

The Health Council of Marin

Minutes of Regular Meeting: Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Meeting via Zoom; the meeting was recorded

Members Present: Kevin Hogan (President), Roberta Anthes, Connie Barker, Sandy Ross, Jennifer Rienks, Ginger Souders-Mason, Kawa Chiu

Members Absent: Jo Prabhu, Barbara Wientjes, Bobby Moske

Guests: Loretta Rogers (Secretary), Larry Bragman

Handouts: *Agenda; Minutes of January 24, 2023, Health Council of Marin monthly meeting; Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement; Health Council of Marin Meetings for 2023; Marin Water – Strategic Water Supply Assessment meeting - Agenda*

1. **Call to Order:** President Kevin Hogan called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** President Kevin Hogan asked members to review the agenda. Jennifer Rienks moved to approve the agenda. Roberta Anthes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Resolution regarding Tele/Video Conference Meetings during the COVID-19 State of Emergency:** President Hogan asked for a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was made by Sandra Ross, seconded by Roberta Anthes, and passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes of the January 24, 2023, Health Council of Marin Meeting.** President Hogan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023, Health Council of Marin meeting. The motion was made by Jennifer Rienks, seconded by Sandra Ross, and passed unanimously.
5. **Report from the Nominating Committee:** Sandy Ross reported that the Board of Supervisors did set a date to interview our applicants, but Barbara Wientjes was able to attend on that date. The other applicant did not respond. The new date for interviews is March 14, 2023, and Barbara Wientjes has confirmed she can make that date. There are three open positions on the Council.
6. **Report from Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee did not meet, so there is no report.
7. **HHS Update:** Loretta Rogers shared her screen and gave a PowerPoint presentation. She reported the following:
 1. **COVID:** The Emergency Declaration in California and Marin ends on February 28, 2023. Marin County Public Health will continue to monitor COVID via wastewater testing, outbreaks, hospitalizations, and variants. The current dominant variant is Omicron XBB.1. Overall, community infection rates for COVID, flu and RSV are slowly declining. COVID-related staff, hired on a fixed term or extra hire basis, are departing.
 2. **Opioid Crisis:** RxSafe Marin has been renamed OD Free Marin to focus on this issue. Fatal overdoses in Marin have doubled since 2020 and fentanyl is involved in 57% of those overdoses. OD Free Marin is creating new partnerships and strategies to address this crisis.
 3. **Other HHS News:** She provided brief updates on other HHS programs.
 4. Loretta Rogers asked the members what other topics they would like her to report on. Members responded with these topics: Food insecurity, how the County is doing getting qualified residents enrolled in benefits programs, mental health, status of seasonal flu.
8. **Discussions:**
 1. **Guest speaker – Larry Bragman – Presentation on Marin Municipal Water District**

1. He introduced himself. He has just finished serving two terms on the Marin Municipal Water District Board. Before that, he served eleven years on the Fairfax Town Council.
2. The Strategic Water Supply Assessment meeting was tonight. He sent the agenda for this meeting to all HCM members. At this meeting, they were discussing whether or not to move forward on a suite of options for Marin's water future. No specific projects will move forward as a result of any vote taken at this meeting.
3. Background: His focus has always been on the Mt. Tam watershed which is a living system and forms the basis of Marin's water supply. His first project on the MMWD Board was the banning of glyphosates and other toxic herbicides from Marin water which was successful. The drought in the last two years has shifted efforts to increasing water supply.
4. The Board has focused on efforts and increased funding for conservation. This is the easiest and most economical way to stretch our water supply. The California constitution has a provision against wasting water. This is the Public Trust Doctrine. Climate change has made weather patterns unstable, but the Lagunitas watershed is very reliable. The weakness in Marin's water system is that Marin's storage capacity is relatively small i.e. 80,000 acre feet, which makes Marin vulnerable.
5. He favors increasing local storage by raising spillways. This can be done in a very economical way, although permission from the State would be necessary. Another issue is water rights which are complicate and which he explained. Marin's water rights are 87,280-acre feet per year; Marin's use has been 25,000 acre feet per year which shows how well our population has conserved water. About 10,000 acre feet need to be released for the habitat. If Marin increases its storage capacity, Marin avoids huge costs of importing water from Sonoma County including the energy needed to pump the water from outside the county.
6. Ginger Souder-Mason asked about the problem of siltation. Larry Bragman said that Phoenix Lake is the only area where that may be a problem and excavation may be necessary at some point. But, it is not a huge issue in Marin County.
7. The Board has considered building a desalinization plant. However, the consultant said that desalinization costs four times as much as surface water pumped from outside the county. He talked about the benefits or lack of benefits of putting fluoride in the water.
8. Roberta Anthes asked about how the mandated increase in housing will affect the water supply. He said, for example, the mandated addition of 500 units in Fairfax is totally unrealistic just in terms of available land to build. He stated that he thought replacing Northgate Shopping Center with housing units was a very viable option as water, utilities, etc. were already in place.
2. **Update: Legislative Calendar Opinions, Additions and Amendments sent to Board of Supervisors:** President Kevin Hogan stated that he had nothing to report on this.
3. **Update: AB2449 – Return to In-person meetings:** President Kevin Hogan reported that he had not heard back from Damon Connolly on this issue. He did speak with Supervisor Eric Lucan and was informed that the HCM must follow the Brown Act, and there will not be much leeway in accommodating people who have difficulty attending in-person meetings. Out of the ten HCM meetings per year, a person can attend virtually only two. Sandy Ross thanked Kevin Hogan for getting the large conference room at MarinHealth as this will make it easier for members to spread out.
4. **In-person Meeting Schedule at MarinHealth Medical Center:** President Kevin Hogan asked the Council members to print and sign the MarinHealth waiver form and send same to Loretta by this Friday. He continues to look for other possible meeting locations.
9. **Updates from Council Members:** President Kevin Hogan asked for updates from Council members.

1. Sandy Ross reported that her appetite has finally come back along with some of her ability to taste. It's been a little over a year. She also reminded members that the HCM has to do a public meeting sometime during the year.
 2. Ginger Souders-Mason reported on an article in *Science Magazine* about genetically modified house plants which are supposed to be able to "mop up pollutants." However, Marin County is a genetically modified plant free community, so they cannot be sold or bought here. Other plants which cannot be sold in Marin are blue roses and multi-headed sunflowers.
 3. Roberta Anthes reported that her 98-year-old mother passed away on Valentine's Day.
 4. Connie Barker reported that she has not been available recently as her partner, Jan, has been in and out of the hospital twice so far this year. Also, her brother had a severe stroke. There is a bill before the state legislature to set a wage floor for IHHS workers. This floor is considerably above minimum wage. The Marin Organizing Committee has been working on the issue of getting decent wages for IHHS workers for some time. There is a meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 9, at 7:00 pm, at First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael. Connie Barker will be one of the speakers at this meeting.
10. **Update from Council President:** President Kevin Hogan reported the following.
1. He is looking to line up additional speakers to address issues listed in the Biennial Report.
 2. He has reached out to Jennifer Rienks, MarinHealth and Kaiser regarding environmental toxins in the hospitals and no one has responded.
 3. He will follow up with the Board of Supervisors regarding the three open positions on the Council
 4. There will be an Executive Committee meeting on March 14th. This will be in person.
11. **Public Comment:** None.
12. **Adjournment:** A motion was made by Ginger Souders-Mason to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Roberta Anthes and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm. The next meeting will be on March 28, 2023.