

Food Advisory Committee meeting minutes

June 24, 2021

Those Attending

Ragina Gray, Chris Stringer, Phil Wyman, Zach Christopher, Leah Tax, Jane Dale, Teddi McGuire, Megan de Vries, Shelly Mackie.

Expense Adjustments

The Board of Health approved a 2% COLA for EHS staff. The Indirect Rate was finalized at 47.1% for 2021. This means there is a budget gap of \$260,589. The Foundational Public Health Fund (FPHF) is the state money that will go to local health jurisdictions. This has the potential to help close the budget gap. Right now, we don't know how much we're receiving, or what the stipulations will be on how it will be able to be used.

Food program Fee Adjustment Ideas

Ragina went through 5 different options on how to adjust fees to help cover the cost of the Food program.

Idea #1: Increase the late fee to be consistent for all Environmental Health programs.

Idea #2: A 2% increase on annual permits. This spreads out the cost to everyone rather than one group.

Idea #3: Cost adjustments on plan review. Plan review is our top area for loss. It costs more in staff time than the fee covers. We want to consolidate the categories and simplify.

Idea #4: Increase the cost of temporary permits. The increase is minor. We have plans to come up with a separate farmers market permit and an appropriate fee. It is hard to fit farmers markets into the temporary permit categories. We also want to clarify when a late fee needs to be paid.

Idea #5; The fifth idea is increase enforcement, which also includes improving our messaging. We must make sure this is equitable. We also want to make sure that the Food section of the website is easier and faster to use.

If we do all these ideas, except enforcement, that would come to \$77,000. We are hoping to close that gap with FPHF as was mentioned above. We will probably have to have this discussion again next year. The power point slides, with notes, will also be sent out to the FAC members. Many members were unable to attend. If you have any questions, thoughts or ideas on the fees and budget, please contact us at foodsafety@snohd.org.

Excellence Awards

The 2019 excellence awards are being given out to each winner in July this year. Congratulations to all those winners! It was decided that we would not have 2020 excellence award winners because regular work was interrupted by COVID. We felt it would not be equitable. So many places were closed and our ability to get into facilities was reduced, so we didn't get to all the places we needed to. The 2021 excellence awards will go forward as usual. This is a process that starts with the inspectors reviewing and nominating facilities in each category. Those nominees are reviewed and voted on by 5 members of this committee and 2 non-food employees at SHD. The nomination/voting packets will be mailed out around the December meeting. The awards will be presented at the April 2022 Board of Health meeting.

Reopening on June 30th

Went over the following FAQ's from WA Dept of Health:

- Q) What happens on June 30th when we hit 70% vaccination rates?
- A) The state will be open for business and recreation, and people who are vaccinated can go along with their regular lives for the most part. Unvaccinated people will need to continue wearing masks indoors. Most sectors get to operate as they normally would, but they must follow workplace safety requirements (which come from LNI). Restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, and grocery stores are going to be fully open. DOH recommends that you keep watching your distance, wearing your mask, and washing your hands.
- Q) Will unvaccinated people still have to wear masks?
- A) The Secretary of Health's mask order remains in place, which means that unvaccinated people need to continue to mask in public. This helps protect not only those who are unvaccinated, but also vulnerable children who are not yet able to be vaccinated and others with auto-immune or other conditions that prevent them from being vaccinated.
- Q) Can businesses still require people to wear masks?
- A) Yes, counties and businesses can be stricter and enforce masking, distancing and handwashing, etc. – whatever is appropriate in those spaces. That's why the DOH mantra is "Respect the Rules of the Room you're in."
- Q) What are exceptions to this rule?
- A) Large-scale events will have some limits that the governor just released guidance for. Events that are indoors with 10k or more people must be limited to 75% occupancy or require vaccination and follow mask requirements. Other exceptions are things that have their own proclamations. These are generally higher risk congregant settings like healthcare, long term care facilities, or places where many people are not yet able to be vaccinated like childcare, day camps, K-12. In these settings, masking is still required, even among fully vaccinated persons. These proclamations will be updated in the future based on updated science and guidance from CDC or OSHA.

- Q) What happens to the guidance from the DOH, LNI and Governor's office?
- A) Many of these will simply go away. We believe that 20-25 will be adapted and go forward as DOH guidance. LNI will share guidance for workplace safety. DOH will continue to provide information and resources on the broadly applicable topics of the use of masks to reduce transmission of respiratory diseases, how to have safer social gatherings, and what to do if you are exposed. Vaccination information for individuals and workplaces will also be highlighted throughout.

Questions from FAC members

- Q) Has there been an increase in reopening and new food service establishments?
- A) The biggest increase right now is Change of Ownerships. We also have been receiving many expedited plans, which need to be done by staff after regular hours. This has been overloading the plan review team. The regular posted turnaround time is 10 weeks, expedited are expected to be done within half of the posted time.
- Q) Explain the 90-day grace period on permit renewal?
- A) When the SHD health officer made an emergency declaration, we wanted to give everyone a 90-day grace period to pay for their permit. When/if the health officer lifts that declaration, that grace period will go away. This will apply to the date on the invoice. If the declaration is lifted on July 1, the date on the invoice will determine if you still have the 90-day grace period. If the date on the invoice is June 30, you still get the 90-day grace period. If the date on the invoice is after July 1, you must pay on the invoice date.
- Q) What are the recommendations when it comes to shared eating spaces in schools and setting out condiments or having salad bars?
- A) Information for schools will probably change throughout the summer. We will treat school kitchens the same as we treat other food service establishments. Once you step out of the kitchen, you must follow the school guidance. We will update the schools with any info we receive through meetings with school superintendents, blast emails and the school newsletter.
- Q) What are the recommendations for sampling or Demoing in grocery stores?
- A) Theoretically, you can go back to what you did pre-COVID. Each facility can be stricter than the guidance though. We will have more info on this as early as Monday June 28, when the Dept of Health has a meeting with all the local health jurisdictions. If we receive any new info as all this progresses, we will send out blast emails.

Next meeting September 23, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Link will be provided prior to the date.