

Minutes of the FHVRRA AGM held 25th February 2021 at 19:00 on Zoom

Attendance

Attended by 37 Zoom logons and a minimum of five extras. Quorum is 25.

Welcome

Brian Youngblood (BY) introduced himself as the current Chairman and welcomed everyone. He detailed the Agenda.

Guest Speaker's topic: "The latest in Covid matters".

Mireille Wenger (MW) - Chair of the Western Cape Parliament ad-hoc committee on Covid 19

Ms Wenger began by speaking about the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa, the national lockdown and the formation of the ad-hoc committee on COVID 19, which still meets regularly. There are between 15 and 30 members on the committee from six out of the seven political parties represented in our parliament with the one party declining to participate. This committee has interacted with Government, to ensure that it was doing its best during these difficult times. Anyone can watch this committee on YouTube. South Africa and Estonia were the first full house Parliaments and Legislative bodies to meet virtually.

Some of the things looked at were provincial oxygen supplies, bereavement counselling, the informal economy, sufficiency of food supplies from farms during the hard lock-down and why the price of eggs increased, feeding schemes for children and the provision of personal protection equipment (PPE) for nurses. They took on SAFFER and the UIF for closed offices and the Police for heavy-handedness. The committee learned how long COVID can survive on different surfaces and how the lock-down reduced pollution levels in our province. They were involved with the building of Hospitals of Hope to add capacity.

The committee spoke to survivors of COVID about their experiences with the Health System, NGO's in the Private Sector, Unions and School Governing bodies. It received 17,000 responses to the request for public input.

The mortality rate amongst diabetics with COVID was 28%. The Provincial Department of Health put together a team of experts and managed to bring it down to just 4.5%. The Western Cape Government, in conjunction with the City, has developed a system to monitor sewerage to spot and identify outbreaks before they are seen in testing results.

In this first week with the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the Western Cape has vaccinated 5,389 Health Care workers around Cape Town with the 13,000 doses received. Three more tranches are expected over the next eight weeks and will cover the rest of the province's Health Care workers. So far, 1,400 vaccinators have been trained. The Western Cape Government can handle the -70° storage capacity for the Pfizer vaccine and has enough space for just under half a million vaccine vials. We are looking at sourcing additional vaccines as a contingency measure.

In the following week, the ad-hoc Committee were to be briefed on preparing for a possible third wave of infections. However, for the sixth week in a row we've recorded a decrease in the number of COVID cases and the main COVID indicators. The "R" number (Reproductive) is currently 0.7 and anything below one is a good sign. It means that each person with COVID is infecting less than one other person.

Our seven day rolling average of infections has declined by 16% and hospital admissions have declined by 11% over the last seven days. And very importantly, the number of deaths have declined by 40%. Also our test positivity rate is now below 10% which is also encouraging. Our Oxygen use currently stands at 37 tons a day which is well within what the Province's manufacturing capabilities can manage.

Questions

Karen Gray Kilfoil - Where are False Bay Hospital in the vaccination roll-out plan and can you clarify “by when”?

MW - I don't know which tranche, but it will be some time over the next eight weeks.

Matthew Gray (MG) - Most of the vaccine companies did their trials on getting maximum protection which required two injections. As some being vaccinated will have already had Covid, the online discussion has been to just give one injection now for widest spread instead of the two injections.

MW – Correct. The UK is just doing the one injection now to everybody before starting the second injections. Those injected won't get as sick and won't die from Covid. SA has also taken this decision. For now we only have the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which is a one-dose vaccine which is what makes it so attractive vs the others requiring two shots. We don't yet know the most effective against the SA variant. These are all in “trial”.

BY – I see in the Daily Maverick today that there are 4,000 reinfections and I am assuming that this is due to the local variant which wasn't available with the first round of infection so with other countries also experiencing local variants and with tourism starting to increase, then we could be introduced to more variants and need a different vaccine?

MW - It is possible and that's why we are in such a race to get population immunity through the vaccines because the quicker you can slow down the spread of the virus the less chance it has to mutate and that's why the vaccination programs are so important. But Yes ... I also saw that item about the 4,000 people that had been infected twice and yes, that is as a result of the different variants.

South Africa has very advanced genome sequencing which is why we were able to identify that new variant so quickly, although it's now infamous as the 'South African Variant'. It might be in many other places around the world and we just don't know because other countries are not sequencing, nor watching how the virus is changing.

MG - The Spanish Flu did not originate in Spain, although it's unfortunately received that name.

MW – At next Thursday's meeting we will specifically ask questions about the likelihood of a third wave. Because our vaccine program has been slowed, we won't have enough population immunity to prevent a possible third wave, so the Health Department is preparing.

Andy Dawes (AD) – How reliable is the “R” number for this country because we have a pretty useless test and trace system. Without good data, where does the 0.7 number come from, its derivation and margin of error?

MW – Yes, we are aware of people that are feeling “fluely” but don't know that they have COVID. So, other criteria are also considered: test positive rates, number of tests, numbers in hospitals and mortality rates.

AD – Thanks, it's basically a modelling exercise, which is compromised if you don't have a good test and tracing as happened to me when a family member became very ill, but no one contacted me.

MW – We have a good Track and Trace system, but during a wave phase, it becomes too great for the system to cope. We're moving to Covid-app. It won't tell you who, but it will give you a little red dot so that you can make an informed decision to perhaps not go into that shop or to that area. However, it is reliant on a number of people that have all been tested for the virus.

BY - If the protocol is to self-isolate when exposed or having flu symptoms, then they just go into isolation. They're not reporting. It was interesting when they found the number of antibodies was higher than they predicted, because people had, obviously, been exposed and not reporting it.

MW – Correct. Our randomised trials in different WC communities uncovered exactly this finding.

MG - What's the estimate of the current Herd Immunity percentage?

MW – It varies between communities, but some are as high as 40%.

Formal FHVRRA AGM items:

1. The **Minutes of the QGM held on 26th November 2020** were adopted –
Proposed by Matthew Gray and seconded by James Ricketts. There were no objections.
2. **Changes to the Constitution** – previously circulated to members, included proof of residency requirement; minimums for Exco meeting 9 times/year and General Meetings 3 times/year;

adjournment from 14 days to 30 minutes if no general meeting quorum; removal of an Exco member mechanism; from expenditure “signing” to “acknowledgement”; Force Majeure section added) were proposed to be passed by John Shaw and seconded by Helen O’Regan. There were no objections

3. Amendment to the Subscriptions

At our Quarterly General Meeting on 26th November, we approved subscriptions of R80 per annum. At our EXCO meeting of 21st January 2021, we proposed in the light of the resurgent COVID-19, that 2021 subscriptions be waived for this year, although any donations would be welcomed. There were no objections.

4. Treasurer’s Report – Judy Bean

We have had a good year 2020. Our Financial Auditor, Lorna Fulford, said that our numbers look very sound. I want to point out that even though our subscriptions show a slight increase over 2019, this is mainly because we’ve had some recovery in our arrears subscriptions. Our donations for 2020 show a very generous R5,000 donation from one member and we’ve used that mainly for donations to worthy causes. We’ve made donations of R4,700. In 2020 we donated R1,000 each to the Masiphumelele Fire Appeal, False Bay Hospital, The Net (day activities for street people), Phillip Katz (towards the beautiful gardens of Fish Hoek beach) and R2,700 towards local Covid-19 relief.

This is the last year that Lorna is auditing our books and Ronnie van’t Hof of AQB has kindly offered to audit our books for us in 2021 so I would like to name him as our Auditor. Brian Youngblood proposed this and Fanie Kloppers seconded the motion. There were no objections.

5. Election of EXCO members

Current Committee consists of Judy Bean, Matthew Gray, Helen O’Regan, James Ricketts, Peter Scott, John Shaw, Brian Youngblood and we have a potential new member, Fanie Kloppers. Cllr Aimee Kuhl proposed their election and requested a seconder. James Ricketts seconded. Cllr Kuhl called for nominations from the floor, i.e. participants on the ZOOM call. No-one volunteered. Cllr Kuhl said that she assumed there were no contestants and BY confirmed that 12 members were allowed on the committee.

Cllr Kuhl congratulated members who were being re-elected and welcomed the new member, Mr Fanie Kloppers.

6. Chairman’s report

The Chairman’s Report can be viewed in the FHVRRRA newsletter.

7. Councillor's Report

Cllr Aimee Kuhl commented that especially during these hard times whilst having lock-down, there had been rough patches due to internal issues, but she really appreciated the way that the FHVRRRA Exco committee had been engaging with her and with the Council. She had been elected in 2016 and she felt that 2020 had been her best year yet. Progress had been made with quite a few things and she looks forward to working with the Committee in future.

BY thanked Cllr Kuhl. Whilst he acknowledged it had been a challenging year and that the FHVRRRA had had to make quite a few modifications to deal with Covid-19, he hoped that the EXCO of the FHVRRRA had risen to the occasion. He thanked everybody for their cooperation and assistance.

8. General

Kim Kruyshaar (KK) thanked FHVRRRA as part of the Far South Community Forum for supporting the Sea Level Rise Mural at the Fish Hoek beach. Painting had started that day. The mural is on the sea side of the Law Enforcement building. Students from Kommetjie Private School and Fish Hoek Art

School are painting sea creatures in the section that depicts the underwater. Kim said that this was a Team Effort and the artists are using paint that has been tested in Muizenberg and St. James.

Cllr Aimee Kuhl commented that the project was a brilliant initiative; that there were a lot of murals that had been painted in Muizenberg, but that she really liked the design and the educational value of this one. She also suggested that FHVRRA post Mereille Wegner's talk, and this has been done.

Carol Axmann spoke on behalf of "The Net" which is a daytime activity safe space for homeless individuals. She said they were desperately in need of someone to help with counselling and social work that if there was anyone in the valley who would like to offer to do this voluntary work that has huge rewards and benefits. The Net would welcome volunteers and is located at No. 7 Kommetjie Road at the top of Fourth Avenue.

There being no further matters BY closed the meeting, thanking all those who had attended and thanked the Guest Speaker, our Councillors and thanks to the EXCO members.