

County lifts health orders, keeps mask mandate

(KAIR)--A special meeting of the Atchison County Commission Monday, held to address the controversial Local Health Order approved and implemented last month, ended with all aspects rescinded, save for the mandatory wearing of face masks in public.

The decision followed nearly one hour of discussion, which included questions from the public and clarification from health officials, including Atchison County Health Officer Lori Forge and Dr. Bonnie Tackett, of Atchison's Amberwell Health.

Prior to a motion being made, and a vote taken, Commission Chair Jack Bower warned the Commission to be careful about making a misstep at this stage in the County's handling of COVID-19.

Commissioner Eric Noll ultimately made the motion to rescind the health order, but keep the mask mandate in place; and, following instruction from County Counselor Patrick Henderson to specify the language, a vote was called, with removal of the health order approved 2 to 1, with Bower casting the lone no vote.

Rescinded were some mandates remaining in place through April 13, while others were to continue through May 26.

Forge, moving forward following the vote, plans to make recommendations in the name of public health and safety pertaining to COVID-19, but to not look to the Commission to formally approve health orders.

Prior to Monday's discussion, and vote, Forge updated the Commission on the County's current virus status, saying there are currently three active cases in Atchison County, with one hospitalized.

Many Signals Communications