



Food Service Advisory Committee

Approved Minutes (FSAC)

October 19, 2020 2 pm to 4 pm

Members Present: Carollee Woodstock (Woodstock’s Pizza Parlor), Barb Eveland (Normals); Chris Heuchert, Chair (Block 15); Jeff Franzoia, GM & Vice Chair (Applebee’s); Mark Tibbetts, General Manager – Food & Nutrition Services Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center Corvallis, Oregon

Excused Members:

Staff Present: Benton County Environmental Health: Bill Emminger, Suzanne Hoffman (Health Director), Kate Porsche (Economic Development); Scott Kruger, Paula Felipe (recorder)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm by Chair Heuchert.

II. Introductions and Citizen Comments.

Welcome to new Health Department Director Suzanne Hoffman and to guest speaker Kate Porsche from Economic Development. No citizen comments were made.

III. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

MOTION was made to approve the Agenda. Chris has a priority item: what is plan for COVID19 Protocols and returning to in-house restaurant inspections? The annual Permit fees pay for the inspectors’ time coming into restaurant, and Chris understands it was put on pause during the pandemic. He feels this should impact the talks on proposed renewal of licensing fees, and said it has been more than a year since he was seen inspections take place. Bill: One reason why Kate Porsche was invited to discuss how to help with financial support for industry, such as operational costs and recovery costs for restaurant license fees. Chris: I’m referring to when are we going to see inspections return? The justifications from the health department for the fees is to administer the inspection program. If no inspections are happening, then we should talk about cost recovery and structure for fees tied to health inspections. This item will be included in the Agenda for discussion. **MOTION** on Agenda was Seconded and passed unanimously.

MOTION was made by Carollee Woodstock to approve the September 2019 minutes; Seconded by Jeff Franzoia; passed unanimously.

IV. COVID-19 and Environmental Health Activities – Ever Changing Priorities in a COVID-19 World – Bill Emminger.

1918-1920: 3 year period and up to four peaks during the outbreak. The intervention protocols used for many states at that time were similar to today – masking, social distancing, quarantine, hand washing, etc. Other highlights include:

- Between 1918-1920; 50 million died worldwide; 675,000 died in U.S.
- Four waves affected the United States. Second wave had much higher peak and fatality rate; medical professionals concerned how will the second wave affects us today.
- Until a vaccine gets developed today; we are still using intervention measures they used 100 years ago.
- National geographic article: How some cities flattening the curve: Philadelphia banned gatherings early but hosted a parade of 200,000 and had a big spike.
- Lessons to be learned from the past pandemic: With OHA using metrics and decisions based on science--opening and closing activities to prevent the spread and flatten the curve.
- CDC article dated October 9 shows how COVID-19 played out in Arizona. Point out they declared emergency and put controls in effect; stay at home orders; look at average still going

up steadily: On April 29 thru May 11 started phase reopenings but didn't really flatten the curve. Lifted stay at home orders and things getting out of control; started mandating masking, closing restaurants to reduce capacity to 50 percent. We have better metrics and public health system today; antibiotics and support care improved—still need a vaccine.

- Flatten curve to avoid spike to not overwhelm hospitals, medical staff, and life support systems, like ventilators.
- Sources for stats include John Hopkins website has worldwide information; can see Benton county numbers. Oregon Health Authority also has a site with public information.
- County Status Map: we are in phase 2 and on the watch list, which means some numbers not moving in right direction. Help trigger where additional resources might be needed.
- Benton County COVID-19 website kept up to date. Statewide Guidance; current social guidance standards. Can find restaurants guidance and bar guidance; at least once a week looking at guidance and how it might affect my staff work; literally changing every other day; make sure we are up to date on current guidance; get up to date info to businesses.
- EH priorities: During Emergency Operations, working on COVID19 response including supporting our communicable disease team/contact tracing efforts and response to the wildfires. Continue to support EOC as needed along with responding to food and water borne illnesses; animal bite investigations; surveys; day-care inspections; plans reviews; routine inspections of restaurants, pools, spas, priority inspections. Trying to fit work in as best we can with other priorities.
- Environmental Health would love to get back to routine work schedule and completed about 20 percent of inspections—could be up to 50 percent by end of calendar year. The virus determines the timeline. That concludes my update.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

- Chris Heuchert: good information on background. From financial standpoint, does county receive funding to help fund contact tracing? What kind of cost recovery equivalency based on—how much time it takes? Bill: Early on with Governor's declaration of emergency, we started our Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and there is tracking and accountability for the response. Staff completed an ICS form 214 related to disaster and this helps reimburse expenses incurred. I don't think it will be 100 percent reimbursement; maybe 70 or 80 percent—that is work by our Finance/Accounting Department.
- Question about cares act funding: Discussion about the legal and legitimate use of such funding to pay down license fees or to give credit on license fees. Another county using care act to pay for license fees 2020 and 2021 and there is a concern that may not be an appropriate use—more of a direct response to Covid19—so we are taking a closer look at this for our county.
- Kate: we come up with list of variation of different ideas; meeting with Mark this week. Funding they can get especially waiving of city or county fees or personal property taxes beneficial. High on their list.
- Kate: we put together our list, and on city side and county side finance teams to review and see if passes their understanding of cares act rule and how they are interpreting it.
- Suzanne Hoffman: Big focus in coming weeks is how to continue to respond appropriately to pandemic and also conduct all the rest of public health work—at this point budget is unknown.
- Bill: Even if vaccine becomes available; manufacturer still needs to get vaccines out and distributed and follow requirements.

V. **Economic Aid – Kate Porsche, Economic Development Manager, City of Corvallis/Benton County. Financial Assistance for Businesses in Benton County/Corvallis.** <https://yescorvallis.org/resources/> Kate gave a presentation on outreach to businesses; resource support; finance fees; and funding for local businesses impacted by the pandemic. Economic Development is also a clearing house of info for businesses and the website (listed above) has information gathered from the state and county, including grants available for small businesses in Benton County. Some highlights of her talk includes:

- She worked in Emergency Ops Center from March-August assisting local businesses and working with partners to communicate timely information to the public.
- Fourth round of grants available thru business Oregon.
- Want business owners aware of website resource—will post all information.
- Business guide on site: helpful in getting into out; available in English and Spanish; has reopening guidelines and other info.
- Recently dispersed 11,000 masks to businesses.
- Website has contact information.
- Funding and info for businesses in dire straits linked to small business development center which has counselors for one on one advising.
- Website is a resource for your team and businesses.
- Right now round of funding: Business Oregon grants to help businesses. Need to show you have been negatively impacted by COVID19; the uses are flexible. You used to have to show 50 percent impact on revenue; now it's only 25 percent. Before excluded businesses who received PPP and or idle funding. But now opened that up. Current round is flexible on what funds used for. Grant funds run out quickly; in a week we had 50 applications and only \$200,000 for all of Benton County; watching for future rounds.
- Potential use for cares act money to help—we are working with city manager and Joe Kerby in formulating pitches for cares act money that can benefit businesses to work hand in hand with public and environmental health to help offset costs.
- Please contact us with questions.

VI. **Review of Proposed 2021 Fees:** Bill: calculated rates and sent out justification as Attachment B; proposed fee schedule (Attachment A). In last year, new configuration able to pass on some cost savings to license facility side of program so last year we did not increase fees at all. Assuming a normal year, looking at 3 percent fee increase. Normally that is what I would be recommending but these are unusual times and open for discussion.

Comments/Questions:

- Carolee: I haven't had inspections and don't know what I'm paying for: My seating is a mere fraction what I would be charged for. Hard time to support higher level. Since March, I've not been operating as a restaurant as I used to operate. Two main issues I have with fee increases: I would like to support and encourage finding funding to offset fees for restaurants—a lot are suffering more than we are—I have outside seating.
- Chris: I echo her comments: I cannot support increased fees where we are now. We should have one year of half cost or lower fees; we have not seen inspections for a year based on our inspection calendar—we were due for one; with that in mind, it feels very cold and unaware to say we are going to ask for raise fees for services that have not been provided.
- Bill: I hear that loud and clear; I'm not sure if we need a motion at this point or more discussion

about it. One piece I'll be working on is seeing what other financial assistance is available to help offset license fees—maybe credit for next year—I don't know but willing to have that conversation.

- Jeff: curious about fees and occupancy requirements--75 seat restaurant now--is that the fee we are on now? Bill: we talked about that scenario with health officials and one point is that our category based on seating is so broad if defaulted to that many places would not get a decrease in fees. Rather than trying to recalculate 300 or 400 seating; better as a 50 percent credit or 100 percent credit to apply to this year's license or next year's licenses—instead of recalculate fees based on seating. A credit would be simpler than a recalculation of seating.
- Barb: Everyone has taken a hit: no business since middle of March. Only a couple months on that license we paid for.
- Carolee: A simple way is the credit; I paid full fee last year for this year. I think it is insulting – we already lost 9 months.
- Kate: Meeting with Joe Kerby (County Administrator) and Mary Otley (Chief Finance Officer) to discuss the Cares Act funding and possible credit or rebate related to public health inspections. Bill will be part of that meeting along with community development—get better guidance on how to move forward.
- Chris: Strong lack of approval for this fee structure as it is proposed now—Bill will work with Kate for alternatives to balance the overall budget looking into next year. How to move forward? Bill: I don't want to tell FSAC what to do; what I'm hearing is industry is struggling and would appreciate any kind of assistance the county can find. Normally I know where money is coming from; but in these times, I don't know where dollars will come from and will take that conversation forward. chris; intent of services t
- Chris: We are saying the services have not been rendered for the fees paid. Some businesses are hurting; some better than others; really hurting; really about lack of providing inspections services for fees we paid for 2020.
- Jeff: I got a health inspection a couple weeks ago. Carolee recalled having one in March. Fees based on supposed volume and we cannot generate that level of business. I do not propose you redo those classifications—I like the 50 percent or so would be really helpful.
- Bill: I hear you. 50- percent of last year's fees reimbursed or next year forgiven; want to be equitable to folks.
- Chris: what do you need form us? Do you need a motion?
- Carolee: I feel you've heard us—don't feel a need for a motion. Bill will take FSAC concerns to the Board of Commissioners.
- Bill: I will make sure they understand your concern about providing some financial relief – for this year, and next year or some combination. Maybe 50 percent is a good starting point as 50 percent of our work will be done by end of year.
- Chris: if we don't need a motion, we will leave it in your hands. We need to schedule another FSAC meeting—so you can seek our recommendation going forward.
- Bill will find out more information and send out an invite to an FSAC meeting when he has more information.

VII. Adjournment - MOTION was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:38 pm; **MOTION** seconded, all in favor, so approved.