

YUMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

September 18, 2020

Special Meeting Minutes¹

On September 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., the Yuma County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting as members of the local Yuma County COVID Task Force. Chairman Dean Wingfield, Commissioner Trent Bushner, 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. Special guests for the meeting were Elle Child representing the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as well as John Swartout and Daphne Gervais of Colorado Counties, Inc.

COVID Task Force – Hospital and public health representatives provided data on current local case counts and hospitalizations and reported a notable spike in both counts was currently being seen. Current testing counts were also reported as being up, some to a point of straining local resources for testing provision. Wray hospital reported that rapid testing supplies had been expended at a much higher rate than expected and that no rapid tests would be available until more supplies were received as the few remaining tests needed to be reserved for healthcare frontline workers first. In light of the increased counts, the group discussed how to best to work with CDPHE and the State within the newly established dial metric. The group also requested information from Ms. Elle Child regarding how communication from the State would look as local communities moved around within the new dial metric.

The group discussed the importance of focusing on the 14-day average and hospitalization counts and not daily testing numbers. Based on the widespread misinformation within the community regarding local case counts and implications of the increase in cases, the team discussed establishing a public education campaign designed to disseminate reliable information from local sources and to educate local citizens on the work the task force is doing and has done of the preceding months. It was determined that the respective public information officers from each entity would meet in the coming days to develop such an educational campaign.

A discussion with Child was had regarding current variance status and how to continue forward momentum previously gained within the new circumstances. Child discussed the additional requirements for the submitted variance requests including the barriers in law enforcement attestation. Child noted that the State is motivated to assist Yuma County in getting to a Protect Your Neighbor status and noted that case counts will be evaluated as of September 29, which allows Yuma County a window to return the community statistics to the ideal thresholds. Child also reminded the group to focus more heavily on hospitalizations and the 14 day average case count as opposed to any one or two day case count increase. The local representatives advocated for the ability of the local officials to utilized the task force framework to assess and establish local control and response based on local data. Child acknowledged the strength of the task force relationships and looks to support Yuma County's efforts as local data allows. Child inquired as to how the State can assist in resolving the law enforcement barriers to attestation and the group discussed the lack of available resources in enforcing public health orders. The group also requested Child's input on the Protect Your Neighbor application requirements in their original form as compared to under the new dial metric.

The group discussed the local COVID business grant program timelines and application process. The timelines were reviewed with the intention of both infusing funds into the community and reserving time to award a second round of grants if funding is available. **City of Yuma Manager Scott Moore moved to open the Yuma County COVID business grant program for applications effective September 25 and to have a two week application period closing October 9. City of Wray Manager James DePue seconded the motion. It passed by unanimous vote.**

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



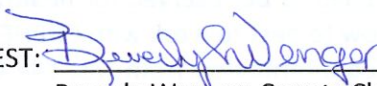


CCI President John Swartout notified the group that additional funding through the Coronavirus Relief Fund may be available mid to late October should local governments have additional projects necessitating funds beyond the original award.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next COVID Task Force meeting will be set for the week of September 21, 2020 based on group availability.


Dean Wingfield, Chairman


Andrea Calhoon, Administrator

ATTEST: 
Beverly Wenger, County Clerk

