



Macon County  
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH  
MINUTES  
December 16, 2014**

**Members Present:** Russell Stevenson – Chair, Frank Killian MD - Vice-Chairman, Teresa Murray, Emily Bowers, Dr. Roy Lenzo, Nathan Brenner DDS, and Commissioner Paul Higdon

Absent: Stacy Shannon Pharm. D. & Molly Phillips

**Staff Present:** Jim Bruckner, Tammy Keezer, Becky Barr, Jimmy Villiard, Barry Patterson, Tonya Hodgins, Kathy McGaha, & Charlene Bellavance.

**Public Comment:** Jane Morgan spoke in support of employee's right to choose not to get the flu shot. She indicated that she felt it was damaging staff moral by making it mandatory for all employees to get the flu shot.

**Media:** Mike Parks from the Franklin Press was in attendance.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:18 by Chairman Stevenson.

Mr. Bruckner reviewed the new Board of Health meeting binders and what they contained. He asked the board members for suggestions, and comments for improvements.

**Approve Agenda:** Mr. Stevenson requested that budget update and vote for 2015 Chair and Vice-Chair be added under old business. A motion was made by Ms. Bowers and seconded by Dr. Killian to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**Welcome/Intro/Departures/Recognition:** Mr. Bruckner introduced Paula Ledford as the newest member of the board. She is a general public representative.

**Presentations - There were no presentations**

**Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting:** A motion was made by Dr. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Bowers to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2014 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

**Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair:** Mr. Stevenson stated that at the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting Dr. Killian had agreed to step up into the Chairman position on the Board. He opened the floor to nominations for Vice-Chairman. Mr. Bruckner indicated he had three nominations for vice chair. It was suggested that they vote by ballot. The results of the ballots indicated a majority vote for Teresa Murray as Vice-Chair. A motion was made by Ms.

Bowers and seconded by Ms. Phillips to accept the nominations for Teresa Murray as Vice-Chair and Dr. Killian as Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

**Employee Required Vaccination Update:** Mr. Bruckner indicated that at the October meeting the board had discussed adding the flu vaccine to the list of mandatory vaccines required in the employee immunization policy. Mr. Bruckner referred the board members to two handouts in their packets. The first handout provided the CDC recommendations for the flu vaccine, data relative to deaths and outbreaks, and why the agency feels it is important for all employees to be vaccinated. The second handout gave a list of all of the local hospitals, EMS facilities, nursing programs, etc. that require their employees or students to have certain vaccines. Mr. Bruckner referred the Board to the updated Agent Vaccination Policy that now includes the guidelines for those who have medical or religious exemptions. He referred them to the attachment that indicates when employees are required to wear a mask. Copies of this policy and the requirements for masks are attached. Mr. Stevenson asked what percent of employees have received the flu vaccine. Mr. Bruckner indicated that we have two employees that have asked to receive the flu mist and as soon as they receive it, we will be at 100% compliance. Commissioner Higdon indicated his concern is in respect to those employees who were hired and this was not a condition of employment when they were hired. However, he said he understood requiring it for newly hired employees. Mr. Bruckner indicated he had discussed implementation of this policy with the county attorney, the attorney with the State Division of Public Health and two attorneys with the UNC School of Government. He also said that he had spoken with several agencies who had implemented mandatory flu vaccination policies and none of those agencies had received any pushback from staff once it became mandatory. Mr. Stevenson indicated there had been discussion at two prior meetings that in the event of an outbreak the public has to have confidence in the fact that public health will be prepared for such an incident. Dr. Killian mentioned that he is a member of Asheville Eye and they require a mandatory flu shot. Dr. Brenner stated that he hears a lot of individuals say that because they got the flu shot last year and got the flu they weren't going to get it again. Mr. Bruckner indicated that unfortunately most people are not aware that they have been exposed to the flu when they get the shot. The flu shot does not cause the flu but if they already had the flu when they got the shot they may still come down with it.

Dr. Lenzo indicated his feeling was that individuals do not take seriously what the flu can do. He indicated that in his opinion public health's first job is to do no harm. The community has to have faith that the people who are caring for them and providing proper vaccines have been vaccinated themselves.

County Manager, Derek Roland, asked what we consider the Health Center. Mr. Bruckner indicated that this includes all areas occupied by health department staff including Environmental Health, but not code enforcement or DSS. Mr. Bruckner indicated that we have had a mandatory vaccination program in effect for many years and we have had 100% compliance. He also said, that we had never received a request for medical or religious exemption for other vaccinations.

Ms. Bowers noted that all of the employees at Highlands/Cashiers Hospital, even those who are support staff, are required to have a flu shot. This is modeled after the Mission Health System policy. She said they gave their staff a year to comply and that those who have not had the flu shot are required to wear a mask.

Mr. Roland asked if Code Enforcement was part of the Health Department. Mr. Bruckner indicated that they were not and they were not required to comply with our policy. That requirement would have to come from the Commissioners and the County Manager. Mr. Stevenson indicated that it was the Board's feeling that they needed to be in the forefront in the community and our agency employees need to be proactive.

**Molar Roller Renovation Update:** Mr. Villiard indicated that the molar roller will be picked up tomorrow. The employees packed up the equipment and the IT department removed the computers. We are hoping for a two week completion time frame. In the meantime, our child dental staff will be working in the extra adult dental operatory and doing some Baby oral health. Mr. Stevenson asked how many people we serve. Mr. Villiard indicated that they average about 250 to 300 visits each month. The unit travels to every school every other

year and during the summer months they provide services at Macon Program for Progress. Mr. Villiard thanked our maintenance staff and IT department for their hard work in getting the unit ready for transport.

**Policy Review - Policy and Procedure Development, Quality Program, 24/7 Public Health Response, and the Hours of Operation:** Mr. Bruckner reminded the members that at the November meeting they were asked to take home these four policies for review so they would be able to contribute to discussion. Ms. McGaha noted that the changes to the policies were minimal and unless there were any questions they will be documented accordingly. There were no questions.

Mr. Bruckner noted that the Hours of Operation were the same as the other county departments with few exceptions based on needs of the community and service delivered. The Dental programs work four 10-hour days because that is the standard in the industry. We do flex Environmental Health staff seasonally due to day light savings time. Both Mr. Villiard and Mr. Patterson monitor the schedules for these flex hours. We also have outside events like the fair, health education events, rabies clinics, Ladies Night Out that we allow staff to flex their time in order to have coverage for these events. Mr. Stevenson also noted that for the Environmental Health staff that have site visits they need to flex their hours to get the inspections done and are not necessarily here at 8:00 or until 5:00.

**Meth Labs Update:** Mr. Patterson gave an update regarding the status of meth lab clean-up in the community. Mr. Stevenson asked what happens to the property when it is seized. The first thing they do is locate the property owner and notify them of the seizure and advise them that they cannot reoccupy that property until it has been cleaned up. Mr. Stevenson asked about who can clean these labs up. Mr. Patterson said that unfortunately, it is the owner's responsibility to clean it up and some have not so we continue to monitor those properties. As far as transfer of the property, we have no authority to post a sign and no way to notify anyone stating that the property was used for making meth. As far as disclosure, the property owner could put it up for sale with no disclosure of the prior use. Because it is private property there is no way to force the owner to clean it up. However, we are responsible for signing off on the actual cleanup efforts prior to start and after completion of the process.

Mr. Stevenson asked what the status was of the wells that were affected by the landfill plume. Mr. Patterson stated that we are working with Chris Stahl from the landfill and are in the process of properly abandoning these wells. Mr. Stevenson encouraged Commissioner Higdon to help with this in any way possible. Commissioner Higdon said he had been in touch with Chris Stahl.

**Physician Extender and Lab Director Position Update:** Ms. Keezer reported that they had received applications for the position but they were concerned about the salary that was being offered. We have used newspaper ads and other websites for posting the position. We have also been in touch with Locum Tenum agencies to try to find a contract employee. Most of the conversation that we have had with physician extenders in the community is that our salary is not enough. Ms. Keezer noted that the information included in the handout in their packets included salaries of what other counties are paying for their physician extenders. She and Mr. Bruckner met with County Manager, Derek Roland, and they were able to agree to raise the salary. They have reposted the position at this higher salary and will hopefully receive some qualified applicants. Mr. Bruckner indicated that he does have one physician in the community that is interested in doing some part time work for us and he will be contacting him. Dr. Peterson asked if there were any nurse practitioners in the community that would be willing to do some part time work. Mr. Bruckner indicated that of the ones he has spoken with all already have full-time jobs.

Ms. Keezer noted that our Lab Director, Debbie Reeves, had retired and the position has been posted. We have received several applications but unfortunately they have not been qualified. Mr. Villiard noted that we have entered into a contract with the State Lab where we are now under their CLIA certificate which allows us to continue to provide lab services.

**Budget Update:** Ms. Hodgins referred the board to the handout in their packets of the current revenue and expenditures. A copy of her report is attached to these minutes. In response to the board's requests she will be reporting on a quarterly basis from now on.

## **New Business**

**Approval of Fee Changes:** Ms. Hodgins indicated that there were some fees that needed to be changed due to increases from the vendor. She referred the board members to the handouts in their packets and noted that the changes had been highlighted. A motion was made by Dr. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Bowers to approve the increased fees as recommended by Ms. Hodgins. The motion passed unanimously.

**Bad Debt Write-Off:** Ms. Hodgins indicated that the amount of the bad debt write off has decreased since we have begun using the collection agency. A motion was made by Dr. Peterson and seconded by Dr. Killian to approve the bad debt write off amount of \$4,404.52. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of 2015 Board Meeting Dates:** Mr. Stevenson asked if any of the members had any changes to the proposed calendar. A motion was made by Ms. Bowers and seconded by Dr. Peterson to approve the calendar as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**NC Resolution to Increase Cigarette Tax:** Ms. Barr submitted a resolution from the NC Alliance for Health to raise the state's tobacco tax by \$1.00 per pack. Ms. Barr shared several of the expected health benefits that a tobacco tax increase could provide; including an estimated 15.5% decrease in youth smoking rates and the prevention of up to 62,700 NC children becoming adult smokers. The resolution is also supported by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. Dr. Lenzo asked how we would rank among the other states in which tobacco was a sizable cash crop if the tax were increased. Ms. Barr shared that NC currently has the 45<sup>th</sup> lowest tax in the nation and that the \$1.00 increase would bring us up to about average overall, but probably higher than average among the larger tobacco-growing states. Commissioner Higdon asked what the revenue would be. Ms. Barr said that according to sources provided with the resolution, the estimated generation of new revenues would be 351 million in the first year. The resolution gave specifics as to how the increased revenue would be allocated in the future. A motion was made by Ms. Bowers and seconded by Dr. Killian to support the resolution to increase the sales tax. The motion passed with six in favor. Commissioner Higdon was opposed.

**Review of Health Director's Evaluation:** Mr. Stevenson indicated that he, Dr. Killian and Ms. Murray met with Mr. Bruckner prior to this meeting to conduct his annual evaluation. Mr. Stevenson noted that the department had received numerous awards as well as individual awards under Mr. Bruckner's leadership.

**Board Training and Information:** Ms. Bellavance reminded those who hadn't brought their notebooks to remember them for the next meeting.

**Announcements:** Mr. Stevenson asked the board members for suggestions for items they would like to discuss at future meetings. Dr. Lenzo suggested that he would like an update on any infectious diseases that are in current news.

**Next Meeting Date:** January 27, 2014

**Adjourn** – A motion to adjourn at 7:00 was made by Dr. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Bowers. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bellavance

These minutes were approved on January 27, 2015 with a motion by Dr. Peterson and seconded by Mr. Stevenson to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.