

**RiverStone Health**  
**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**  
**June 22, 2023**

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John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

**Members Present:** John Dorr; Spencer Anderson; Brent Cromley; Michael Dennis; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Lionel Tapia; Steve Wahrlich (phone-in); K.C. Williams

**Members Absent:** Carol Beam; Debbie Davis; Bea Ann Melichar; Casey Wheeler

**Staff Present:** John Felton, Yellowstone County Health Officer; Forte, President & CEO; Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen, Vice-President of Public Health and Clinical Services; Shelli Ritz, Executive Vice President & CFO; Tani Sanchez, Administrative Assistant – Organizational Innovation; Barbara Schneeman, Vice President, Communication & Public Affairs / Public Information Officer / RiverStone Health Foundation Executive Director; Judy Stewart, Vice President Organizational Innovation; Shanna Zier, Senior Director - Fiscal Services

**Guests Present:** Stewart Kirkpatrick, Legal Counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, Legal Counsel – Crowley Fleck (phone-in); Steve Williams, In-house Counsel Yellowstone County Attorney's Office

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dorr called the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairperson Dorr invited members of the public to address the Board. Upon hearing no comment, Chairperson Dorr proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

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**APPROVAL**

**May 25, 2023 meeting minutes:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the May 25, 2023 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Williams), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 2023 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**June 22, 2023 consent agenda:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **CONSENT AGENDA** (copy on file) of the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting that was previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Williams), seconded (Jones), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA OF THE JUNE 22, 2023  
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

### **CEO REPORT**

Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “HELP” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Lily Griego, Regional Director for Region 8 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) visited RiverStone Health on Friday, June 16 for a campus tour and to learn more about the work we do to serve our community.
- RiverStone Health is participating in several community events this week including United Way’s Day of Action at Dover Park on June 21 to provide first aid services, and Billings Pride Week (June 19-25) events, including Pride Day at ZooMontana and the Pride Parade in downtown Billings this Saturday.
- Earlier this year Shelli Ritz, RiverStone Health’s Executive Vice President and CFO, announced her retirement effective June 30, 2023. Upon Shelli’s retirement, Shanna Zier will become RiverStone Health’s interim CFO effective July 1, 2023.
- On June 9th, RiverStone Health dedicated a Memorial Garden to our colleagues who passed away during their tenure with RiverStone Health. Three RiverStone Health staff members were memorialized: Luis Rivera, an outreach worker for our Health Care for the Homeless program, Angel Gaston, who worked in our community health center, and Molly Hale who worked in our public health prevention programs serving those facing cancer and HIV/AIDS.
- The Healthy By Design Gardeners’ Market located at South Park opened for the 2023 season on Thursday, June 8. The Gardeners’ Market will be open every Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. through October 5, 2023. The market accepts a variety of payment methods including SNAP (and Double SNAP!), WIC Farm Direct Checks, and Senior Nutrition Program Coupons for fresh, local, and affordable produce.
- The RiverStone Health Bridger Clinic announced expanded hours on Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The newly expanded hours will increase availability and capacity to better serve our patients. Clinic hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- RiverStone Health has been awarded funding through a CDC / Montana Department of Public Health & Human Service (DPHHS) grant to conduct wastewater surveillance for the purposes of detecting and tracking emergence and community spread of COVID-19 and other diseases. RiverStone Health will work with the City of Billings Public Works to complete weekly testing.

- RiverStone Health received a grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to complete an assessment of our organizational accessibility. The assessment seeks to determine how access to the programs and services offered by RiverStone Health may be hindered by an individual's disability. We have partnered with LIFT – Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow, to help us complete the assessment and identify areas for improvement.

## **HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

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John Felton provided updates and noted highlights of the Health Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- John reported that the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has recently changed hospitals' reporting requirements for COVID-19. Daily inpatient census is no longer required, and weekly unique inpatient admissions is now required. John noted that going forward, we will report weekly unique inpatient admissions for our two local hospitals. This data point will serve as a "screening measure" that will serve to bring public health and healthcare leadership together if significant changes or untoward trends are noted.
- John informed the Board that CMS issued a notice in the June 5, 2023 Federal Register of its intent to terminate the COVID-19 staff vaccination requirement for certain provider types.
- John discussed the increasing incidence of syphilis that continues to be of concern to public health nationally, statewide, and locally. John noted that a comparison of newly diagnosed cases in Yellowstone County during the first five months of calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023 showed an exponential increase in cases from year to year. RiverStone Health's communicable disease and communications staff are collaborating on the development of a public information campaign primarily targeted at the Native American population, noting the substantially disproportionate number of new syphilis cases affecting that sub-population.

## **CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT**

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Megan Littlefield provided an update of activity in the CHC and the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Medical staffing continues to be a very high priority and we are working on ideas to improve both recruitment and retention of physicians.
- A weeklong CHC Staff Structure Kaizen has been planned to review our current staffing model and assess needs to make necessary adjustments that will increase access and productivity for better provider-patient, provider-staff, and patient-staff continuity, consistency, and predictability.
- We received notice that our application for grant funding to develop an Advanced Practice Provider residency was unsuccessful. Funding would provide support for new midlevel providers starting their practice and would also serve as a pipeline for midlevel providers going into practice in Eastern Montana. We will continue to work on identifying ways to fund this type of structure.
- New interns of the Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) class of 2026 began orientation on June 19. The new interns will participate in a month-long orientation

program before their full-time schedule begins. Our current MFMR class of 2023 residents will graduate on June 30.

- Attended a Syphilis symposium sponsored by DPHHS, MCUIH, NADC, and MTPHI, on June 21st.
- IT Optimization - We have started our work with Ero Health, who specializes in the optimization of eCW, to develop a plan to optimize our daily use, improve how we do population health, and maximize our utilization of the patient portal.

## **SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the June 6, 2023 safety and quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Williams), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JUNE 6, 2023 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the June 6, 2023 public health policy development committee meeting that were previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Dennis), seconded (Giuliano), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JUNE 6, 2023 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

Chairperson Dorr reported that the Committee discussed the termination of the CMS COVID-19 staff vaccination requirement and Montana's HB702 (that was deemed unconstitutional when applied to healthcare organizations) in consideration of RiverStone Health's staff vaccination requirements (i.e. COVID-19, influenza, and MMR that were reinstated by the Board of Health at its January 26, 2023 meeting. After discussion concluded, the Public Health Policy Development Committee made the following recommendations for Board approval:

1. Terminate the COVID-19 immunization requirement for staff, and
2. Amend the current MMR vaccination requirement to include a compliance deadline of September 30, 2023 as a condition of employment at RiverStone Health.

### **M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Jones), opposed (Dennis), it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE TERMINATION OF THE COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENT FOR RIVERSTONE HEALTH STAFF EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**

### **M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Tapia), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE MMR VACCINATION REQUIREMENT FOR RIVERSTONE HEALTH STAFF TO INCLUDE A COMPLIANCE DEADLINE OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023**

Brent Cromley discussed the new Environmental Health Services enforcement process, including workflow improvements and change recommendations, to enforce existing licensing rules for retail and wholesale food, pools and spas, public accommodations, trailer courts and campgrounds, body artists and drop-in daycares. Brent added that the Public Health Policy Development Committee recommends Board approval of the new Environmental Health Enforcement Procedure as presented.

### **M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Giuliano), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE AS PRESENTED**

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided an overview of the FY24 budget and answered questions from Board members.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the June 21, 2023 finance committee meeting notes, the April 2023 financial statements, and approve the FY24 operating budget, FY24 capital budget, and the revised FY24 public health mill levy allocation, (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JUNE 21, 2023 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED**

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Dorr), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:      TO ACCEPT THE APRIL 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS  
PRESENTED**

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Williams), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:      TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY24 OPERATING BUDGET AS  
PRESENTED**

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Williams), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:      TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY24 CAPITAL BUDGET AS  
PRESENTED**

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:      TO APPROVE THE REVISED FY24 PUBLIC HEALTH MILL LEVY  
ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED**

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the May 25, 2023 meeting that were previously distributed in the June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Harris), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:      TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE MAY 25, 2023  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business discussion held

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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**July 2023 Board of Health meeting:** Chairperson Dorr discussed the upcoming summer meeting schedule and noted that the Board usually defers either the July or August meeting to provide a summer break. Board members discussed the options and agreed to cancel the July 2023 meeting and resume its regular meeting schedule beginning on August 24, 2023.

### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Williams), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO APPROVE CANCELLING THE JULY 2023 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING**

## **MEETING SCHEDULE**

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The next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, August 24, 2023 beginning at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

## **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

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The June 22, 2023 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:07 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Harris  
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte  
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2023\minutes\6.22.23