Commissioner Randy Ross called the Board of Health meeting to order at 8:34 am and called for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners Wes Cormier and Vickie Raines were in attendance.

The agenda was approved for reports from Dr. Bauscher, Health Officer; Karolyn Holden, Health and Social Services Director; and Kristina Alnajjar, Public Health Manager; and a resolution for consideration. Jeff Nelson, Environmental Health Director was not in attendance.

**Motion:** Commissioner Cormier moved to approve the April 26, 2018 minutes.  
**Second:** Commissioner Raines seconded the motion.  
**Approval:** The minutes of April 26, 2018 were approved unanimously.

**Dr. Bauscher Update:**
- There is influenza activity and the campaign to immunize will hopefully help to thwart the increase.  
- Locally, three physicians are resigning and moving out of Grays Harbor. It is a complex problem, and we know many factors are important to the recruitment and retention of providers – including, but not limited to, economics, understanding the community’s needs and resources, business management, impact of Medicaid Transformation, etc.

**Public Health and Social Services Update:**  
Karolyn Holden presented on some of the key accomplishments from this past year:
- Following the 2017 audit finding regarding the WIC grant, we successfully re-allocated staff time retroactively to January 2017 to comply with the corrective action plan. The 2018 audit had no findings.
- Created a series of policies and procedures related to public information and communications in order to assure that messages are consistent, high quality, and subject to a defined approval and release process.
- Reduced the reading level on all of our web pages to improve the accessibility of the information.
- Supported and staffed the launch of felony drug court.
- Implemented a new, less expensive, right-sized accounting solution for our in-house fund and project tracking.
- Submitted an application for McKinney-Vento funding that ranked first among the state’s projects and pushed us on to the 2nd round of review. While not a guarantee of funding, this is our most successful application to date and could (based on HUD budget) result in $185,000 annually in permanent housing subsidy and case management for 16 chronically homeless individuals.
- Using special funds provided by WIC and Family Planning grants, we made low-cost changes in our reception and back clinic areas to improve client privacy. The changes, along with new outreach
materials, were also designed to make our clinic more LGBTQ-friendly support other aspects of toward trauma-informed practice.

- Began using monthly all-staff meetings to introduce content to improve our performance against the Public Health Core Competencies.
- Took in 2 new grants to address the opioid crisis: one that supports a community coalition in the Aberdeen School District and one that supports implementation of key strategies identified in our locally developed Overdose Prevention Plan.
- Began communicating routinely – as opposed to on an urgent basis - with primary care, urgent care and emergency departments regarding communicable disease.
- Increased WIC caseload – which increases funding – after a successful 4-month marketing campaign. In general WIC caseload has been declining over the last few years at the local, state and national level, so we are happy that our marketing effort has resulted in an increase in caseload for our Department.

Kristina Alnajjar presented on PHSS’s strategic planning effort:

- Alnajjar is leading the PHSS Department’s strategic planning efforts, and the plan will be for 2019-2024. The anticipated next steps includes finalizing strategic priorities (in October), develop the strategic and implementation plan, including strategies, goals, outcome objectives and measurement metrics (by February), refine and write the plan (by May), and review and adopt (by end of July).
- The Strategic Planning Committee is comprised of representatives from different sections in the Department, and the members were selected for their variety of content expertise and perspectives. Members include: Karolyn Holden, Beth Mizushima, Julie Myers, Vera Kalkwarf, Cassie Lentz, Dee Dee Garman, Brianne Probasco, Kim McCaw, Erin Schreiber, and Kristina Alnajjar (Strategic Planning Lead). The Board of Health will have an important role in this planning effort. The Board of Health will assist in the prioritization of the strategic priorities, review and refine the plan, and adopt the plan.
- The strategic planning process and the resulting plan will be similar to many other processes and plans, but what is unique to Public Health is that the plan will be informed by four key public health trends and emphasis: public health accreditation, Public Health 3.0, trauma-informed care, and health equity.
- The Public Health Accreditation Board’s accreditation process seeks to advance quality and performance within public health departments nationally. Accreditation standards define the expectations for all public health departments that seek to become accredited; in addition to the performance standards, all entities must also have a current strategic plan, community health improvement plan, and a quality improvement plan. Our department believes that the standards outlined in the accreditation process support good business practices; we will align what we do and how we do it with the standards so that we can eventually achieve accreditation.
- The Strategic Planning Committee has brought forward 10 strategic priorities and asked the Board of Health to provide their input on how to prioritize them.

**Resolution for Consideration**

- Commissioner Cormier brought forth a resolution for consideration by the Board of Health to increase accountability with regard to the Syringe Exchange Program. The Resolution would require Public health and Social Services to ink each syringe with an emblem or non-removable sticker labeling it as property of Grays Harbor County as a method to track the syringes exchanged via the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Commissioner Raines stated that the Syringe Exchange Program exchanges syringes at a one-to-one rate, which in her opinion meets the County’s need for accountability. Unwrapping the syringes to label
them would increase the potential that the syringe needle becomes contaminated, and would be time-consuming to label each syringe.

- Commissioner Cormier does not question the cost benefit of the program but is interested in having the private sector manage the program. Commissioner Cormier has conducted some research and has identified an affordable machine that would label individual syringes. Commissioner Cormier will send that information to Karolyn Holden.

- Kristina Alnajjar described a few key elements of the Syringe Exchange Program: the syringes, which are provided by the State, are packaged in a bag of 10, which is inside a bag of 100, inside a bag of 500. The majority of the clients exchange a large number of syringes, but on occasion, there are people who exchange a small amount. In those situations employees open the bags up to get the exact number of syringes. Some clients exchange by bringing in a full sharps container. Each container, based on its size, has a pre-determined amount of syringes that it can hold; Syringe Exchange Program employees will exchange according to that figure. Alnajjar reports that she has had conversations with community members who are concerned about the Syringe Exchange Program and the information about how employees ensure a one-to-one exchange is helpful for those individuals to feel more confident that the Syringe Exchange Program is not ‘giving away’ syringes.

- Karolyn Holden stated that syringe exchange programs ensure that syringes have value like currency. Without an exchange program the likelihood of inappropriate disposal (not in a sharps container) would increase, and if people do not have the money to purchase the new syringes, they would be more likely to re-use a syringe or share it, increasing the risk of abscesses and blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis C and HIV, which is costly to the community and puts lives at risk.

- The Commissioners will consider Commissioner Cormier’s resolution.

Hearing no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 10:36 AM.

Approved on this 24 day of January, 2019

Randy Ross, Chair

Wes Cormier, Commissioner First District

Vickie Raines, Commissioner Third District

ATTEST:

Julie Myers, Board Secretary