

**Madison County  
Commissioner Meeting Minutes  
July 21, 2020**



**Attendees:**

**Jon Weber, Commissioner (Chairman)**  
**Todd Smith, Commissioner**  
**Brent Mendenhall, Commissioner**  
**Kim Muir, County Clerk**

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Commissioner Mendenhall

**ACTION ITEMS**

Those present: Geri Rackow and James Corbett with Eastern Idaho Public Health, Frank Asbell, Commissioner Elect Doug Smith, Robert Kohler, Jerry Merrill, Bradley Petersen, Kirsten Ruebush  
Joining by Zoom: Rachel Gonzales, Sugar City Mayor Steve Adams.

Robert reported that 31 people are currently considered active COVID cases in the County. Geri Rackow gave a timeline of the virus beginning in March 2020 when the governor issued a statewide, stay at home order. The Eastern Idaho Public Health district is in stage 4 of Idaho rebounds. The governor gives a press conference every Thursday. Three weeks ago, the governor announced the regional offices would begin taking a local approach and monitor the cases, recognizing it is not a one-size fits all approach. EIPH is able to implement at a local level where we are at this point. All are trying to understand the public crises we are faced with.

As outlined in Idaho Code, Idaho's public health districts shall "do all things required for the preservation and protection of the public health and preventative health." The ultimate goal of this plan is to slow the spread of COVID-19, to protect public health and to ensure during the COVID-19 pandemic that healthcare capacity is maintained for ALL patients needing care – not just COVID-19 patients. Also, to minimize the impact to our economy as much as possible while still protecting public health.

EIPH's Board of Health and Director will be responsible for the implementation of this plan and will be in close communication and collaboration with elected officials of local jurisdictions within the region. Elected Officials have the authority to implement their own measures.

Geri explains we are experiencing a 5 to 10 days waiting period for testing, but our capacity to test is much better. Testing kits are more readily available, but re-agent to run the test is in short supply through Express Lab. The district is currently in the green level and large gatherings present the highest level of spread of the disease. Testing has shown that even people that have mild systems of the disease, have lifelong lung problems. This is the point of the mask to minimize you spreading to other people.

James comments that Madison County would move to moderate when we hit 40 active cases. Active means 10 days from symptom onset, and ends when there are no active symptoms. Their office becomes involved upon a positive test.

Active case is defined as those not released from isolation. Contact tracing involves the positive patient and whom they have interacted with. You are most contagious right before and right as symptoms begin. Even without testing you can be a probable case. Cases are recorded in our jurisdiction at their permanent addresses.

The district wants to stress: Wash your hands, if you're sick, stay at home, if you are out in public – wear a mask. When we hit 40 cases, (for 3 consecutive days) there will be a meeting called and mandatory face covering when in public could be ordered by elected officials. This will stay in effect for 14 days.

They are trying to increase the ability of each hospital to treat more patients – all patients not just COVID. ICU occupancy 21 days is the average, but some can stay 4 – 6 weeks and some can be a day and they could go in multiple times. Patients in the hospital with severe symptoms are contagious pretty much the whole time.

The hospitals have their own surge plans they can escalate as needed. The main concern is the staffing. There are resources to get beds and equipment, but not staffing.

Commissioner Weber comments that Geri and her staff at EIPH do a tremendous job and have a tough job to do. If we can get this virus under control we can have our freedom back. Home schooling isn't happening for a lot of families and our internet services aren't that great. Domestic violence and drug use are up statistically. This had huge impact on our businesses and we have to look out for them. Face masks are not preventing the spread, but we have to control it, or it gets more serious. Control of this disease is absolutely essential.

Jerry Merrill is having a committee meeting at 10:30 a.m. today to review ways to control the spread. They are encouraging people to be aware of what is going on.

The Health District is launching a campaign to talk about some of the myths and misinformation and to get everyone on board with factual information. Commissioner Smith mentions that wearing a mask isn't about protecting yourself, it's about protecting others. The goal is to slow down the spread and stay in the green. Our commissioners don't want to vote, as Bonneville is today to mandate masks and move to limit gatherings.

There being no further business Commissioner Weber made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded and voting was unanimous. The motion passed.

Approved:

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Jon Weber, Commission Chairman

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Todd Smith, Commissioner

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Brent Mendenhall, Commissioner

Attest:

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Kim Muir, County Clerk