



Grays Harbor County Board of Health

PEARSALL BUILDING
2109 SUMNER AVENUE, ABERDEEN, WA 98520

January 14, 2021 Board of Health Special Meeting

Board of Health Chair Vickie Raines called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Commissioner Kevin Pine and Commissioner Jill Warne were also present. The meeting was held electronically through Zoom to allow for social distancing.

Also in Attendance: Cassie Lentz, Healthy Places Division Manager; Kristina Alnajjar, Healthy Families Program Manager; Jeff Nelson, Environmental Health Director; Dr. John Bausher, Health Officer, Health; Maranatha Hay, Public Health Incident Commander; April Heikkila, Healthy People Division Manager; Hanna Cleverly, Emergency Management; Norma Tillotson, County Prosecuting Attorney (Interim); Jon Beltran, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney; Fire District 2 Chief Leonard Johnson; Jenna Amsbury, Clerk of the Board; Joy Corossino, Grays Harbor County Risk Manager; and Alex Vido, Secretary. Members of the Grays Harbor Public Health Department, members of the State agencies, and members of the public were also present. The meeting was held electronically over Zoom to allow for social distancing.

This special meeting of the Board of Health was called for the approval of Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program by Commissioner Jill Warne and Commissioner Kevin Pine effective April 1, 2021.

The agenda changed to table the approval of the January 5, 2021 Board of Health Special Meeting minutes until the first Board of Health Quarterly Meeting on January 28, 2021.

Health Officer Report – Dr. John Bausher

- Desperation of Public Health is to mitigate the spread of disease.
- In the previous meeting we heard from the Department of Health and the hospital in its plea to understand the potential impact of an already loaded system that termination of the Syringe Services Program could have. With the addition from Public Health.
- Asked for the board to consider the consequences of this action which was well described in a letter from Joan Brewster, former Public Health Director, in which he agreed with what was said.

Commissioner Raines commented the letter from Joan Brewster will be read aloud during public comment.

- Will be available later for any discussion

Public Comments and Questions:

Commissioner Raines stated the Board of Health received public comments in written form, some duplicates, regarding comments about the Syringe Services Program. The reading of these public comments was turned over to staff to read aloud.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Sheri Reeves, Trueblood Division Case Manager, Community Integrated Health Services; wrote in support of the Syringe Services Program.

Commissioner Jill Warne asked if the public comments received in written form could be read after those who are waiting to comment.

Commissioner Kevin Pine and Commissioner Vickie Raines agreed.

- Maryann Welch, Public Health and Social Services Department Director 2004; read her letter submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program
- Becky Walsh, Retired RN, Hospital Board as a Public Commissioner representing Aberdeen; spoke in support of the Syringe Service Program.
- Andrea, Costal Community Action Program serving those with HIV and AIDS living in both Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties; spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program
- Jeff Wilson, Legislative District 19 State Senator, Longview resident; Spoke to oppose the Syringe Services Program.
- Shelli Ann Kerns, Grays Harbor Resident; Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program.
- Dr. Shawn Andrews and Beth Hindbaugh, Primary Care Medical Director Summit Pacific, Representative of Summit Pacific; Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program.
- Malika Lamont, Director of VOCAL Washington, Former Thurston County Syringe Services Program employee, former Medicaid Transformation Demonstration Opioid Response Program Manager for Cascade Pacific Action Alliance, former Intake Manager for Evergreen Treatment Services; Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program.
- Tim Candela, Drug User Health Coordinator, Washington State Department of Health; Spoke for the Washington Department of Health in support of the Syringe Services Program. Strongly encouraged to delay till September 1, 2021.
- Rob Paylor; Asked at a minimum to delay vote or implementation until another solution is found and to listen to the boots on the ground and the science.
- Pete Schave; spoke to oppose the Syringe Services Program. Would like to see a private company take this over and move it out of Aberdeen.

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Judy Carter: “The science support the public health issues these programs provide. This also gives an opportunity for substance abuse counselors and other Public Health people to interact with drug users. These interactions can lead to treatment and freeing these people from addiction. Some people insist that there are needles discarded by drug users littered all over parks, trails and other public spaces. I have been walking my dogs in these places for years and have been

taking my grandchild to parks to play, on trails and other places in the community to explore. I am always on the lookout for things like needles since people have claimed they are common and dangerous to our children and pets. I have seen three. Not 3000 or 300, but three. The cost of the program is, if I recall correctly, \$14,000 annually. What this community gains from this program is worth many times more than the cost of the program itself.”

- Spencer Boudreau, Longview Parks and Recreation Board, Longview resident; Spoke to oppose Syringe Services Program.

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Lisa Zaborac: “not sure what areas you are going to, I have found more than 3 discarded on my property alone.”

Commissioner Rains read a typed comment from Judy Careter: “Most parks in Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Cosi. Local trails including many areas along the bay and up on the hills. And along the sidewalks.”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Jeff Wilson. “Why does harm reduction also create another unmitigated harm? Out of balance, and we need to have such balance.”

- Cassie Lents, Grays Harbor County Public Health Places Manager, oversees variety of programs that work on the social determinacies of health and community health, oversees the Syringe Services Program; shared she is proud of staff at the Public Health Department especially during 2020 Covid-19 and that the Syringe Services Program did not pause or stop to continue this critical service for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. This program is also used as a platform for communication and resources to a certain population. She also provided additional points and information that have not been shared about how valuable the Syringe Services Program is for the community.
- Miki Cabell, worked with critical harm reductions programs, University of Washington fetal alcohol drug unit, worked with Grays Harbor Public Health to advocate for Naloxone distribution to different tribes; Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program.

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Melissa Scott: “The problem is there is no exchange. People are not made to actually bring in used needles. Get rid of this program.”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Miki Cabell: “let us please fix this, not end it”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Malika Lamont: “The program did not end in Cowlitz County, it was expanded and housed in a private organization.”

- Andy Bickar, Grays Harbor Public Hospital District 2 Commissioner, Business owner in downtown Aberdeen; read his letter submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Spoke in support of the Syringe Services Program.

Commissioner Raines read a Syringe Services Program link posted from Tim Candela: “Research for SSPs: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/ProgramsandServices/DiseaseControlandHealthStatistics/InfectiousDisease/DrugUserHealthStaff/SSPResearch>”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Milika Lamont: “Syringe exchange does not cause drug use.”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Erin Schreiber: “Homelessness does not equal substance abuse or addiction”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Angela Montgomery: “They are not hanging around town waiting for bags of needles.”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Becky Walsh: “My husband Jeff Cook helped with a cleanup downtown in Aberdeen in 2019 & found zero needles in 2019.”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Robs iPad: “ENABLING FUELS ADDICTION Enabling drug-addicts is harmful to their health. Shooting up heroin is illegal, and Grays Harbor County should not be contributing to illegal, immoral, and dangerous activities. Please stop promoting and enabling this lawlessness and vote to immediately and permanently END this drug paraphernalia giveaway. It only enables junkies to continue harming themselves and victimizing law-abiding citizens. ENABLING AN ADDICT IS HURTING THEM!”

Commissioner Raines read a typed comment from Angela Montgomery: “Sooooo restructure the program Lets do it.”

- Joan Brewster, former Director of Grays Harbor County Public Health; Read her letter submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting in favor of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Katie Closter, Grays Harbor County Resident; Wrote in an e-mail from the last Board of Health Special Meeting which will be read later. Spoke in favor of the Syringe Exchange Program.

Commissioner Raines noted there were no other chat comments or request to speak. The Board did receive several e-mails submitted and asked Commissioner Pine and Commissioner Warne if staff should read them aloud or if inclusion with the record meeting minutes sufficient for the record.

Commissioner Pine stated it could be included in the minutes as he has read all e-mails and comments submitted.

Commissioner Warne stated she has also ready all the e-mails and comments submitted.

- Ralph Clarkson, Former EMT for Grays Harbor County: Spoke in favor of the Syringe Exchange Program.

Commissioner Raines noted there were a few comments stating individuals were under the impression their e-mails and comments would be read.

Commissioner Pine noted that since it was stated in the beginning of this meeting that all e-mails and comments would be read aloud during this meeting that we should follow through on that.

Commissioner Pine asked if Commissioner Warne agreed.

Commissioner Warne agreed.

Commissioner Raines asked Board Secretary Alex Vido if she was ready to read the e-mails and comments sent to the Commissioners aloud.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido noted that the e-mails and comments were in not particular order.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Rob Warren wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program. The Commissioners received and e-mail from Rob Warren on January 5, 2021 and the same e-mail on January 14, 2021.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Dr. Julie Buck, Medical Director for EMS; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Joshua Francy, Aberdeen City Councilman; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Karen Rowe; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Debbie Warren, District 2 Aberdeen resident, wrote opposed to the Syringe Exchange Program. The Commissioners received and e-mail from Rob Warren on January 5, 2021 and the same e-mail on January 14, 2021.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Angela Crowley, Grays Harbor County resident; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Dee Anne Shaw, Aberdeen City Council, 6th Ward; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Jim Eddy, Hoquiam resident; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Zach Lynch, CHOICE Regional Health Network Substance Use and Prevention Coordinator; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Susan Kingston, Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute Program Operations Specialist; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Denis Brumbaugh, Elma resident; wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Katie Closter, Grays Harbor resident; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Sara Channel; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from M'Liss Hansen; wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Jeffery Wong, Aberdeen resident; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Theresa Julius, Montesano resident; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program.

4:42 p.m.

Recess

At 4:42 p.m. Commissioner Raines announced the meeting would take a brief recess to give Board Secretary Alex Vido a break. Commissioner Raines stated the meeting would reconvene at 4:50 p.m.

At 4:50 p.m. Commissioner Raines moved back to session asking Board Secretary Alex Vido if she was ready to begin reading again and if Cassie Lentz, Healthy Places Division Manager, was going to help read the e-mails and comments sent to the Commissioners aloud.

Board Secretary Alex Vido stated that she would continue to read a few and Cassie Lentz, Healthy Places Division Manager, would read the rest.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Rebecca Durr; wrote in support for the Syringe Exchange Program. Rebecca Durr also commented about COVID 19 vaccination.

Commissioner Raines asked for Emergency Management for Public Health on the pandemic response could put information on the chat box where individuals can get information on vaccines and isolation quarantine. She also stated we have a state guideline for a teared program for vaccinations as vaccinations become available. This is what we are following as required by the State.

Commissioner Pines noted the next tear should be happening in the next few days.

Commissioner Raines responded to Commissioner Pines comment and stated the next tear could occur provided if we have enough vaccines.

Commissioner Pines stated this is what was told to him today.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Rhonda Kennedy, Montesano resident; wrote to oppose the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Brian Anderson, Ocean Shores resident; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from elkhunter; wrote to oppose the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Kacey Morrison, Aberdeen District 2 resident; wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program. The Commissioners received and e-mail from Kacey Morrison on January 5, 2021 and the same e-mail on January 14, 2021.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Kacey Morrison on behalf of Holly Schuck, Montesano resident; wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program. The Commissioners received and e-mail from Kacey Morrison on behalf of Holly Schuck on January 5, 2021 and the same e-mail on January 14, 2021.

- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Kacey Morrison on behalf of Savor our Aberdeen Please, Grays Harbor County residents; wrote to opposed the Syringe Exchange Program. The Commissioners received an e-mail from Kacey Morrison on behalf of Save our Aberdeen Please on January 5, 2021 and the same e-mail on January 14, 2021.
- Board Secretary Alex Vido read a public e-mail comment from Mary Pat Marshall; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.

Cassie Lentz, Healthy Places Division Manager; read the remaining e-mails and comments sent to the Commissioners aloud.

- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Nathan Kennedy, Aberdeen resident, representative of Ward 2 on City Council; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Amy Ostwald spoke in support of the Syringe Exchange Program and provided some links for resources.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Ward Lynne; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Debbie Pieraccini; wrote to oppose the Syringe Services Exchange.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Barb Shillinger, Aberdeen resident; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Roger Nedrow, wrote to oppose the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Cassie Lentz read a public e-mail comment from Victoria Evans, Molina Healthcare; wrote in support of the Syringe Exchange Program.

No more remaining e-mails and comments sent to the Commissioners were left to read aloud.

Commissioner Pine noted someone had their hand up to speak.

Commissioner Raines noted that it looked as though the chat box was disabled and she had asked for Emergency Management to put information on vaccinations on there.

- Dan Wood, spoke to oppose the Syringe Exchange Program and asked to pursue alternatives.
- Chris Thomas, spoke in favor of the Syringe Exchange Program.
- Arthur Blauvelt, local attorney and former judge; spoke to oppose the Syringe Exchange Program.

Hearing or reading no more public comment, Commissioner Raines moved the meeting to item five on the agenda; Approval of Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program.

Approval of Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program

Commissioner Raines asked the Board of Health what their pleasure is for the resolution.

Motion: Commissioner Pine moved to approve the Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program

Second: Commissioner Jill Warne second the motion to approve the Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program.

Commissioner Raines asked Commissioner Pine and Commissioners Warne if there is any discussion.

Commissioner Pine noted this is a complicated issue and appreciates everyone's comments. He agrees this does not need to go away by tomorrow. The syringe aspect is what we want to do away with and focus on rehabilitation, working with the homeless and mental health aspect. The grant money we get is based on need. The program that is currently in place will go on for another 90 days. At the end of our 90 days, our need for the needles we will no longer need. The rest of the program we could like to continue as every life is valuable. We want to help individuals with rehabilitation. Using Cowlitz county as an example of success and use it as a precedent can help our county to help and care for individuals.

Commissioner Warne noted there were a few questions. The RV was not purchased yet so we are not responsible for the \$105,000.00. The amount of money the county spends is not that much money but they are not factoring in loss of business, property values and jobs because of the environment we are creating and maintaining. She mentioned a documentary called Seattle is Dying by Eric Johnson on KOMO fits that Aberdeen is dying also. We can not continue this. Commissioner Warne mention she is not insensitive and has a family member dealing with addiction.

Commissioner Raines thanked everyone for their comments and for the Commissioners to speak up and mentioned she also has a family member who is dealing with addiction. She shared her perspective on the Syringe Exchange and her responsibility as a Board of Health member and Commissioner is to make decisions for all the people of Grays Harbor no matter religion, race, political party, or district they live in. What she does care about is our public health, working with State, local and medical professional health care providers to ensure we do all we can to help the community. She is proud of the programs that have been established in her tenure. There is an evaluation and treatment facility in McCleary, new drug court underway, family drug court in 2020, and expanded diversion program which are all great programs in being successful in helping people with the next step of addiction. She does not see this program as enabling. When the new Commissioners were sworn in it was mentioned they have a lot to learn. Commissioner Raines respectfully request/plead with her fellow board members to take the time to really learn their position and learn about this program and to consider the public health of all Grays Harbor and not just a specific group.

Vote on the Approval of the Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program

Commissioner Raines called to vote on the Approval the Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program with those who approve to say "I."

Commissioner Pine and Commissioner Warne both said "I"

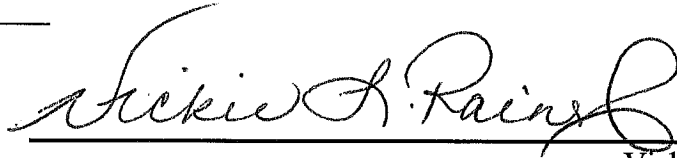
Commissioner Raines asked for those who oppose the approve the Resolution to Discontinue the Syringe Exchange Program to day "Nay"

Commissioner Raines said "nay"

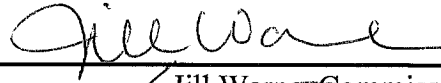
Motion passes.

With no other items to discuss the meeting was called to end at 5:34 p.m.

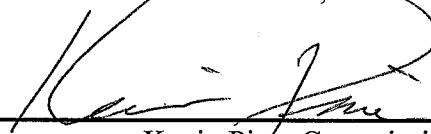
Approved on this ____ day of _____, _____



Vickie Raines, Chair




Jill Warne, Commissioner First District



Kevin Pine, Commissioner Second District

ATTEST:



Alex Vido, Board Secretary