

Commissioners emphasize parental consent required before vaccinations for minors

ALBANY — At their Tuesday morning meeting, Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker emphasized their position that minors will not be vaccinated at county-sponsored COVID-19 clinics without parental permission.

The issue stemmed from Friday when the county withdrew from planned vaccination clinics within the Greater Albany Public Schools system after county officials learned parental permission would not be required.

GAPS Superintendent Melissa Goff asked the board to clarify its position.

The board submitted into the record a letter from Deputy County Attorney Jodi Gollehon that noted while it is legal to provide vaccinations to minors who are 15- to 17-years-old without parental permission, the Board of Commissioners has the authority to require parental consent.

Now that children as young as 12 years of age can receive vaccinations, state law requires signed parental consent, Public Health Director Todd Noble said after the meeting. Linn County's vaccination paperwork is being adjusted to reflect that.

Vaccinations have only been available to minors for the last two weeks, Noble said, and they have been accompanied at the clinics by their parents or guardians.

Commissioner Tucker — who has volunteered at the clinics numerous times — said that to his knowledge the county has not provided vaccinations to minors without parental consent.

Commissioner Sprenger said as a former state representative, she has had conversations with many people who have made it clear they want to “be engaged” with their children's health care decisions.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved 911 Dispatch Services contracts with the Albany Fire Department, Brownsville Rural Fire Protection District, Halsey-Shedd Rural Fire Protection District, Harrisburg Fire and Rescue District, Lebanon Fire District, Scio Rural Fire Protection District, Sweet Home Fire & Ambulance District and the Tangent Rural Fire Protection District.
- Approved a contract with Oregon Electric Grant Inc. for electrical services with General Services.
- Approved a \$50,000 Victims of Crime Act grant to be used by the District Attorney's Office.
- Held a public hearing concerning a conditional use permit application by Lynn Merrill to site a dwelling on 4.8 acres near Snow Peak. Members of the Jones family, who live near the property, oppose the proposal. The record will remain open for 14 days and Merrill will have a week to rebut new information. The commissioners will revisit the issue at 10 a.m. on June 15.
- Were presented with results of a survey of neighbors concerning a proposed housing development in the Wagon Wheel area of Lebanon. Information was presented by Ron Edwards. He said the apartment complex could diminish the quality of life in the area.
- Reported that response to the COVID-19 Emergency Business Grant program has been brisk. More than a dozen businesses have applied for the \$4,000 stipend. The commissioners anticipate that up to 100 businesses will participate. Applications are through the Albany and Lebanon chambers of commerce.

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