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# Health Needs and Human Services Commission Minutes

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 2:00 p.m.  
Harrigan Centennial Hall

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**Commission Members:** Doug Osborne, Loyd Platson, Jeff Arndt,  
Barbara Kendall, Vera Gibson, Martha Pearson, Jennifer Herrera  
Dr. Richard Wein (Assembly Liaison)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Osborne called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Doug Osborne, Loyd Platson, Jeff Arndt, Barbara Kendall, Vera Gibson, Martha Pearson, Jennifer Herrera

**III. AGENDA CHANGES**

**M - Platson / S - Arndt moved to place item D prior to item B. Motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. February 14, 2018**

**M - Pearson / S - Platson moved to approve the February 14, 2018 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.**

**V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**VI. REPORTS**

Chair - Osborne introduced himself for the guests.

Commissioners - Commissioners introduced themselves for the guests.

City Staff - None.

Assembly Liaison - Dr. Wein reported on two items from the February 27, 2018 assembly meeting.

Other(s) - None.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**D. Public Assistance Office**

Osborne told of history and that this may be the first of several conversations. Cliff Tincher with Sitka Community Hospital told of Public Assistance office history with regards to the office being moved, a decline in staffing, length of processing applications, the office closure, significant changes without notice, employee turnover, fee agents, lack of tracking of applications, and prescriptions not covered. The following programs are involved: SNAP (food stamps), heating assistance, Denali Care, Medicaid, senior benefits, adult public assistance. Susan Briles told of a backlog of 18,000 applications, a policy of no response, lack of coverage for 2 to 3 months, and that SEARHC was denied to be allowed to submit applications. Blossom Twitchell added that STA's food pantry has been stocked once a month and was out of stock within the first week of the month that help supply over and estimated 100 citizens. Ken Fate stated that Sitka was not the only community dealing with these issues. Potential solutions were discussed: Staff a local office, do work arounds with

submissions, connect with state representatives including testifying, regional advocacy including the state ombudsman, and advocate for AIREs. Fate would send information on how to text representatives. Wein would research and check to see if there was a house bill associated.

**B. Tobacco 21**

Chair Osborne told of FAQ's sheet that was in the packet.

**M - Osborne / S - Arndt moved go over item E in order to address item C. The motion passed unanimously.**

**E. Local Data**

Platson went over the data from Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) noting high school students who ever tried or were current users of cigarettes, electronic vapor products, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, binge drinking, marijuana, or prescription pain medication. He spoke of concerns with the trend tied to females rising.

**C. Public Health Strategies/2018 Goals**

Pearson, Arndt, Kendall, Platson, and Gibson was support of goal 2: End sales tax on food and find revenue source(s) that are proved to promote health to pay for the change. Wein thought that goal 1 would be a resolution to the Assembly. Goal 1 stated: Support increased communication and coordination for public assistance/social services in Sitka and to address the issue of publicizing resources. He had concerns with the Finance Department's role in goal 2 and that there were already many exemptions. Herrera wondered how to address goal 1 at a local level, how to find information. She would like to support healthy food access such as a summer food program for children and STA's pantry emptiness.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

See above under unfinished business, the agenda was changed.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**D. Agenda items for the next meeting of April 12, 2018 at 2:00 p.m., Harrigan Centennial Hall**

Agenda items for the next meeting would be Goals and Public Assistance Office.

**Platson moved to adjourn the meeting, seeing no objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.**

Attest:  
Melissa Henshaw, Deputy Clerk