

## Teton County Board of Health Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2014

**Present:** Jim Hodgskiss, Gayle Harris, Lora Wier, Melissa Moyer, Corrine Rose, Randy Morris, Tim Sinton, and Elaine Sedlack.

Lora called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

**Variance Request:** Corrine introduced Darrin Johnson of Bynum who has requested a variance to install a pressure dose septic system on a 13.9 acre parcel of land. He has purchased a home to be moved onto the tract of land which was established in November, 1954 when there was no sanitation review requirement. According to ARM (Administrative Rules of Montana) 17.30.702 the nitrate nitrogen and nitrate plus nitrite nitrogen standards for these waters are each 50mg/l. The proposed drainfield will be a “new source” of nitrates to the groundwater. The nitrate level from a well in close proximity was 49.5 mg/l. If the nitrate/nitrite level was 0.5 mg/l higher Darrin could install a regular gravity flow septic system on this property. A pressure dose system installed in an area where the nitrate background is 49.5 mg/l will provide much better treatment of the effluent than a gravity flow system installed where the nitrates are 50 mg/l. In addition Corrine said nitrates can't be greater than 7.5 at the end of the plume in agricultural areas as opposed to 5 in developed areas. Nitrates bind with oxygen in the blood which can be a problem especially with pregnant women and infants.

As provided in ARM 17.36.922 LOCAL VARIANCES, a local board of health may grant variances from the requirement if all conditions in these rules are met and granting the variance will not impact the drinking water or cause a health hazard to the public, animals, or contaminate state waters.

Randy Morris made a motion to grant the variance. It was seconded by Tim Sinton and signed by Tim as the Teton County Health Officer.

**HB 630:** Corrine reported on her work as part of a legislative advisory committee tasked with recommending regulations for the cottage food industry. The committee included The Department of Livestock, Agriculture Department, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services. The committee has finished its work and made its recommendations to the legislature. They tried to standardize rules for potentially hazardous foods prepared in homes and sold person to person such as through farmers' markets. The food can't be sold through stores or intrastate. They do not regulate whole non-processed foods such as fruits or vegetables. They did not deal with raw milk issues. Corrine thinks that issue will come up again. The dairy industry was

opposed to the previous bill dealing with the sale of raw milk due to some additions to the bill. Corrine also said the committee suggested the local county commissioners or Board of Health members accompany sanitarians on their inspections to better understand what they do.

**Accreditation:** Melissa reported on the status of the work being done to seek accreditation of the health department. She is currently doing a community health assessment with input from multiple sources. She said the plan's requirements are designed for large communities so she is adapting it to our smaller community. After the data is collated she will put together a community group to develop a community plan, then she will work on the health department plan. After applying for accreditation she has one year to get the required documentation together. She is also working on the Chouteau County plan in a job sharing with them. Lora offered to do a job sharing with other counties to help offset the cost but Chouteau County was the only one interested.

Lora said all the larger health departments in the state are working on their accreditation plans and she is on the accreditation committee for the state health department. Gayle asked about the advantages of accreditation. Lora said accountability is a major factor to ensure the health department is meeting the needs of the community and gets the most benefit for the money spent and programs are achieving their desired goals. It may also be necessary in the future to apply for grants. The health department must renew its accreditation every 5 years with a new community health assessment.

**Influenza:** Lora reported that during the week between Christmas and New Years two employees and two residents of Teton Nursing Home tested positive for influenza. The two residents were isolated and the two employees stayed home. After consultation with the state health department all residents and employees were given a 10 day course of Tamiflu as a preventative and the nursing home was essentially locked down limiting visitors. Both employees and the two residents had received flu shots which may have prevented serious complications and all recovered.

**Pertussis:** Lora reported that on December 12<sup>th</sup> the health dept. received a report of a confirmed case of pertussis in a two year old child in Dutton. The child had four siblings in Dutton School with symptoms. They were tested and two of them tested positive. Lora went to the school in the evening to talk to the school staff about what they needed to do and what the health dept. would do. After consultation with the state health dept. it was decided all children within arm's length of the confirmed cases for one hour cumulative should receive antibiotics. The health dept. got a list from the school and called the parents the next morning and told them to have their children tested if they

had symptoms or to take preventative antibiotics if they had no symptoms. A letter was sent to all parents. Two contacts tested positive. One child was in a confirmation class. Tim Sinton, PA, ordered testing and allowed the health dept. to write prescriptions for antibiotics. Tim said the medical providers received many calls from panicked parents. Lora found out Cascade County Health Dept. sends letters to the doctors of the affected children and warns them to expect calls from the parents. There is still a problem with the worried well. Elaine said in Flathead County we would send a blanket letter to all providers to keep them informed.

**Specimen Transportation Plan:** Lora presented the updated specimen transportation plan which was signed by Tim.

**Misc:** Jim reported the latest snow pack readings in the mountains show a snowpack 134% of normal with more snow predicted over the weekend.

Jim reported the contractors are pouring the 4<sup>th</sup> base for the six wind turbines on Bole Bench. The concrete base is 36 feet deep. Beginning March 17<sup>th</sup> trucks carrying the components will be coming through Choteau. Each turbine blade requires one truck to haul it.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Elaine Sedlack