

The Traill County Commissioners came to order in special session on August 24, 2021, with all members present. Also attending in person: Corwyn Martin, Jackie Kraling, Allison Klassen, Beth Morrow, Jay Showers, Kitty Showers, Todd Zimprich, Forrest Derosier, Allen Bennett, Corey Ackerman, Roger Lee, Kim Jacobson, Charlie Stock, Brenda Stallman, Steve Hunt and Heather Hovey.

The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the intent of the motion made on August 17, 2021 concerning COVID vaccines. Chairman Elliott read the motion: "On motion of Nesvig, seconded by Eblen to require all county employees to get fully vaccinated or be subject to always wearing a mask when indoors/offices and must be tested on a weekly basis effective Monday, August 23, 2021. All Commissioners present and voting aye, except for Commissioner Amb voting nay, motion passed." Commissioners explained the reasoning behind the motion was to keep the employees and public safe and to keep the offices open.

Employees were asked to submit questions concerning the August 17th motion (a complete list of questions can be obtained from the Auditor's office). Employees questioned why 19 individuals were singled out and why they are the only employees that must wear a mask and undergo weekly COVID testing. Perhaps all employees should undergo weekly testing. Questioned the Auditor's role in the procedure. It was questioned why the letters were all dated August 18th, however most employees didn't get their letter until the 23rd.

Corey Ackerman spoke for several employees stating it is apparent that the public health department has access to confidential medical information, providing that information to the Auditor's office and their supervisors. Brenda Stallman, Traill County Health District Director stated that vaccine records are not medical records, and her department did not share medical records with anyone. Letters were typed up, sealed, and delivered to the Auditor's office as they handle Human Resources. The Auditor's office hand delivered to employees and if the employees were not around, the Auditor's office gave the letters to their supervisors. No HIPPA violations were made. Ackerman stated the group understands the Commissioners have the burden to do what they think is right for the people, however the employees request the Commissioners to respect the employee's choices and not make medical mandates.

Kitty Showers played an audio clip from her mother, who fell very ill after receiving the vaccination and is still suffering months later. Showers stated employees feel shunned and bullied and everyone has the right and choice of what they put in their bodies.

Al Bennett questioned why Traill County continues to require visitors to wear masks in the courthouse. Bennett feels his freedom has been taken away and he should be able to choose if he wants a vaccine or not.

Motion #1: On motion of Amb, seconded by Eblen to rescind the motion made at the August 17, 2021, meeting concerning masks and COVID testing for employees who are not vaccinated. Commissioners present and voting aye: Eblen, Young and Amb, Commissioners present and voting nay: Elliott and Nesvig, motion passed.

Discussion was held on having all employees tested on a weekly basis as the group feels that even vaccinated employees can spread COVID. Stallman said it would be a waste of resources, as the CDC doesn't feel testing vaccinated individuals is necessary.

Motion #2: On motion of Nesvig, seconded by Eblen to require weekly COVID testing for all county employees. Commissioners present and voting aye: Nesvig. Commissioners present and voting nay: Eblen, Elliott, Young and Amb, motion failed.

Commissioners expressed that everyone needs to do their job and follow the rules. Follow the CDC guidelines and wear a mask. We have policies in place already, they need to be followed.

Motion #3: On motion of Eblen, seconded by Nesvig to require county employees and elected officials to follow the CDC Guidelines and follow the county policies already in place. Commissioners present and voting aye: Eblen, Elliott and Nesvig. Commissioners present and voting nay: Young and Amb, motion passed.

Discussion was held on whether to continue with meetings being held in-person and by Webex as several employees asked for the option. All Commissioners agreed to continue their regular meetings via Webex.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m. to meet again in regular session on September 7, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.

Attest:

Glenda Haugen, Auditor

Kurt Elliott, Chairman