

# Meeting Minutes from the TriCounty Board of Health Meeting

## January 28, 2026

### LOCATION

TriCounty Health Department - 133 S 500 W - Vernal

### ATTENDEES

Chairman Dr. John Mathis, Commissioner Randy Asay, Dr. Sterling Haws, Melissa Hughes (representing Commissioner Tracy Killian), Kim Harding, Shanna Wheeler, Director Kirk Bengé, Deputy Director Darrin Brown, Bruce McKee, Raima Colledge, Sydnee Lyons, Ashley Linschoten, Cyndie Mattinson, Rob Grove, Joe Hadlock, Ben Muffler, Loren Anderson, Keith Goodspeed, and Luke Fausett.

### Virtual Attendees

Jodi Tinker and Irene Hansen.

### EXCUSED

Emmett Duncan, Commissioner Tracy Killian, and Commissioner Willis Lefevre.

### AGENDA

#### Call to order

12:06 p.m.

#### Approval of December 3, 2025 Minutes

**Melissa Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes from the Dec. 3 meeting. Kim Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### Updates

- Director Bengé presented an overview of the Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey conducted by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services. Overall the survey demonstrated positive trends in substance use. Some of the trends he highlighted are:
  - There has been an increase in the use of nicotine pouches among local teens.
  - There has been a decrease in depression.
  - Many students face challenges with getting adequate sleep.
  - Teen alcohol use is down to 3.8% from 11.8%.
  - Since starting the survey in 2003, vaping has decreased.
  - Only 0.5% of students reported smoking cigarettes.
  - Suicidal thoughts and attempts have decreased among upper grade levels, but increased among sixth graders.
- Director Bengé moved to give an overview of a local health district school exemption survey report conducted by the state.
  - 11% of kindergartners are not up-to-date on the recommended vaccinations, and 8% of seventh graders are not up-to-date either.

- Director Bengé turned time over to TriCounty Health Department's (TriCHD) infectious disease specialist, Cyndie Mattinson, to give an on measles surveillance.
  - There are currently 237 positive measles cases in the state, with 54 of those cases being confirmed in the last week. Most of these cases originate from homeschool populations.
  - There have been some exposures within our jurisdiction, but confirmed cases.
  - TriCHD is monitoring wastewater results, but this doesn't capture data from septic tank users.
  - Cyndie stated that she feels reassured by the support of local doctors and physicians.
  - TriCHD has started a new vaccine prevention coalition which is currently focused on partnering with local organizations to educate the population and promote resources to prevent illnesses in the community.
- Director Bengé then drew the board's attention to bills that are worth watching during the upcoming legislative session.
- Director Bengé then updated the board about the search for a new generator and contractor bids for the Roosevelt office. TriCHD has received one proposal from a vendor regarding a generator.

### Approval of Check Register

Bruce McKee presented the check register for October through November of 2025. He drew attention to a few irregular items on this register which were for:

- \$6,000 on an employee purchasing card statement, \$4,500 were for WIC supplies for a WIC event.

**Kim Harding motioned to approve the check register as presented. Shanna Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Financial Report

Bruce McKee then presented the financial report for all accounts as of November 30, 2025. He noted that cash equivalents have increased to \$3.5 million due to Uintah County's annual contribution. He also stated that this increase is typical for year-end payments from counties per the interlocal agreement.

Bruce also reported that TriCHD's rainy day fund is sitting at \$1.2 million. Dr. Mathis asked if TriCHD is in a position to add more to that fund. Bruce stated that TriCHD would need to go to the board for permission to add to or withdraw from that account. He explained that the department has \$1 million in unrestricted funds to use in case of an emergency that does not require board permission to utilize. According to the law, TriCHD is allowed to have up to 25% of its total budget in a restricted emergency fund — Bruce stated that his opinion is that TriCHD is in a good position with the amount that's in both accounts.

### Consideration of the 2026 Employee Compensation Plan

Raima Colledge presented the work she's done in creating a pay scale and employee compensation plan. She researched wages for each position at TriCHD and compared them with comparable rates at other establishments to come up with an updated compensation plan.

She highlighted that executive leadership found that the finance director and public information officer were in need of a raise in order to stay competitive.

**Kim Harding made a motion to accept the compensation plan. Shanna Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Review of Bylaws

Director Bengé drew attention to sections 3.6 and 5.3 of the bylaws which Deputy Director Darrin Brown reviewed and suggested the following amendment for.

- These sections should be amended to follow current state law, rather than explicitly require notices to go in newspapers.
  - Loren Anderson, TriCHD's legal counsel, recommended removing specific codes from the bylaws, as they change so often.
  - Members of the board agreed that these changes should be made and brought for adoption in the next meeting.
- Luke Fausett asked for clarification on section 3.2 of the bylaws which states that the board shall determine policies to be followed by the department. He was curious if these policies could subvert or be in conflict with state law.
  - Director Bengé and Deputy Director Brown clarified that the board approves rules specific to TriCHD's local jurisdiction and within the parameters of the law.

### **Consideration of rewrite of policy 720 - Confidential Nature of Department Affairs, Protected Health Information Privacy Requirements & Public Records Access**

Director Bengé stated that policy 720 has been completely rewritten to include information and privacy policies.

**Shanna Wheeler motioned to postpone adopting these changes until the next meeting when more commissioners are present. Melissa Hughes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Review of public comment on wastewater rule revisions**

Environmental Health Director Joe Hadlock presented a synopsis of the proposed changes in the new wastewater rule which are as follows:

- Requiring estimated gallons of wastewater generated per day instead of floorplans in septic system designs.
- Getting rid of TriCHD conducted site assessments.
- Requiring people to become registered installers in order to conduct site assessments.
- Requiring systems designers to become registered.
  - Luke Fausett raised his concerns regarding this, as he understands the Utah Department of Professional Licensing (DOPL) only issues licenses to businesses, rather than individuals.
  - Dr. Mathis, Dr. Haws, Kim Harding, and Keith Goodspeed all stated that their licenses are in their own names.
  - Joe Hadlock assured Luke that the language will be reviewed to ensure that it is correct and aligned with the state's practice.
- Requiring evaluators to notify TriCHD of when they plan to be working at least one day in advance.
- TriCHD will no longer offer homeowner installer classes based on public feedback. Homeowners will still have the option to install systems themselves, but TriCHD will recommend professional oversight.
  - Homeowners will also be required to provide at least one day's notice prior to planned work.
- There is now a grievance process that installers, evaluators and designers can go through.
  - Loren Anderson suggested a 10 day window from revocation to make an appeal.
- Due to changes in the installation process, TriCHD will now only conduct final inspections.
  - Dr. Mathis asked for clarification about how long it takes TriCHD to go out and conduct a final inspection. Joe answered that TriCHD has 5-7 days to go out, but that the goal is not to approach that limit.
  - Dr. Mathis and Kim Harding voiced concerns about safety with having open sites until the inspection is conducted. Joe stated that final inspections take precedence over all other types. He went on to say that he has concerns about having a timeline written into policy as this would restrict judgement calls. Luke Fausett expressed his concerns about the implications of there not being a written policy.

- Section 20.1.1 regarding alternative wastewater systems was added due to Utah Geological Survey findings and lack of state guidance with the intent to help save homeowners with saprolite on their property save money.
- The language in section 24.4.1.2. regarding subdivisions was changed based on public feedback.
- Section 24.6.2 changed from requiring a “will serve” letter to an “availability” letter to be consistent with what counties accept.

Joe Hadlock asked for 60 days (the start of April) to begin enacting the new rules.

**Commissioner Randy Asay motioned to approve the new wastewater rule pending the final version with the added suggestions from TriCHD’s legal counsel, and for the rule to go into effect April 1. Kim Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Public Comment

- Luke Fausett brought up concerns with section 8 of the new wastewater rule and clarified that in his reading the rule states that an individual must be registered with DOPL and work under a licensed entity.
  - Keith Goodspeed pulled up his own license for reference and stated that it's in his own name, making the concern a non-issue. He expressed his excitement for the rule to go into effect and see the septic system installation process streamlined.
- Luke Fausett voiced his frustration with TriCHD’s lack of clear policies and line of communication to direct complaints to.
  - Kim Harding directed Luke to bring concerns to a board member, especially when there is a problem. Kim added that Luke can always contact him personally.

### Considerations of amendments to to policy 405 - Vehicle Usage

Director Bengé brought up the policy change to reflect prior verbal board agreement that the board can sanction special vehicle use by case.

- Melissa Hughes asked if requiring staff to provide proof of insurance on their own personal vehicles if a fleet vehicle isn’t available.
  - Director Bengé stated that TriCHD would work with Loren Anderson and Utah Counties Indemnity Pool (UCIP) and include it in the policy before having the board approve this change.

### Contract Updates

Director Bengé walked the board through the following new contracts:

- **PDG B-5 Amendment 3**
- **Electronic Case Reporting - 2022 Amendment 2**
- **Tobacco Contract FY21-FY25 Amendment 10**
- **FY23-27 Violence and Injury Prevention Program Amendment 4**

### Board Elections

Present board members noted the absence of several commissioners and agreed it would be best to postpone elections until the next meeting.

**Kim Harding motioned to postpone board elections until the next meeting or until more commissioners are present. Melissa Hughes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## Closed Session

Board members noted the absence of a quorum and the need for those present to move into a closed session to discuss the health officer's performance with the understanding that no action could be taken.

**Dr. Mathis motioned to move into a closed session at approximately 2:25 p.m.**

Those present for the closed session were: Dr. Mathis, Dr. Haws, Commissioner Asay, Shanna Wheeler, Melissa Hughes, and Loren Anderson, TriCHD's appointed legal counselor.

**Dr. Mathis motioned to move back into an open session at approximately 2:45 p.m.**

Those present once the open session was resumed: Dr. Mathis, Dr. Haws, Commissioner Asay, Shanna Wheeler, Melissa Hughes, and Loren Anderson, TriCHD's appointed legal counselor.

## Additional Updates & Discussion

- UALBOH - Save the Date- UALHD 2026 Symposium - April 28-29 -Davis Conference Center
- NALBOH - October 12-14, 2026, San Antonio, Texas

## Adjourn

**Commissioner Randy Asay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kim Harding seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.**

*Board Chair Signature of Approval*

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