

YUMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

October 23, 2020

Special Meeting Minutes¹

On October 23, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., the Yuma County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting as members of the local Yuma County COVID Task Force. Chairman Dean Winfield, Commissioner Robin Wiley, and Administrator Andrea Calhoon were present throughout the meeting with meeting members joining via teleconference. Also in attendance were various municipal and hospital officials as well as Northeast Colorado Health Department Director Trish McClain.

COVID Task Force – Sandy Gilliland of Yuma FFA was present to discuss FFA activities during Yuma’s Trick-or-Treat Street events including a hayride and serving of candy and cider. McClain provided guidance on how to safely distribute candy and cider and City of Yuma representatives provided their input on their preliminary review.

McClain provided updates on an email received from Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Director Jill Ryan expressing concern over COVID metrics and growth rate trends in local jurisdictions and encouraging local public health to voluntarily enact stricter guidelines in the immediate future. Ryan also reviewed changes to executive orders which lower the personal gathering thresholds and limit personal gatherings to no more than two households. Ryan also noted the executive order changes include that CDPHE may change a local jurisdiction’s assignment on the dial outside of the two-week timelines as previously planned and that a local jurisdiction may be moved more than one level at a time. The group discussed interpretations and implications of the message as well as other entities’ responses and work that is currently ongoing. McClain also discussed another email received requesting county meetings with Yuma County Commissioners on October 30. Commissioner Wiley reported on take-aways from a meeting this morning with Colorado Counties, Inc. and county commissioners and their experiences with changing public health guidance. Commissioner Wiley discussed work done by a group of county commissioners who are developing a proposed plan that would target mitigation efforts locally based on transmission within specific communities as opposed to applying blanket metrics. The plan is still being developed and will be presented to the Governor’s Office when finalized.

McClain reported on trends and protocols being followed in various parts of the state as well as potential consequences of various county responses to state public health orders. The group discussed the economic impact of varying restrictions in a region that shares multiple resources including the need for local citizens to travel for essential functions such as groceries and employment. The group expressed concern for the disproportional disadvantage placed on less populated areas under the current metrics and the inefficacies of locking down individual communities and counties as well as the region-wide implications including a potential increase in travel between communities that may result.

Jennifer Kramer of Wray Community District Hospital reported on trends in local testing with positive test results dropping by 50% per week over the last three weeks, respectively. Kramer also reviewed the impacts of switching from open drive-through testing to cause-related antigen testing. Kramer reported that the number of tests provided per week is only marginally less than testing rates prior, but that test are now being targeted to symptomatic and exposed individuals, which is allowing Wray Community District Hospital to target treatment and public education more appropriately. The group discussed various metrics including incidence rates and testing counts. Data is currently trending in a positive direction and the group expressed ways in which to present these trends to CDDPHE in hopes of inspiring cooperative decision-making with State health partners. The group also discussed ways to utilize available CARES Act funding allocated to Yuma County in support of local antigen testing.

McClain reviewed the three metrics needed to move to an improved level on the State dial versus the impact of a single metric impacting the decision to move to a more restrictive metric. The group discussed frustration and lack of understanding of how one metric in violation can result in an immediate move to a more restrictive level whereas all three metrics must be met for two weeks before an improved level is approved. The group also discussed concern for the long-range impact of such changes on community perspectives and participation in public health instruction. Concern over the credibility of local governments and public health agencies with constituents were expressed including attempts

¹ Minutes prepared by Andrea Calhoon are a summary of discussions, not a verbatim account.





to relay such concerns to the State level by and through partner organizations like CCI. The group will work next week on preparing local data trends for presentation to CDPHE at the October 30 meeting requested by CDPHE.

The group discussed recent news related to COVID including a recent ruling in federal court regarding masking and distancing protocols in churches.

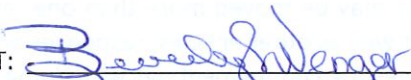
The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next COVID Task Force meeting will be set for the week of October 26, 2020 based on group availability.



Dean Wingfield, Chairman



Andrea Calhoon, Administrator

ATTEST: 

Beverly Wenger, County Clerk

