



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
September 22, 2015**

Members Present: Frank Killian MD – Chair, Teresa Murray - Vice-Chairman, Emily Bowers, Dr. Roy Lenzo, Chris Hanners, Nathan Brenner DDS, Paula Ledford and Molly Phillips

Absent: Commissioner Paul Higdon and Carole Peterson MD

Staff Present: Jim Bruckner, Tammy Keezer, Lynn Baker, Jimmy Villiard, Kyle Jennings, Kathy McGaha, & Charlene Bellavance.

Public Comment: There were no members of the public present

Media: Ms. Brittany Raby w/Macon County News, Ms. Kristen Karcher with WNCC Radio & Ryan Hanchett from The Franklin Press were all in attendance.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:22 by Chairman Killian.

Approve Agenda: Dr. Killian noted that Budget Update should be removed under Old Business and moved to Board Training and Information. Environmental Health Fees should take the place of this under Old Business as “C” on the agenda. October Rabies Clinic and Employee picnic should be added under Announcements. A motion was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Ms. Bowers to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Welcome/Intro/Departures/Recognition:

Mr. Bruckner noted that Mr. Villiard had nominated our Child Dental Clinic “Molar Roller” staff for the Glaxo Smith Kline award at the North Carolina Public Health Association meeting in Winston-Salem and although we didn’t win the award we are very proud of our staff.

Presentations: There were no presentations

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting: A motion was made by Ms. Ledford and seconded by Dr. Brenner to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2015 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Medicaid Cost Settlement: Mr. Bruckner reported that the impact on Macon County for the FY13/14 cost settlement if left to DMA’s new calculation is approximately a (\$62,000) dollar payback.

...Impact on Local Government and the Citizens of NC of DHHS/DMA proposed Local Health Department Cost Settlement changes (push to use new “Top Level Statistic”)

- DHHS/DMA already withholding approximately \$16.9 mil in local government (county) revenues from State Fiscal Year’s (SFY) 11, 12, & 13 – these are federal funds for services already performed by county health departments – no state dollars...
- If DHHS/DMA continues the push to use the new “Top Level Statistic” for SFY 13...90 of the 100 NC Counties would be in a payback situation totaling (\$22.8) million dollars
- In future SFY’s if DHHS/DMA continue to apply the new “Top Level Statistic” - Counties will lose approx. \$22.8 million in federal reimbursement (local revenues) annually for services provided through county health departments
- Impact on citizens:
 - Reductions in or elimination of critical health services - fewer women screened for cancer, fewer children immunized, fewer children screened for dental issues, fewer women receiving prenatal services - increase in poor birth outcomes/infant mortality, increase in unplanned pregnancies, etc.
 - Loss of Local Public Health infrastructure at county level - communities at greater risk for infectious disease outbreaks, fewer people screened for communicable diseases, lifesaving vaccinations denied or unavailable to protect local communities, etc.
 - Loss of local jobs.

Mr. Bruckner noted that in some ways we are at a standstill with the DMA. He had a meeting with County Commissioner Ronnie Beale, who is the current President of the NC Association of County Commissioners, to discuss the situation. The NCALHD has hired an attorney to represent the 100 local health departments in NC. I have filed an appeal with DMA on behalf of Macon related to the FY11 cost settlement for approximately \$5,700 being withheld by DMA.

Approval of Billing and Collections Policies and Fee Schedules: Ms. Keezer reminded the board members of the hand out from last month that they were asked to review. She asked if anyone had any questions regarding any of the documents. Chris Hanners asked about the sliding fee scale that applies to the adult dental clinic that is 200% where most of the others are 250% of the poverty level. Mr. Bruckner noted that adult dental is not a state mandated service and they are revenue neutral. Dr. Killian asked if the board approves the fee schedule do the commissioners then have to approve it. Mr. Bruckner noted that yes they do have to approve them and we hope to have that added to their agenda for their next meeting.

After a long discussion regarding environmental health fees, a motion was made by Dr. Lenzo that they approve the Billing and Collections Policies and Fee Schedules as submitted with the exception of the environmental health fees. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Murray asked if Mr. Jennings would come back to the board with the proposed Environmental Health fee plan.

Mr. Hanners asked Ms. Murray if as a realtor she sees individuals that ask about fees for septic or wells before they purchase a property. Ms. Murray indicated that she gets some individuals that presume that the septic permits will be transferred and they do not. She does feel that this second permit charge is prohibitive.

Mr. Hanners noted that we should be having a conversation with Commissioner Higdon regarding the comparison of our agency fees with other county fees based on the contribution of funds from their county.

Environmental Health Fees: Mr. Bruckner noted that he has had meeting with Derek Roland regarding the environmental health fees. Mr. Bruckner and Mr. Roland discussed several proposals as to how to cover the cost of changing the environmental health fees. R. Killian asked to have the original Board of Health motion read to the group. Ms. Bellavance read the motion out loud for the group - the original motion made at the July meeting was “to support the changes to the Environmental Health fee structure as presented contingent on the board of commissioner’s approval of funding to support the \$46,000 reduction in revenues caused by these suggested changes.” Mr. Bruckner indicated that the Board of Commissioners at their last meeting were not in support of using contingency funds for this purpose as it requires recurring funds; the Board of Commissioners asked Mr. Roland to review Environmental Health and Code Enforcement fees for the region and to bring that information back for their review before making any decisions.

Ms. Phillips asked what the point of reducing the fees is. Mr. Bruckner noted that we are one of the highest priced counties for some of our permits. Dr. Killian noted that it may be to encourage development. Ms. Phillips asked if there is any data that suggests that the ratio of development is slower or better in Macon as compared to Jackson, for instance, due to these fees being higher. Dr. Lenzo asked if the board members felt that if a person was planning to build a house for \$200,000 would a few hundred dollars be prohibitive in keeping them from building the house. Ms. Murray asked what the decision was regarding the current permits and wasn’t there a decision made to allow those individuals who had already paid for permits and were not grandfathered. Mr. Jennings noted that the individuals needing permits shouldn’t be getting double charged and those are the individuals that should benefit. Dr. Lenzo also noted that he remembered a time when we couldn’t get the permits done fast enough. Now that we have our system working and things are getting done efficiently he did not feel we should be messing with it. Dr. Killian asked if the Medicaid Cost Settlement money would affect this. Mr. Bruckner noted that this does not have an impact because the Medicaid Cost Settlement has to be spent in the program it was earned in. Mr. Hanners noted that we may need to look at whether or not we need to raise the fees in order to cover some of the deficit from our Medicaid Cost Settlement shortages. Ms. Ledford asked if the permitting issue had been resolved. Mr. Jennings noted that the County Commissioners had voted at the May 12, 2015 meeting “to waive the permit fee, retroactive to December of 2014, and to authorize refunds of fees paid for this specific type of permit issued between then and today’s date” so those individuals that already had their permits do not have to pay again but if the property changes hands the new owner has to pay again for the CA permit. Dr. Lenzo asked if we could fix the permitting issue with the double payments because he feels that these are the individuals we should be helping. Mr. Bruckner noted that they have the ability to make that decision.

Mr. Bruckner indicated that had discussed several possible ways to cover the cost of reducing permit fees. Mr. Bruckner indicated that the department has a halftime temporary position that it could give up to help offset the fees if necessary. Giving up this position should not impact clinical service delivery. Dr. Killian asked if anyone was in favor of the agency giving up a part time position to help pay for the reduction in the Environmental Health fees. No one responded.

Mr. Jennings presented the proposal he had prepared for the Board of Commissioners in anticipation of a reduction in fees. During the presentation Mr. Jennings asked Ms. Murray if she felt that her clients were looking for property to be permitted when they buy. Her answer was yes. Ms. Phillips asked if they could basically approve Mr. Jennings proposal to bill on a per gallon basis. Mr. Jennings noted that he would be willing to come back at next month’s meeting with a presentation explaining the proposal so everyone would be clear and comfortable with the final proposal. It was suggested by several Board Members that the Board may want to have another meeting prior to the commissioners meeting next month. We may also want to invite the commissioners and the County Manager to attend this meeting.

Dr. Killian asked if anyone would be willing to come back for a special meeting on the 6th of October. He asked for a show of hands of how many would be available for this time. Dr. Killian noted that this meeting will be just regarding the Environmental Health fees. Ms. Phillips noted that it would be important to let the

commissioners and the County Manager know that this will be on the agenda and they would expect that they would want to be in attendance.

New Business

Community Health Assessment: Ms. Baker presented that the Macon County Health Assessment is a Community collaborative process to determine health status, needs and resources of a community. All non-profit hospitals must participate and use the local CHA to prepare their CH(N)A (Community Health Needs Assessment) that is submitted to the IRS. The process started back in January and February and is now in full swing. MCPH is working with MountainWise and Western North Carolina Community Health Network (WNCHN). We have received our data and have set our workgroup meetings. The first group meeting, MountainWise of Macon County Executive/Leadership Team, is set for October 9th. The goals we hope to accomplish at this meeting are to review all the data. The second meeting is planned to take place in November to set the top priorities for Macon County. They will be using different methods and criteria to determine what the priorities are for our county. A copy of Ms. Baker's report is attached to these minutes. Ms. Baker asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Bruckner added a note that MountainWise is regional collaborative of the western eight counties with Macon County serving as the lead. We are encouraging the other counties involved in the MountainWise partnership to join in the use of MountainWise for their individual county programs.

Policy Review: Mr. Bruckner noted that the members had been emailed a copy of the agent vaccination policy and asked to review and bring any questions to this meeting. There were no questions regarding this. Ms. McGaha noted that the review of policies is an accreditation benchmark. The policy change in their packets relates to how our agency develops our policies. The only change to the policy is the addition of a section for the Employee and Family Health clinic. There were no other Board of Health policies that had changed.

Emerging Issues: Mr. Villiard noted that the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a new report in September regarding the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. The report notes a new strain, a re-assortment of Asian HPAI strains with North American low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) viruses, that they are projecting will hit us in the fall. North Carolina is on the list of states that may be affected. North Carolina is now requiring people to register backyard flocks of birds. The poultry industry is a huge industry in North Carolina with an economic impact of \$34.4 billion annually. The poultry industry is the #1 agricultural industry in North Carolina; and rates #2 in turkey production and #3 in the total poultry production nationally. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes. Mr. Villiard noted that there has not been a reported case in a human in the United States to date. Ms. Phillips asked if a person eats an egg from an infected bird if the person can become infected. Mr. Villiard indicated that no, they would not become infected. Mr. Bruckner noted that Macon County has the most registered backyard flocks in the state. Mr. Bruckner noted that the confinement area in an outbreak would be very large. The federal government is reimbursing the flock owners for the loss of their birds that have to be euthanized, but most poultry farmers do not own the birds themselves. The majority of birds are owned by large national poultry producers.

Board of Health Funds: Mr. Bruckner reminded members that they are allowed to get a stipend for their service on the Board of Health. They voted back in 2007 to leave the funds in the administration budget to be used for meals at the Board meetings, subscriptions, and memberships; and, for employee functions. The costs for the employee picnic and holiday diner are some of the event partially funded by this money. Mr. Bruckner noted that the members could receive a \$35.00 per member for meeting attendance if they chose to receive this stipend. Dr. Lenzo asked if there was anything else that the agency would like to do with this money. Mr. Bruckner noted that this is basically the only money we have for these types of events. The total amount is \$6,000. A motion was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Ms. Ledford to allow the agency to continue to use these funds for meetings and employee functions. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Training and Information: Mr. Bruckner noted that the monthly budget report is in their notebooks for their information.

Announcements: Rabies Clinic – October 3, 2015. Mr. Jennings noted that the department sponsors two of these a year. The Employee Picnic is September 30th from 11:30 to 1:00. All of the Board of Health notebooks have been updated and given back to the members. Information will be forthcoming regarding the October 6th meeting to discuss the Environmental Health fees.

Next Meeting Date: October 6, 2015

Regular Monthly Meeting: October 27, 2015

Recess: At 8:05 p.m., and upon a motion by Mr. Hanners, seconded by Ms. Phillips, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bellavance

These minutes were approved on October 27, 2015 with a motion by Mr. Hanners and seconded by Ms. Bowers. The motion passed unanimously.