

PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 2 OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON
VERDANT HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

**Hybrid: In-Person at Verdant Community Wellness Center and via Zoom
February 22, 2023
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

**Commissioners
Present**

Jim Distelhorst, MD, President
Deana Knutsen, Commissioner
Bob Knowles, Commissioner
Carolyn Brennan, Commissioner (joined 8:11am virtually)

** Karianna Wilson, Commissioner (excused absence)*

Staff

Dr. Lisa Edwards, Superintendent
Riene Simpson, CPA, Director of Finance
Leslie Silverman, Interim Director of Community Impact &
Grantmaking
Kaysi Caballero, Executive Assistant/Office Manager
Monika Star, Wellness Center Assistant
Sandra Huber, Community Engagement Manager

Guests

Alissa Jones, Lynnwood Food Bank
Andrew Brokaw, Edmonds Food Bank
Mike Begeman, Concern for Neighbors Food Bank
Carla Brown, Concern for Neighbors Food Bank
Deb Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District
Jenni McCloughan
Chris Martin
Carl Zapora
Elizabeth Lunsford

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Hospital District No. 2, Snohomish County, was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

**Land and
Enslaved People's
Acknowledgement**

President Distelhorst read the acknowledgement.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Knutsen made a motion to approve all items included on the consent agenda, with an amendment to the January 25th Board meeting minutes, Commissioner Knowles seconded. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda (E:17:23)

Approval of Minutes:

- a. January 24, 2023 Special Board Meeting
- b. January 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting (as amended)

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- c. January 30, 2023 Special Board Meeting
- d. February 9, 2023 Special Board Meeting
- e. Grant Contract Extensions:
 - i. Lynnwood Food Bank
 - ii. Millenia Ministries
 - iii. South County Fire

Public Comments

Jenni McCloughan, Move 60 Coordinator for Edmonds

School District: Provided thanks to Verdant for its funding of the Move 60 Program over the last twelve years. She thanked President Distelhorst for visiting the Hazelwood Move 60 program and seeing it in action, Commissioner Knutsen for always putting students first by encouraging the program to be inclusionary for all students to feel welcome, and Commissioner Knowles for supporting the program from the very beginning and knowing that Move 60 is a place where students can participate for free. Currently there is a waiting list for student to get into the Move 60 Program. She ended her comments with a quote from one of the students in the program: *"Move 60 is the best part of my day! I have friends in Move 60 and I love the games. I don't really like sports but I love jump rope and the games that we play in Move 60. Move 60 is my favorite and it rocks!"*

Margaret Elwood, Edmonds resident, speaking on behalf of Peter Hallson who could not attend to read his

comment: The Edmonds Bicycle Advocacy Group (EBAG) is here today to express their gratitude for Verdant's long term commitment to Bicycle/Pedestrian Education in the Edmonds School District. In addition to having support from Verdant, EBAG has financial assistance from Cascade Bicycle Club, Hazel Miller Foundation, Parks & Recreation, to name a few. Cascade Bicycle Club provides a bicycle curriculum and training of PE teachers and now delivers bikes to schools and inspects and repairs bikes to keep them in a safe mechanical condition. In 2006 Verdant funded "Bike to Health" connecting bike lanes with distance and wayfinding signs to Edmonds, Lynnwood and Mountlake Terrace. We are using this connection of bike routes to continue making improvements from a safety and user standpoint. They want to increase "Let's Go", bike/pedestrian bicycle education from current 6,000 to 10,000 to reach all students in elementary and middle school in ESD. They are looking at a variety of new bike initiatives in the Edmonds School District. He thanked Verdant for its support of bicycle/pedestrian education in Edmonds School District.

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**Executive
Committee Report**

President Distelhorst reported that Executive Committee met on February 16th to approve the agenda for today's meeting. No action was taken at Executive Committee meeting.

**Food Security
Discussion Panel**

President Distelhorst stated that at 2023 board meetings, Commissioners will examine the work that is underway in each of our 2023-24 strategic priority areas and engage with community partners who have been funded in this work. The intention is to deepen our understanding of the issues and challenges that they are addressing and explore collaborative and innovative efforts that are underway.

Presenters:

Alissa Jones,
Lynnwood Food
Bank

Andrew Brokaw,
Edmonds Food Bank

Mike Begeman &
Carla Brown,
Concern for
Neighbors Food
Bank

Deb Brandi,
Foundation for
Edmonds School
District

Verdant's first strategic focus area to explore kicks off this month with Food Security -- understanding what this really means in our communities and how our partners are working together and within their programs to address these needs.

The Board packet for today's meeting includes a summary of food security strategies and objectives as well as a list of food security grants active and recently approved in 2023.

Ms. Silverman introduced the panelists.

Ms. Silverman asked Ms. Alissa Jones, Lynnwood Food Bank, to give us the big picture in Food Bank infrastructure and how programs and services are administered.

- Ms. Jones answered that there are 18 food banks in the coalition in Snohomish County. Each of them is slightly different, offering alternative services such as drive-up, pop-up, providing nutrition education, and/or culturally diverse food. The coalition pays Volunteers of America several hundred thousand dollars to administer their food distribution. Food banks in the coalition receive state and federal funding.

Ms. Silverman followed up with Ms. Jones, Lynnwood Food Bank, to ask what the growth pattern looks like in South Snohomish County and how does it compare to the rest of the County?

- Ms. Jones reported that Lynnwood Food Bank served 382,210 in 2020-2021 and 653,920 in 2021-2022. For 2023, in the first 6 months they are projecting to service 900,000 residents. She added that these three food banks here today, Lynnwood Food Bank, Edmonds Food Bank, and Concern for Neighbors Food Bank (Mountlake Terrace) consistently serve 25-29% of the county.
- Ms. Deb Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, added that with the current trendline and the elimination

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of SNAP benefits, she anticipates the amount of people served will be even higher than 900,000.

Ms. Silverman asked Mr. Andrew Brokaw, Edmonds Food Bank, how are local food banks addressing the local cultural needs of the community?

- Mr. Brokaw answered that they rely on local cultural groups such as Latino Educational Training Institute (LETI) to provide support for language barriers and to expand services within their network. The Edmonds Food Bank provides food to their cultural partners to then distribute to their networks as they see fit. For example, the WA West African Center has its "Grandmother's Club" where they provide food to local West African residents and the grandmothers distribute the food to others as they see fit.
- Ms. Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, commented that culturally appropriate foods are not readily available in our community, so they have to get creative on how to source the culturally necessary food that is not readily available in our area.

Ms. Silverman asked Ms. Carla Brown and Mr. Mike Begeman, Concern for Neighbors Food Bank, how do food banks approach the issue of nutrition security, when nutritious foods are often more expensive?

- Ms. Brown answered they procure food from grocery stores and discount stores such as Thriftway to reduce costs. All their residents leave the food bank with a bag of fruit and vegetables every visit.
- Mr. Begeman added that one of the benefits of the coalition is that they can use their purchasing power to get access to fresh produce.
- Mr. Brokaw added that Edmonds Food Bank recently published a food donation guide to show people what food the food banks need most, and healthier food requests, so they are not receiving the same donations of canned green beans and boxed mac-n-cheese, for example.

Ms. Silverman asked Ms. Deb Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, what are the main barriers or challenges you are facing when addressing food insecurity?

- Ms. Brandi answered that during the pandemic, the Foundation was providing food to 475 children per week. Looking ahead for this year, they are predicting food supply issues and trying to plan ahead to be able to bring in enough food resources for 300-400 children per week.

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- Mr. Brokaw states that Edmonds Food Bank building relationships with local farms has been critical in maintaining their food stock.

Ms. Silverman asked Mr. Brokaw, Edmonds Food Bank, what changes do you foresee occurring in South County and what challenges will those changes bring?

- Mr. Brokaw answered that SNAP benefits will be taken back to pre-pandemic levels as of March 1st. This will provide a significant hardship for their senior residents who rely on social security and SNAP benefits. Therefore, they are anticipating the number of senior residents who come in as well as how often they visit the food bank will increase.

Ms. Silverman asked Ms. Deb Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, what are some examples of collaborations among food banks and other community partners – be it nonprofit, businesses, county, schools, etc.

- Ms. Brandi gave thanks to their food bank partners. The Foundation for Edmonds School District operates seven pop-up pantries each month. The Foundation only has shelf-stable food, but the food banks are able to provide meat, cheese, dairy, eggs so they can come and provide these food resources to their pop up pantries. They also share their volunteers with the food banks. They do competitive food drives such as a construction company versus an engineering company to see who can raise the most money for food or bring in the most food donations. They also partner with a network of 30 churches who provide food resources.
- Ms. Jones, Lynnwood Food Bank, added that having all these partnerships with other food banks, food distributors, pop ups, cultural organizations, etc. has been *critical* to provide food resources to families who have alternative schedules and need to go to multiple different distributors to get their food.
- Ms. Brown, Concern for Neighbors Food Bank, said they are thinking of new ways to procure healthy options. They are also working to be able to provide clients with *choices* when they come into the food bank, so they don't have to pick up the same items every week.
- Ms. Begeman, Concern for Neighbors Food Bank, added they like to offer hygiene items such as toothbrushes, feminine care, etc. and their volunteers help bring those kinds of donations in. They have a program where they cook a simple nutritious meal and provide samples to

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clients to show them easy recipes they can do with their food bank groceries.

- Ms. Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, added, in closing, our families are hungry, it doesn't matter where they go to get their food, let's feed them.

Commissioner Questions:

President Distelhorst asked how the coalition utilizes the 3500lbs of food from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), since it used to provide 6,000lbs?

- Mr. Brokaw, Edmonds Food Bank, answered that with TEFAP, their donation would be one item, a pallet of canned peaches, or canned mixed vegetables, for example. The grocery stores are where they purchase items such as meat, dairy. There is an actual season for food drives that they can count on too, October-December. Purchasing costs are way up, so cash donations are greatly appreciated so the food banks can utilize their buying power to get more groceries for their banks.

Commissioner Knutsen asked, as they are taking away some of the SNAP benefits, Verdant has been trying to think about how we can support our children to receive food. What is their thought in moving forward in keeping the level of food distribution up for children without relying on income levels?

- Ms. Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, answered that they are hoping a new House Bill will pass which will provide free school meals to *all* children. Their nurses always ask kids what they ate when they provide care at school so they can provide a healthy snack if they have not eaten anything.
- Mr. Brokaw, Edmonds Food Bank, answered they try to connect foods to children discreetly, so they are not embarrassed to be receiving that type of assistance. They have a high school where they drop off 40 bags of food each week.

Commissioner Knutsen asked, who do you work with to assure clients who have specific diets or health issues can get food that works for them?

- Ms. Jones, Lynnwood Food Bank, answered they work with American Heart Association and prepare heart healthy boxes including low sodium and brown rice, for example, that people can use for that diet. They also have junior dietitians who can go to cars and discuss food needs for individual families.

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Commissioner Brennan asked if they have thoughts on strategic ways Verdant can partner with the food banks and the school district.

- Ms. Jones, Lynnwood, Food Bank, answered that several years ago, Verdant staff and a few Commissioners went around to other food banks who had nutrition programming and policies in place and really helped pave the way to get the food banks to where they are now. Because of this, our local food bank is above the standard in providing healthy food options. Utilizing Verdant's influence and connections to support the food banks is one way to help.
- Ms. Brandi, Foundation for Edmonds School District, agrees they would not be where they are today without the support of Verdant in the beginning. The Foundation provides the only free summer meals program in the entire South Snohomish County.

Commissioner Knowles encouraged these food banks to lean on Verdant for support, whether it be for asking for volunteers, providing letters of support, etc.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Edwards thanked the members of our food security panel in providing such an informative panel today. We look forward to continuing to provide support to our Food Security partners in the community.

Dr. Edwards reported that South County Fire has received a \$60,000 grant from the state to continue the environmental impact testing and cleanup of the Value Village site. This moves us one step closer to South County Fire being able to purchase the Value Village property from the District to build a new fire station.

Commissioners met recently to decide on grant funding for the Spring 2023 cycle and determine how Commissioners will review and score the next cycle of applications.

She is happy to see use of the Verdant Community Wellness Center is increasing and we are working on having staff coverage for after hours and weekend events.

We had a failed search for our Fiscal Specialist position and are reentering the market to find a candidate.

We are working to fill the vacant Community Resource Advocate position with VOA.

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Program Report

Conflicts of Interest None.

Next Funding Cycle Ms. Silverman reported that Commissioners met on February 21st at a Special Board meeting to determine the funding cycle timeline for Fall 2023 and we will post this timeline on our website after the Program Committee meets in March.

Finance Report

Review Financial Statements & Cash Activity Ms. Simpson presented the financial reports for January 2023 (E:19:23), noting any transactions out of the ordinary, compared to prior month periods. This first month of the year shows we have a favorable balance to budget as of January 2023.

Authorization of Payments of Vouchers and Payroll Authorization for payment of vouchers and payroll: Warrant numbers 15931 through 15960 and references B-C for January 2023 for payment in the amount of \$384,252.09 were presented for approval (E:20:23).
Motion was made by Commissioner Knowles, seconded by Commissioner Brennan and passed unanimously to approve the warrants.

Resolution 2023:02 PEBB Health Benefit Application & Attestation Ms. Simpson recommended to make an application to Public Employee Benefit Board Program (PEBB) for Verdant's healthcare benefit (E:21:23). This application requires a resolution and attestation, and we are not inclined to switch coverage once we apply but the application is the first step. Our Regence healthcare is becoming increasingly more expensive and the PEBB program provides *options* for employees.
Motion was made by Commissioner Knutsen, seconded by Commissioner Knowles and passed unanimously to approve Resolution 2023:02.

Public Comments

Elizabeth Lunsford, 98037: It's been a month since she last made a public comment. She requested resources to help with her personal mental health. She hasn't had a chance to follow up about her mental health. The City of Lynnwood is harassing her and violating her rights. A private opioid center opened up near a school and people protested. She is a Christian and a veteran. Those statistics about veterans apply to her. She is disappointed in the Board since she hasn't seen programs that would support her. She talked about Behavioral Health and the three different tiers of support – she is looking for tier 3 support which is community.

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**Commissioner
Comments**

Commissioner Knutsen thanked the panelists and the public who came and made a comment.

Commissioner Brennan learned a lot from the Food Security panel today.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

ATTEST BY:

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JSDistelhorst
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President

DocuSigned by:
Karianna Wilson
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Secretary