the state is and the dynamic of if we switched to the Tennessee Pledge, how would that impact our timing.

Dr. Buchanan stated that the state's approach is much different than our phased approach, whereby the state releases new guidance periodically. They are using data to guide the Governor, very similar to the benchmarks we are using, but looking across the

entire state, not just one county. There are not a lot of differences in the state's Tennessee Pledge and the phase two guidance we have existing currently in Knox County, from the perspective of what people can and cannot do.

Mayor Jacobs asked more about timelines, when is the state looking at moving into Phase Three.

Dr. Buchanan said those decisions will be made by the state's unified command, and she learns about those changes when the public is informed of the changes, when the governor makes an announcement or issues an executive order.

Mayor Jacobs asked Myers Morton, if under the Governor's executive order, we cannot be less restrictive than the state.

Myers Morton replied that their advice is to not be more restrictive than the state.

Dr. Buchanan stated that she thinks the two weeks' timeframe is enough time to make the change.

Myers Morton reiterated that legally Knox County currently has no plan and there are no phases.

Dr. O'Brien said that there is a plan operationally. He questioned the difference between Tennessee Pledge versus our restaurant guidance and how many people can gather.

Dr. Buchanan stated both sets of guidance are very similar. Regarding restaurants both are based on spreading tables six feet apart. One difference is that the local plans states people must wear a cloth face covering if six feet of distancing cannot be maintained. That would change as the state says people should wear a cloth face covering if six feet of social distancing cannot be maintained. She stated those businesses that want their staff where masks can continue to have their staff wear masks.

Dr. O'Brien noted that he prefers the stricter mask requirements indoors in close quarters.

Dr. Drake seconded Dr. O'Brien's motion to move to the state's plan.

Dr. Gotcher restated the motion, which is to utilize the state's plan, the Tennessee Pledge, for Knox County in 14 days and maintain the current plan until then. He then asked for any discussion.

Narda Cappuccilli, the recorder, proceeded with the voting, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Gotcher then asked the board if they needed to delineate or further discuss the role of the county taskforce, now that we are utilizing the Tennessee Pledge, to give the Health Department guidance.

Dr. Drake asked who gets input from the taskforce.

Dr. Buchanan stated the taskforce was meeting to advise her on creating reopening guidance, which will no longer be needed. They are also part of our team that answers questions for businesses. She also noted that the state is standing up some resources for businesses.

Dr. Souza said she would like to have the taskforce available for input, as a resource, when we are reviewing those benchmarks, to have them as a resource moving forward.

Dr. Buchanan replied that it would be possible to ask them to attend a Board of Health meeting to accomplish that with an open format. They are local citizens who are concerned about our community and happy to provide feedback.

Dr. Gotcher asked Dr. Buchanan how often she would expect to meet with the taskforce to give her information on how things are progressing and if a critical issue arises that they would defer to the board.

Dr. Buchanan said she does not see an ongoing use for the formal taskforce to advise her. They are connected to the Health Department and communicate with us regularly, bringing up concerns, that we would bring up to the board, as any citizen can. The bigger question is for the board to decide the frequency they want to meet and be updated. She noted that since these meetings require being sunshined, it is not easy to have a last-minute meeting, so the board must allow for adequate time for public notice. If the board wants to weigh in regularly on the benchmarks, that would be something they would need to schedule.

Dr. O'Brien stated that he wants the benchmarks to continue and to meet briefly every two weeks to discuss them.

Dr. Buchanan stated the benchmarks are very important to the health department and their partners, and the health department uses this data internally to discuss how to reduce risk to certain populations. She stated that they are happy to meet with the board as often as they like.

Dr. Gotcher said traditionally the board has met quarterly, with several topics, including the budget; and in his opinion this is an important topic for the community, which deserves undivided attention on a more frequent basis. He then stated he is open to a motion and then discussion.

Dr. Drake made a motion that the board set up meetings every two weeks for a certain period in order to review the benchmarks and see how Knox County is doing.

Dr. Souza seconded the motion.

Dr. Gotcher began the discussion with two points, asking if the board wanted to do this or not and at what frequency, if they do.

Dr. O'Brien stated that he thinks this is reasonable, have these meetings as an informational COVID-19 pandemic related meeting, then every quarter the board would have a regular meeting dealing with those other issues and to do this as long as necessary.

Dr. Souza asked Dr. Buchanan, if that seemed reasonable to her.

Dr. Buchanan responded yes, totally reasonable.

Dr. Gotcher requested the vote be taken.

Narda Cappuccilli, the recorder, proceeded with the voting, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Buchanan, as the secretary, requested what time of day would be best for everyone. We anticipate these meetings will not be long as they will mostly be informational.

Dr. Gotcher asked if 5:00 p.m. works for everyone.

Dr. Buchanan and Mayor Jacobs both agreed that 5:00 p.m. works for their schedules.

Dr. Gotcher asked if there were any additional topics to address at tonight's meeting.

Dr. Buchanan responded with a question regarding the benchmarks: if the board had any changes to the benchmarks. She stated that the benchmarks the health department uses are standard of what's being utilized in varying ways across the country.

Dr. Souza stated she liked the benchmarks and wants them to continue. She then asked if an existing phase does exist legally, do we need to approve that for the next two weeks?

Myers Morton stated no benchmarks exist presently without this board determining there are.

Dr. Buchanan said that yes, the board needs to express their opinion on the benchmarks, to keep them or not and Phase Two.

Dr. Souza made a motion that for the next two weeks, we stay under the current Knox County Phase Two plan, including those benchmarks

Dr. O'Brien seconded this motion.

Dr. Gotcher asked for any further discussion.

Myers Morton asked for clarification to confirm that all the board members are clear on exactly what the benchmarks are.

Dr. Buchanan established that the board had reviewed the benchmarks previously in the meeting.

Dr. Gotcher confirmed everyone agrees on our understanding of the benchmarks and the continuation of them.

Dr. O'Brien called Phase Two, the existing operation plan that is what we are continuing and approving at this time.

Dr. Buchanan had a comment on the benchmarks, in two weeks we need to make a decision about keeping or not keeping the benchmarks.

Dr. O'Brien clarified that he thought we are reaffirming the benchmarks and Phase Two operational plan.

Dr. Souza confirmed that was her motion was to keep the benchmarks, as she wants to keep them forever until this pandemic is over.

Dr. Buchanan wanted to confirm that everyone received the link to Phase Two, if you have any questions or concerns about it.

Dr. Gotcher asked for any further discussion on the motion; if not we are prepared for voting.

Narda Cappuccilli, the recorder, proceeded with the voting, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Gotcher thanked everyone and asked if any additional matters for discussion or any new business.

Dr. Buchanan had a question for Myers Morton, for clarity and so that everything is done properly. She referenced the email that she forwarded to the Board of Health and noted that they had not discussed it prior to the meeting. She asked if they needed to discuss it or if anything further needs to be done regarding the email.

Myers Morton stated if there are no discussions then it's not a violation of the Sunshine Law. If there was a discussion among the board members, we would need to start over and have those discussions again.

Mayor Jacobs wanted to clarify with Dr. Buchanan and Myers, when Dr. Buchanan has information, she is free to disseminate it to the board, but the board may not discuss it outside the public meeting.

Myers Morton responded that is correct, there cannot be any deliberation and cannot be decisions made outside the meeting.

Dr. Gotcher said he would entertain a motion for adjournment.

Dr. Drake made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. O'Brien seconded.

Dr. Gotcher thanked everyone for the informational meeting, and stated that they had accomplished some good things. He confirmed with Dr. Buchanan that the next meeting will be in approximately two weeks and we will anticipate a zoom meeting invitation and the usual package of information.

Dr. Buchanan stated that she is happy to continue to meet by zoom, as it is convenient for everyone, as long as the Governor's executive order allowing it remains in effect. If not, the board may have to move to in-person meetings and find a location large enough to maintain social distancing.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 1, 2020; at 5:00 p.m. Location to be determined.

VII. ADJOURMENT

There being no other business, Dr. Drake, moved to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Martha, Buchanan, MD, Senior Director and Public Health Officer
Knox County Health Department
Secretary, Knox County Board of Health