



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
6/22/2021**

Members: Mitchell Bishop, Engineer and Chair; Ross Dodge, General Public and Vice-Chair; Melissa Bell, Pharmacist, Nathan Brenner, Dentist, Teresa Murray, General Public; Jeff Todd, Veterinarian; Paul Higdon, County Commissioner; Gosia Tiger, General Public; Vacant, Physician, Ellen Shope; Nurse Representative; Vacant, General Public

Members Absent: Teresa Murray, Gosia Tiger and Dr. Jeff Todd

Staff Present: Kathy McGaha, Melissa Setzer, Jennifer Garrett, Jimmy Villiard, Kyle Jennings, Carrie Pazcoguín and Jessica Baucum

Guests: None

Media: None

Public Comment: Tracey Dogan spoke again in regards to the Animal Control Ordinance, and how she would like to see it changed. Ms. Dogan provided a copy of the G.S., and the Macon County Ordinance to the board and asked for a committee be appointed to review and discuss the ordinance.

Deb Smith stated that she has been in animal rescue for many years and is a Vet Tech. She also has questions and concerns about the ordinance. She would like to know if Animal Control has the ability to act when they see an animal in a bad situation. Mrs. McGaha stated that Animal Services can only work within the boundaries of the NC General Statutes.

Sharon Archer stated she has been on the Human Society Board for over 20 years. She and several members of the board would volunteer for the committee if the Board of Health elects to organize a committee.

Call to Order: Mitchell Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:22 pm.

Welcome/Intro: Mrs. McGaha introduced Jessica Baucum as the new Human Resources person.

Agenda Approval: Ellen Shope made a motion to approve the agenda. Melissa Bell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

Environmental Health
Activity Report

Kyle Jennings, Section Administrator of Environmental Health spoke about the lag time in On-Site Waste Water Program (septic permits). Through the pandemic applications did not slow down. In fact, Environmental Health (EH) has been extremely busy over the past year. Applications for septic systems are continuing to come in at a very high rate. Not only has EH staff been involved in the response to the pandemic, they are also short several staff members. Two of these positions are vacant positions that have not been filled. Mr. Jennings stated that no one is applying for these positions because other counties are offering higher pay for the same job. Being short staffed has contributed greatly to the delayed turnaround time. The turnaround time for an application at this time is approximately 6 weeks out. Repairs are top priority, those are completed quickly. Applications with a due diligence are done in a timely manner and completed before the due diligence date is up. All other applications are assigned on a weekly basis. The department continues to develop new ways to handle the overload and track what applications has come in and what has been done.

**Approval of Previous
Meeting Minutes:**

Ross Dodge made a motion to accept the minutes. Melissa Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

COVID-19 Update

Mrs. McGaha stated that Macon County is doing much better. The COVID case count for Macon County has maintained a 10 case or less for the last couple of weeks. Due to the low case count, Mr. Villiard will only send COVID reports out once a week. As of Friday, June 18th, the call center was closed and that staff brought back to the department. All calls for testing and vaccines will now be handled within the department. Adults and teens are still showing interest in the vaccine. CCTO & National Guard were able to help with the Mana Food Bank yesterday, which gave them the opportunity to speak with individuals and hand out information about the vaccine.

Animal Control
Ordinance

Based on Ms. Dogan's public comment at the last meeting. Mrs. McGaha inquired about what the Board of Health could do in regards to revising the Animal Control Ordinance. The County Manager asked that the Board of Health appoint a committee to review and discuss what revisions or additions that could be made to the ordinance. This committee would have to be made up of Board of Health members, and Health Department staff. Members of the general public can come and speak to the committee, sharing their concerns about the current ordinance and make suggestions for revisions, but cannot be an active committee member. The ordinance was last reviewed 5-6 years ago. This committee will only be making recommendations to the County Commissioners. Commissioner Higdon stated that he thought this should be a Planning Board topic. Mrs. McGaha explained that Ms. Dogan went to the Planning Board after being referred to them by the Board of County Commissioners. The Planning Board informed her that the ordinance was out of their jurisdiction and recommended she speak with the Board of Health. One of the main concerns is why Animal Services cannot take an animal away from someone if they are being abused. Mr. Villiard stated that in order for an animal to be ceased, it has to go through the court system. Mr. Villiard also stated that the biggest issue is not the ordinance, it is the enforcement. They are all civil penalties, which do not hold up in court. It is hard to prove animal abuse over animal neglect and animal abuse is the only one that is a criminal offense. Mr. Bishop stated that the committee would review all concerns and comments that Ms. Dogan has brought to the Board of Health when reviewing the ordinance. The committee will then bring all findings back to the Board Of Health at the July meeting.

It was decided by the Board of Health that the Animal Control Committee would consist of:

Dr. Jimmy Villiard, Macon County Animal Services
Dr. Jeff Todd, Veterinarian and Board of Health Member
Ross Dodge, General Public Board of Health Member.

FY22 Budget Update

Mrs. McGaha stated that the FY22 budget was approved by the County Commissioners. Funds were approved to be set aside for the salary study that is currently taking place. At this time, they do not know whose salary will be effected. This is lengthy process and may still take a couple months before they have the results. There were no significant or critical changes to the Health Department budget. Environmental Health were approved for two new vehicles in this budget. There is no word yet on what COVID funds will be coming down from the state.

Y21 End of Year
Budget Report

Mrs. Pazcoguin, Finance Officer asked the board members to look at the handouts for the FY21 expenses and revenues. Overall, this past year the department finished out better than expected due to COVID-19. Some areas that stayed strong all year was the Lab, due to processing the COVID-19 test as well as Family Planning and Maternal Health who continued to see patients through the pandemic. The Medicaid reimbursement went up as well which helped to cover some of the programs that were not operating at full capacity. Two new lines were formed this year for COVID-19 Vaccine and COVID-19 Testing. These two lines were established for the administration fee that the department could charge insurance companies. No patient was ever charged this fee. Most of the expenditures used this year were COVID-19 related.

Billing Guide and Fee
Plan

Mrs. Pazcoguin, Finance Officer stated that after consulting with the state and other counties they have found that the current billing guide is not up to standards. The Finance Committee has been working on new revisions to bring the Billing Guide up to the state standards. Copies of the revisions were handed out to the Board of Health for review. One item addressed is that each time the department needs to make small changes to the fee plan, they first have to take the changes to the Board of Health then it has to go to the County Commissioners for approval before the change can be made. This process can take close to two months to complete. The revisions to the Billing Guide would allow the finance committee to set fees without having to complete the whole process and save time. The Billing Guide would state that fees would be set using a certain formula. This would give the department a consistent way to figure those fees. Due to accreditation, the Billing Guide and Fee Plan will be presented and reviewed by the Board of Health and the County Commissioners each year.

Ellen Shope made a motion to approve the Billing Guide and Fee Plan. Melissa Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Health Director Review
Committee

Mrs. McGaha stated that a Committee needed to be established to complete the Health Director's job review. It was agreed upon that this committee would consist of;
Melissa Bell
Ross Dodge
Teresa Murray

Melissa Bell made a motion to approve the Board Members for the Review Committee. Ross Dodge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion:

Closed Session: None

Announcements: None

Next Meeting Date: July 27, 2021

Adjournment: Paul Higdon made the Motion to adjourn. Melissa Bell seconded that motion. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 7:43 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by: Melissa Setzer, MCPH Administration Assistant