

COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MAY 6, 2020

Sheriff Hardesty, Chairman, called to order the meeting of the Richardson County Board of Health at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. Sheriff Hardesty, Chairman of the Board and Dr. Allan Tramp the appointed physician/medical advisor were both present along with the Secretary, Mary L. Eickhoff, Richardson County Clerk.

Sheriff Hardesty made note that due to this meeting being offered through a teleconference that the Open Meeting Laws were posted at the entrance to this meeting room and were also available for public review on the Richardson County website, www.co.richardson.ne.us.

The minutes of the April 22, 2020, meeting have been forwarded to the members and were thereby approved.

The agenda was provided to the media and was posted at the Richardson County Courthouse in the First Floor Lobby, the Lower Level Lobby and on the Commissioner's Meeting Room door on the 2nd Floor, all entrance doors at the Courthouse and on the Richardson County website www.co.richardson.ne.us.

Several persons from different agencies and departments requested to join the meeting and those present were: **Grant Brueggeman**, Executive Director, SE NE Health Department; **Kathy Messner**, Clinical Care Mgt—Infection Control from the Community Medical Center; **Brian Kirkendall**, Richardson County EMA Director; County Attorney, **Doug Merz**; County Board Chairman, **David Sickel**; **Duane Armbruster**, Falls City Chief of Police and member of the Falls City Board of Health and **Gary Jorn** of the Falls City Ambulance squad.

Because of the need to offer teleconferencing, the ground rules of the meeting to prevent talking over others were presented:

- 1) Request to mute phones
- 2) Chairman will give everyone an opportunity to speak by calling on you in list form.
- 3) State name prior to speaking, Chairman will then repeat your name so that everyone will know who is speaking.
- 4) When a person is completed speaking they should indicate they are finished.

Dr. Tramp once again expressed his thanks to the citizens in Richardson County for doing all they can to practice the social distancing recommendations the past months. He also encourages citizens to wear facial masks while in public and away from home and family members.

Grant Brueggemann of the Southeast Nebraska Health Department provided an update on the coronavirus pandemic in the Southeast Nebraska area. In Nebraska as a total today there are 6483 cases with 82 deaths; the Southeast District has had 4 total cases, 1 Otoe that has recovered; 1 Nemaha that has recovered; 2 in Johnson. Cases now are 1 travel related and the other is close contact with family who had traveled and the other 2 have not been determined how the virus was contracted. He explained the testing schedule and sites and the plans to have more testing sites in the Southeast District area. The testing is an attempt by the State to obtain a better idea and for the general public to benefit of the random testing to identify additional cases and to confirm if they are connected to manufacturing or meat packing plants and facilities. Dr. Tramp had asked about when a peak in cases for the SE District Health Dept. might be seen. Mr. Brueggemann indicated that the Statewide model is showing the peak at the end of May, beginning of June with no model specific for our area. Mr. Brueggemann believes that the peak in the Southeast District area will be delayed due to our location in the State. With some restrictions being lifted on Monday, May 4 it is hoped that residents in the County and the SE District Health Department area don't lose focus of what we have been trying to do these past several months with practicing the recommendation of social distancing, wearing masks in public, sanitizing and hand washing more frequently. These recommendations and guidelines need to continue to be followed and if these recommendations and guidelines aren't still practiced then we will see an uptick in the positive cases. He also reported that the Hall County cases are on the rise and had really started with a party of about 100 or more people in attendance which was the trigger point and that is believed how the virus affected persons working in the meat processing plants. Processing plants in our area have begun to implement some procedures and recommendations like placing barriers between employees, having available the correct personal protective equipment on at all times. The Southeast District Health Department area has been fortunate as we have had some time to prepare and try to avoid outbreaks. Best way to avoid a major breakout of the virus in the area is to stay home when you are sick, avoid large gatherings of people, maintain a distance of 6 feet while out in public and wear a mask so as to not intentionally exposing someone if you are an asymptomatic carrier.

Brian Kirkendall, EMA Director updated on the work that is being done by the Richardson County COVID19 Planning Committee. He reported that the County Board voted at their meeting yesterday to continue with the doors being locked at the Courthouse for the next 2 weeks. The Emergency Management Agency is also working with the SE NE District Health Dept to plan for a testing site if and when one will be approved for this area.

Duane Armbruster reported that it seems that residents are more out and about more freely and that there has been an increase in activity at park areas and the downtown area. A question by Mr. Armbruster on to the mutation of the virus and the different variations of it. Dr. Tramp followed up on the question the test for the virus in the United States is considered more to be more aggressive and easily transmittable that what had originally started in China. Might be one of the reasons that NY and the Midwest meat packing plants has a higher incidence than other places. Hope is that this virus will burn itself out. Vaccine being developed will work if the virus structure changes.

Sheriff Hardesty did report that there was a number of campers at the Kirkman's Cove lake area this past weekend. Domestic incidents and They have also had more calls relating to thefts in the rural area.

Kathy Messner of Community Medical Center reported that 84 tests have been done at the hospital with 6 pending results but with 78 negative and that the turnaround has been 2 days with UNMC and the State. Antibody testing is being done on some CMC employees to see if by chance they had the COVID19 before the pandemic began. Test kits available at CMC are in good supply and testing is Monday thru Friday by referrals only.

Dr. Tramp offered his thanks for everyone for their part in being vigilant in this process and if anyone sees something that needs to be monitored or reviewed, please let the Board know.

Chairman Hardesty adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m. and tentatively scheduled another meeting for Wednesday, May 27, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.

Sheriff Hardesty, Chairman
Richardson County Board of Health

Dr. Allan Tramp

Mary L. Eickhoff, Secretary
Richardson County Clerk