

City Health Board Meeting Discussion Record
April 27, 2020

Voting members in attendance: Dr. Mary Milroy, City Manager Amy Leon and Mayor Nathan Johnson.

Ex Officio members in attendance: City Attorney Ross Den Herder, Police Commander Jason Foote, Kate Huff, Community Development Manager Brad Bies and Community and Economic Development Director Dave Mingo.

Leon stated that recommendations today will be passed on to the City Commission this evening. She introduced Dr. Michael Pietila, a Pulmonologist from Yankton Medical Clinic (YMC), to discuss the COVID-19 situation in Yankton.

Dr. Pietila stated that the peak based on the current modeling for Yankton is predicted at 165 hospitalized patients near the end of June or beginning of July. That will have wide-ranging impacts if it occurs including personnel for COVID patients, personnel for non-COVID patients and supplies, including PPE. He discussed herd immunity and the thought some have that we should let it proceed. He stated that would severely tax local healthcare. Part of considering reopening is that we need access to more testing and the ability to trace contacts. The serologic testing starting at YMC may help us decide the timing to reopen.

Leon discussed the Commission's consideration about opening things up. Dr. Pietila referenced a Harvard study and stated that public health would benefit from extending the ordinance. He stated he understands the balance of the economic situation.

Mayor Johnson also discussed the difficulty of weighing the public health benefits and economic impacts. By all accounts the biggest wave is still in front of us. Pietila discussed the need to continue to focus on businesses getting federal assistance. The herd immunity is flawed logic that statistically, will not get us out of this. Past pandemics have had second, larger waves. He further stated we need to learn how to live with Coronavirus and make efforts to keep healthcare from getting overwhelmed which would be the real problem.

Mayor Johnson commented that based on all referenced reopening criteria, including the White House reopening plan, we don't meet any criteria to reopen. Johnson also discussed the struggles of individual communities having different regulations in place. Dr. Pietila commented that there is no way to have everyone be happy with about 80 percent of people saying it's too soon to open up.

Dr. Pietila discussed the definition of close contact. Close contact is defined as being within six feet of someone not from your household for 15 minutes. Certain businesses like salons can't really do this and PPE should be saved for healthcare.

Dr. Pietila left the meeting at this time.

Milroy stated that as the Health Board, our responsibility is related to public health and safety. All experts that have provided information to us have said we have not reached the peak yet. Everyone statistically says we have not reached the peak yet. Milroy recommends extending restrictions by two weeks to see what changes statistically.

Mayor Johnson agreed with Milroy except maybe excluding dog groomers from the list of restricted businesses. He stated the message from healthcare experts is clear and it would be irresponsible to recommend reopening at this point. Huff agreed stating that the Board needs to make recommendations based on science. Those recommendations all say continue with the ordinance. She also recommended removing tanning salons from the list of restricted businesses.

Bies and Foote concurred. Leon reported that a number of communities are lifting restrictions this week. Milroy suggests two more weeks with the exception of dog groomers and tanning beds.

Mayor Johnson asked how would we administer the ordinance if there were other provisions like spacing and percentages. Mingo, Bies and Foote all agreed that enforcement would be very difficult. The community would need to trust that businesses will do the right thing without enforcement being very involved.

Motion by Leon, seconded by Milroy that the recommendation to the City Commission include extending the ordinance two more weeks, following prescribed CDC and OSHA guidelines, excluding dog groomers and tanning salons and a request that the City Commission take no action tonight but rather allow the staff to formulate resolution language for their action at special meeting later in week. All voted aye

Motion to adjourn by Johnson, seconded by Leon. All voted aye.