



OFFICE OF THE COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES

May 6, 2020

6:30 p.m. – Special Session (Town Hall)

Present: Chairwoman Elizabeth C. Archuleta, Vice Chairwoman Lena Fowler, Supervisor Matt Ryan, Supervisor Jim Parks and Supervisor Art Babbott were present virtually via Zoom meeting technology.

Also Present: County Manager James Jayne, Deputy County Manager/Public Works Director Lucinda Andreani, Deputy County Manager Joanne Keene, Deputy County Manager Marie Peoples, Deputy County Attorney Rose Winkeler, Public Affairs Director Eric Peterson, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Lindsay Daley and Deputy Clerk of the Board Valerie Webber were present virtually via Zoom meeting technology.

Chairwoman Archuleta called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and provided opening statements, welcoming everyone present and thanking all those involved with the County's COVID-10 response.

Special Session Discussion Item:

1. Presentations on and discussion by the Board of Supervisors with the members of the public on the COVID-19 pandemic, the County's response to the pandemic, the pandemic's impacts and concerns for the County and its residents.

Chairwoman Archuleta invited all Board members to present opening statements.

Individual Board members thanked participants for joining the meeting and provided opening statements and expressed their concerns for issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairman Archuleta noted the County is operating on the Governor's order and provided a brief overview of businesses that will be allowed to begin opening and how they may find information related to said openings. She explained the actions being taken by the Board to communicate to the Governor that a one-size fits all approach may not work in all scenarios and, provided information as to where citizens may access resource information related to health, business and community resource services.

Deputy County Manager/Incident Commander Dr. Marie Peoples provided an update on statistics related to those effected by COVID-19 as well as, the County's response to the pandemic.

Public Affairs Director Eric Peterson facilitated participant questions to the Board; adding that Spanish interpretation is available.

Question: Will antibody tests be available to anyone?

Dr. Peoples noted she was not sure they will be available to everyone however there are some labs that are testing for a fee. The County is not able to do that at this time.

Question: Is testing open to everyone or only those who have symptoms?

Dr. Peoples stated testing is available for those with symptoms even without a physician order. The only criteria is that you think you may have been exposed. She detailed the place and times that testing is available.

Question: What is the County doing to prepare to keep those of us employees 65 plus with medical conditions after the governor opens businesses up?

Dr. Peoples stated the County is working on making a safe and whole return of employees at the County that are thoughtful and detailed and safe.

Public Affairs Director Peterson noted there are several questions related to whether the County will follow the Governor's guidance on returning to work? What measures should be taken related to shopping or being out in the community?

Chairwoman Archuleta noted all local government is subject to the Governor's Order and the County cannot supersede his Order however, the County is communicating its concerns with increased numbers of positive testing and will provide citizens information to follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and request those that have compromised immune systems to be smart and continue to be safe, such as wearing masks and sanitize as much as possible.

Dr. Peoples agreed and provided additional information related to taking extra precautions by taking care of yourself and each other.

Public Affairs Director Peterson noted there was a question related to money spent by the County.

Chairwoman explained how a Declaration of Emergency initiates reimbursement of some of the costs that are needed to respond to the emergency however, there is no guarantee as to how much the County will be reimbursed. Therefore, the County must front the costs until reimbursement; which sometimes can take several years. Also, federal funding passed by Congress recently and given to the State has not been given to the County. The second round of funding by Congress did not include funding for counties, even though Coconino County strongly advocated for same, but there are no guaranties.

Public Affairs Director Peterson noted there questions about cases and trends related to a two week decline in cases in Arizona and is there a model available for Coconino County.

Dr. Peoples explained the recent blitz testing that was conducted and testing results have not been completed. Coconino County has not seen a decline at this time. Part of the difficulty in predictions has to do with lack of testing. Northern Arizona University (NAU) Epidemiologists have reviewed various models and shared some recommendations as to what the County might see, but the County is not out of the woods yet and it is hard to say, but we need to keep monitoring a fourteen-day trend.

Questions from Linda: 1) Why would you get tested without symptoms and, 2) is there a list available that tells us what we're allowed to do and not do?

Dr. Peoples spoke about the difficulty in determining that as there are many people that are A-symptomatic with no symptoms, even though they are COVID-19 positive. She encouraged people to get tested this Saturday even if they feel fine.

Questions: There were people that felt sick, exhibiting symptoms in late January, is it possible they had COVID-19? Antibody testing?

Dr. Peoples stated that it was possible. It has been determined that there were cases that were positive as late as the end of last year. She noted she does not know when antibody testing will be available as there is no information at this time due to limited supply as well as, the issue of efficacy with tests. If there are any questions she is not able to answer at this time, they will be addressed by staff after the meeting.

Question from Hanna: What is being done at the county and state levels to attract future health care services?

County Manager Jayne spoke about continued collaborations with local colleges to address the issue.

Chairwoman Archuleta noted the County has been in constant communication with regional hospitals to check on their immediate needs, staffing and whether or not medical staff and personnel are getting ill. It is a County concern to check on shortages and how personnel are doing and handling the current situation.

Question: If community members from Flagstaff want to donate items, such as masks/medical supplies to the Navajo nation, does the county have a coordinated way to do this or know of programs who are accepting and delivering items?

Vice Chair Fowler noted there has been so much generosity in donations to the Navajo Nation. If there are contributions you would like to make, please contact the County for more information. She spoke about current donations being made and delivered to Tuba City. They are working closely to those in the health care field that are going out daily to deliver items.

Question for District 3: Can the County work with Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to put messages on the highway that inform people that we have not met our fourteen day decline in positive cases. Is there a plan to mitigate transmission in large gatherings of people?

Supervisor Ryan noted he can relay this message to ADOT but it depends on the State. The County is responding to the state that a one-size fits all approach does not work for all and, asking what plans are in place to help mitigate those re-opening situations.

Supervisor Babbott noted we've seen a lot of events already closed in Northern Arizona, such as the Grand Canyon, but as trends become clear, there will be further discussions. The Department of Interior and National Park Services are seeking appropriate planning and preparations prior to opening.

Question from Frank Maraga: Any communications with NAU related to opening this Fall?

Chairwoman Archuleta stated President Chang notified the County about their intentions to reintroduce students to the campus in the Fall, but all precautions will be taken with a phased opening. The County offered information to help with following protocols and assistance from the County Health Department to help with training and protocols prior to re-entry for faculty and staff.

County Manager spoke about continued communications with NAU, adding that he is confident the Health Department is working with them to help protect health and human safety.

Question from Everett: If you were tested at Fort Tuthill previously but wonders if it is ok to be retested if exposed after initial testing?

Dr. Peoples noted it is okay to be retested. If you have tested positive in past and test again, you may receive an inconclusive test result.

Questions: Skilled living centers and nursing homes, how are they doing and are we able to do testing in that area?

Dr. Peoples notes some sites have testing and do their own testing however, the County has been offering testing as it is available.

Question: What has been done to prevent outbreaks with inmates and staff at the jail?

Dr. Peoples stated the Sheriff has been very proactive with providing personal protective equipment and disinfecting. Jail staff has availability to test at Fort Tuthill and, we now have rapid testing that has been utilized.

Supervisor Parks stated he is pleased with the Sheriff's Office protocols in helping to minimize any positive cases.

Questions: What is the guidance as to how to get a haircut and what are protocols for restaurants to operate safely?

Dr. Peoples stated the State and Center for Disease Control (CDC) did put out guidance's on those re-openings. There is a need to wear masks, sanitize, etc., and the businesses are very considerate of what needs to happen to protect services.

Question: How will we vote in August and November?

Chairwoman Archuleta noted the County is encouraging everyone to vote via ballot by mail.

Supervisor Babbott noted this is a frustrating circumstance as the legislature needs to address the issue but they are not in session at this time.

Recorder Patty Hansen agreed that they encourage everyone to vote by mail. She provided information as to how to request an early ballot however, there are those that need assistance and a need to do in person voting. For the security of elections, the Recorders Office wants to make sure everyone is voting in the safest manner.

Supervisor Ryan noted that Recorder Hansen has requested this issue be addressed, and the Board is concerned with staffing. The more people that can vote by mail would be helpful due to these unique circumstances.

Question: When we say someone is positive, that is a result of a test not symptoms?

Dr. Peoples affirmed that results calculated are only from positive tests. Everyone has the ability to be tested on Saturday and testing results are returned within four days.

Question: What keeps you up at night as a Board member and, as a resident of the County?

Supervisor Babbott stated he worries about whether the right balance can be met with reopening without an increase in positive testing or fatalities. Personally, he worries about the same issues with his family and the potential profound issues in the community.

Supervisor Ryan felt that at a Board member and personal level, he thinks about issues such as limited testing, economic impacts, grief, funding levels, etc.

Supervisor Parks agreed, adding that his concern is the balance between keeping people safe and not allowing the economy to be destroyed; especially small businesses in the community.

Vice Chairwoman Fowler expressed her concerns with citizens, businesses and contractors, mental health of employees, first responders, families and potential Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) issues with health workers. Everyone needs to take care of themselves and be kind to each other, take care of each other. She is worried about a second wave that may come.

Chairwoman Archuleta stated she worries about how to provide services to all residents and protect those that are most vulnerable and have no access to technology in order to have human interaction and see family members; children who watch their families struggle and thinking about the community she loves along with her family members. She continues to think about what she can do as a public servant to help all of us serve one another in community spirit.

There being no further discussion, Chair Fowler adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

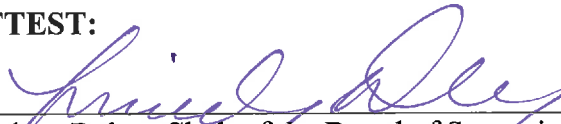
COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

(SEAL)



Elizabeth C. Archuleta, Chair

ATTEST:



Lindsay Daley, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors