



**Region 2 – COVID-19 – County Response
Meeting Minutes
Clallam – Grays Harbor – Jefferson – Kitsap – Mason Counties**

**Thursday, April 23, 2020
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**

FACILITATORS: Jaime Bodden, WSALPHO and Mellani McAleenan, WSAC

ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIALS & STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Clallam:

Nikki Botnen, County Clerk; Ron Cameron, Undersheriff; Megan Duncan; Lorrie Kuss, Deputy Assessor; Teresa Marchi, Treasurer; Mark Ozias, Commissioner; Shoona Riggs, Auditor; Pamela Ruston, Assessor; Rich Sill, Administrator; Kare Wahlsten, Fiscal Specialist

Grays Harbor:

Vicki Raines, Commissioner and Randy Ross, Commissioner

Jefferson:

Greg Brotherton, Commissioner; Jeff Chapman, Patricia Charnas, Director Community Development; Ruth Gordon, County Clerk; Assessor; Kate Dean, Commissioner; Vicki Kirkpatrick, Health Director; Stacie Prada, Treasurer; David Sullivan, Commissioner

Kitsap:

Eric Baker, Policy Manager; Charlotte Garrido, Commissioner; Robert Gelder, Commissioner. Katharine Shaffer, Senior Environmental & Land Use Planner

Mason:

Paddy McGuire, Auditor; Randy Neatherlin, Commissioner; Sharon Trask, Commissioner

Legislators:

Sen. Dean Takko, Rep. Steve Tharinger and Sen. Kevin Van DeWege

Legislative Staff:

Elizabeth Allison, Kevin Black, Marissa Chavez, James Crandall, Sarah Myers, Linda Owens, Brandon Popovac, Kellen Wright

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Vicki Kirkpatrick – Director, Jefferson County Health & Human Services

This is/was an unknown pandemic for everyone, and we are all still learning about it
Counties were gathering information early on and watching returning travelers to SeaTac, as well as cruise ship passengers

To date – over 800 people have been tested in 25 jurisdictions for possible COVID exposure

CHALLENGES AND LOOKING AHEAD

- Increased testing will need to be performed to learn about the disease
- Counties will continue to monitor symptoms to either isolate or quarantine the individual for 14 days
- Local jurisdictions will need additional resources to meet the needs for the state, which will most likely happen in most of the communities
- How do we pay for such expenses?

IMPACT ON COUNTY FUNCTIONS

Clallam County

Stepped up operation in early February with a unified command
PPE is still a challenge and is met with serious concerns to have on hand
Preparation is now taking place for the homeless – currently has not been as serious an issue as expected
The local business community wants to get back to work – financial concerns for everyone
Food banks have seen a major increase throughout the community

Grays Harbor County

Policy group meets each morning for updates
The county has 12 confirmed cases with zero deaths
Army National Guard has played a major role in assisting the county
Testing continues for 18 and over for any COVID symptoms, as county numbers are increasing
Unemployment numbers continues to grow
Basic needs continue to be a challenge – toilet paper, hand sanitizer, etc.
Local funding is inadequate and will not meet the increased demands
The homeless numbers are growing and the homeless camp in Aberdeen is set to close May 15th
Currently a 39-month waiting list for housing
Foresee a 18% cut in hospital staffing

Jefferson County

Older population in the workforce
Lack of hardware/software for broadband services
Seeing an increase in law enforcement – i.e. – domestic violence
Increased expenses have surpassed \$4 million dollars
Inadequate federal support
Hope to work with legislators to address the growing needs of the county

Kitsap County

Using grants to extend housing to the homeless in shelters
Property taxes and revenue shortfalls are growing at a staggering rate
Broadband services are not sufficient
The Kitsap County Great Give was a record breaker with \$2 million dollars going to local charities
Local jurisdictions have come together, continue to learn and hope to move forward to reopen

Mason County

A special election will be held on April 28th with a 3 person staff, who are currently working in shifts
Trying to accommodate and register people with curbside service
County functions have been impacted and budgets will be hard hit
Moving forward and working with EDC, Chambers and business leaders to make sure everyone is ready to return to work
Measures will need to be enacted to protect staff with “social distancing” when returning to work

ANTICIPATED NEEDS MOVING FORWARD

Clallam County

Hard to predict what the revenue impact will be – possibly 1.3 – 1.8 million seen in decreases

What will the sales tax revenue shortfall be?

Concerns what the lasting impact will be on the county for this recession

If there is a continued shutdown, the number of businesses that will not reopen

Property taxes have been extended to July 31 – loss of revenue

A hiring freeze has been implemented – what other cost reductions will need to be made possible
furloughs and/or layoffs?

Needs more information on how the CARE money is distributed to the smaller counties to make informed decisions

Permits have decreased by 50%

What is the “new normal” – how will we serve the public?

Grays Harbor County

Funding from Commerce will be used for isolation/quarantining in Grays Harbor – looking at possibly 2 facilities

Looking at a longer recovery – will be a large reduction in the budget, as well as services?

Sales tax revenues are down

Employees will be returning to work – will still be closed to the public

Are we doing enough to prepare for the anticipated second wave?

Jefferson County

Will be reviewing cost cutting efforts – possibly public hearings

Need direction for funding – what checklist/options are available?

Hope to mutually work together with legislators

What major changes will need to be enacted to the county budget?

Counties will need regulatory relief – relaxing/extending mandates

Kitsap County

How do we adopt and open safely for employees, as well serving the public?

Additional funding will be needed for isolation/quarantine areas

Property taxes delayed to May – revenue shortfall

\$7 – 10 million reduction in the budget

Hiring freeze and spending

Biggest scare...don't know if the stimulus dollars are getting to the people that need it most, currently folks are not seeing the money

The pressure to open is growing and foresee the challenge to keep folks' home

The public information officer is working on putting together an informational piece for the community

Mason County

A grant of \$170,000 will assist the county in preparing for the elections – what equipment will be needed

How does the county comply with the law and still function with safety measures enacted?