



Macon County  
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**

**MINUTES**

**6/27/2016**

**Members** Teresa Murray, General Public and Vice-Chair; Emily Porter-Bowers, Nurse; Dr. Carole Peterson, Physician; Melissa Bell, Pharmacist; Dr. Jeff Todd, Veterinarian; Dr. Nathan Brenner, Dentist; James Tate County Commissioner; Gena Futral and Molly Phillips, General Public.

**Members Absent** Dr. Carole Peterson, Dr. Nathan Brenner, Gena Futral, Molly Phillips

**Staff Present** Jim Bruckner, Diane Keener, Dorota Anthony, Jimmy Villiard, Kyle Jennings, Jennifer Garrett, Kathy McGaha, Darice Davis,

**Guests** None

**Media** Mr. Ryan Hanchett; The Franklin Press, Bobby Coggins; Independent Journalist

**Public Comment** None

**Call to Order** Meeting was called to order at 6:21 by Teresa Murray

**Election of Chairman** Mr. Bruckner said that Dr. Brenner was the only nomination for Chairman and that he did accept the nomination. James Tate made a motion to close nominations. Emily Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. James Tate made a motion to elect Dr. Brenner as the chair. Emily Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approve Agenda** Mr. Bruckner recommended removing PH Law Update from the agenda due to Ms. Keezer's absence and add Prenatal update and EH workflow to New Business. Melissa Bell made a motion to add Prenatal update to Old Business, remove Public Health Law Update from New Business C, add Environmental Health Workflow to New Business and to accept the agenda as amended. Emily Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Welcome/Intro./Departures/Recognition** None

**Closed Session** None

**Presentations** None

**Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting** James Tate made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Emily Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## Old Business

**A. Budget Update FY18** - This is an update on the budget based on the three suggestions from the BOH at last month's meeting. James Tate took the three suggestions to County Commissioners and Mr. Bruckner had a meeting with Mr. Roland and the commissioners as well.

Housekeeping services and funding: Mr. Bruckner said I have been working with the County Manager and we have a plan to pay for this without costing the county any extra money. We will have a written MOU specifying the Health Department and Dental Clinic needs as far as disinfection and occupational cleaning. We will add cleaning checklists for janitorial staff to use in the Health Department and both Dental Clinics.

Funds for Marketing, Communicable Disease, Physician Contract and Lab Certification/Equipment

Maintenance: Mr. Bruckner said he had spoken to the county manager and that they agreed to move money from a vacant temporary health department position to cover the following budget items: \$5000 for marketing, \$20,720 for physician contract (Dr. Dewhurst), \$8,816 for communicable Disease Outbreaks, \$3,580 for required laboratory certifications and \$1,500 for lab equipment maintenance. \$8800 will be put in contracted services to allow us to have immediate access to funds in case of a public health emergency.

Mr. Bruckner said that the legislature has been diverting, what has traditionally been health department maternal health block grant funds, to various other groups since 2011. This year the loss was just over \$7 million. We don't know what the impact to Macon County will be just yet. If they cut our maternal child health money we may have to come before the Board to ask for help. Mr. Bruckner said there is no action needed at this time. He just wants to keep the Board informed.

**B. Prenatal Clinic Update** – Mr. Bruckner reminded the board that three members were appointed to a prenatal ad-hoc committee; Dr. Brenner, Ms. Futral and Ms. Murray, but there has not been a need to get them together yet. Angel Medical Center informed us that they will not have the capacity in their OB/GYN clinic to continue to provide services here at the health department. We are currently in negotiations with Harris Hospital, Deidra Vinson and Steve Heatherly get OB services in place here; however, they notified us that they will not place anyone at the health department until they are fully staffed in their own program which could be a while. We are losing a total of seven doctors and midwives and Harris Regional Hospital plans to only add two positions here in Macon. We aren't for sure how many women will transition to services to MCPH, but we are look at a plan to expand our services if necessary. We won't know what the demand is until the Mission practice closes and Harris reveals their plans. Dr. Todd asked if we have the ability to absorb the extra costs involved with expanding our services. Mr. Bruckner said we currently have enough funds to cover four hours a week for a doctor at \$100 per hour, however it may cost as much as \$180 per hour. Mr. Bruckner said getting clients to Harris for ultrasounds is going to be a challenge. We have talked to Harris about using ultrasound equipment that we currently have here and they are also looking at equipment at Harris that they may be able to put over here to eliminate patients from having to travel to Harris. Dr. Todd asked if the staff that administered the test could interpret the results. Mr. Bruckner said we had a contract with Angel for \$45 ultrasounds. That originally included the interpreting of the test. Then their contract changed to Asheville radiology and we started receiving bills upwards of \$500 to \$1000. These bills are ultimately the patient's responsibility not ours. We are talking with MAHEC and other providers in the community to find help with this. August 15, 2017 is the last day Angel Medical Center will be participating in prenatal clinics at Health Department. The other concern we have is that our liability insurance carrier does not want us to use a midwife, but due to the circumstance they have agreed to allow us to use one intermittently with an MD seeing patients every other clinic day.

## New Business

**A. Fee Plan** Ms. Keener directed everyone to the fee plan handout in their BOH books and explained the chart in detail. She said there are several new fees that will go along with integrated care services. We did

not make any change to Animal Services and we made one change to Environmental Health. We added back a research fee of \$15 minimum and \$15 for every additional 30 minutes of research. This fee had been inadvertently removed from the fee plan a couple of years ago. Ms. Murray asked if it's a \$15 minimum for each request. Mr. Jennings said this is a research fee and does not apply to a records only request. Mr. Bruckner explained that when someone brings in a owners name and doesn't have any previous owner information and we have to go looking for those names it makes the process of researching time consuming and is causing an overload of work on the Environmental Health department. Ultimately the due diligence component of a real-estate transaction falls upon the realtor and not the environmental health department. This fee will put the onus back on the realtor to do their due diligence or pay for us to do the research. Mr. Tate made a motion to accept the fee plan, but hold off on approving the research fee until the Environmental Health workflow discussion later tonight. Ms. Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Billing Guide** Ms. Keener directed everyone to the billing guide draft in their BOH books. She said we are required to have our billing guide be approved by BOH and county commissioners annually. There were very few changes made. We changed some wording just for clarification purposes and we raised the age limit for primary care services from 59 years to 64 years. Mr. Tate made a motion to approve the billing guide as presented. Ms. Porter-Bowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Environmental Health Workflow** Mr. Bruckner said we have received a few complaints about workflow lately. In the past couple months the workload in environmental health has gone up significantly. Back in 2007 – 2008 at the beginning of the decline, we approached the county before the county suggested a reduction in staffing. We left positions vacant as people left and let them go unfunded each budget year after that. We now have three environmental health positions that we are sitting on unfunded and unfilled. Mr. Bruckner wants to have conversation in case the BOH members receive complaints from the public regarding slow turn-around times in environmental health. Mr. Jennings said that this year we have had 20% more applications than last year. The first quarter of the year is our busiest period since 2009. The second quarter is looking the same. The growth in applications, the added research time and the fact that realtors are selling more property is causing a work backlog. Our research includes looking into the records in the databases of the register of deeds, tax, property records, mapping, and past property owners. That information is then cross referenced with our database to find permits. Our records go back to 1973. Mr. Jennings reiterated that some realtors have been doing their own research, but not all. This is really tying up our clerical staff and we cannot get out information back to the realtors in a timely manner. We used to research three permits a day, 60 per month. This month we have done over 128. We would like to reach out to realtors and educate them on how they can get information up front so we can get this done more efficiently. We are going to send an information packet to all realtors explaining to them how to do the research themselves. Mr. Bruckner explained the current research process in environmental health. He said as research comes in, the newest request goes to the bottom of the stack. We recently had a complaint from a customer because the closing date of their had to be moved and as it turned out their request was very easy to take care of, but because we are so backed-up it took a long time to complete. Mr. Tate asked how long it is taking currently. Mr. Jennings said we used to be able to handle most requests within one week, but it has been a little farther out recently. Mr. Tate said they have been talking to Mr. Roland about getting all of the research information from county department online. Mr. Jennings said it would be great to work towards. Mr. Bruckner said he doesn't think we need to add any environmental health specialists just yet, but business is picking up and that could become necessary in the future. Mr. Tate asked how far out we are on permits. Mr. Jennings said 3-4 weeks out on septic permits. Mr. Tate asked Mr. Jennings his personal opinion on our fees. Mr. Jennings said there are a few adjustments that could be made, some fees could be split and there are some structural fees we could make improvements on. Mr. Tate asked Ms. Murray her opinion as a realtor if realtors will be upset over the research fee. Ms. Murray said probably, but if we explain everything well it will be fine. Mr. Jennings said we have not had this issue in the past with long research time affecting closing dates, so we don't have a plan in place. He also said if realtors will let them know when a closing date is very near they will do their best to accommodate. Mr. Tate asked for a monthly update on the workload in order to stay ahead of the situation. Ms. Porter-Bowers made motion to accept research fee. Ms. Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Board Training and Information**

**A. Budget Update** – The May budget update is included in the BOH books. Ms. Anthony will give a quarterly update next month.

**Announcements** Mr. Bruckner said next month we will add the Public Health law update, to the agenda. Mr. Tate would like an update on permits at the next meeting and he would like a tour of the facilities.

**Next Meeting Date** **7/25/2017**

**Adjourn** Emily Porter-Bowers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. James Tate seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.