



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
11/19/2024**

Members: Garrett Higdon, Engineer; Paul Higdon, County Commissioner; Vacant, Optometrist; Dr. Roy Lenzo, Veterinarian; Vacant, Pharmacist; Dr. Matt Corbin, Dentist; Ellen Shope, Nurse Representative and Vice Chair; Dr. Michael Dupuis, Physician; Members of General Public, Jerry Hermanson Chair, Dr. Charlie Vargas; Vacant, General Member

Members Absent: Paul Higdon & Ellen Shope

Staff Present: Kathy McGaha, Jimmy Villiard, Lisa Browning, Noah Sitton, Ruthie Capaforte, and Christina Stamey

Guests: Animal Shelter Volunteers

Media: Thomas Sherrill, The Franklin Press

Call to Order: Jerry Hermanson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

**Welcome/Intro/
Departures/
Recognition/
Announcements:** Kathy opened the meeting welcoming everyone. She announced new staff Christina Stamey (Administrative Assistant), Noah Sitton (Preparedness Coordinator), April Blanton (Returning as a Biller), Alex Windsor (Animal Shelter Attendant), and Sarah Bradley (Administrative Secretary 2 Environmental Health). Dawn Roberts (Health Information Coordinator) left us to return to a previous job for income increase.

Public Comment:

1. Steve Grissm, a volunteer for the Macon County Animal Shelter, thanked the maintenance department for the repairs that were completed at the shelter.
2. A volunteer from the Macon County Animal Shelter addressed the Board about kennel doors not operating correctly; wanting to know if this would be corrected. Jerry Hermanson reassured the volunteers that this was going to be fixed.
3. Several volunteers from the Macon County Animal Shelter were very concerned about the compressor being locked up on the HVAC unit at the shelter. The volunteers were worried about there being no heat and wanted to know what measures were being took to

fix the unit and loss of heat in the shelter. Kathy McGaha and Dr. Jimmy Villard both explained that a new unit has been ordered. There is a two-week turn around on receiving the new unit. As a temporary solution, several heaters have been purchased and placed in the shelter.

Agenda Approval: Dr. Dupuis made a motion to approve the Agenda with one amendment adding to old business was the Environmental Health fees and Dr. Matt Corbin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Presentation:
Hurricane Helene Updates
Lisa Browning presented information on situations and learning tools, Macon County Environmental Health received from Hurricane Helene. Lisa informed the Board that there is 112 restaurants in Macon County. Lisa also addressed that restaurants were not the only establishments requiring permits for power and water and all together, there were 350 establishments with these requirements. Scaly Mountain and Highlands were the areas in Macon County without water or power. The Highlands area never had a boil water requirement. Because of the disaster, we have come up with a better emergency plan in the future. They also came up with an emergency contact list and plan for the establishments requiring power and water. Environmental Health also created a product salvage guide. Kathy added that some of the nurses were sent to Caldwell County to help with relief. Ruthie Capaforte spoke on the help they were able to provide to that area and shelters created in the area of Caldwell County. The state also provided a water testing system for residents in the area. The state gave out free water sample bottles to residents. Kathy McGaha said Macon County would be receiving funds to prepare for any upcoming disasters.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Garrett Higdon made a motion to approve the minutes from 09/24/2024. Dr. Michael Dupis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Kathy McGaha spoke on the concerns and issues that were brought before the Board of Health at the September meeting. In October Kathy McGaha, staff members and Macon County Animal Shelter volunteers met and discussed and narrowed down what were the top priorities to be addressed first need to be. Kathy put a pamphlet together with what was prioritized in that meeting and handed it out. All present agreed that the lack of staffing at the Macon County Animal Shelter was the most important issue to resolve first. Kathy also spoke on the importance and the need for a veterinarian technician. Dr. Jimmy Villiard takes care of most of the animal's minor medical needs as of now. Jimmy's retirement is approaching and the long-term planning needs to make sure these needs for the animals are still met after his departure. Having a veterinarian technician will be a need at the shelter so that the shelter does not have to rely on the area veterinarians for smaller medical needs. Building facilities was another concern Kathy McGaha addressed. Maintenance has added more lighting, damaged walls were fixed and painted. Kathy McGaha said there upcoming repairs scheduled. Kathy McGaha, Dr. Jimmy Villiard, Dr. Roy Lenzo, and the volunteers discussed the 10-day hold on adoptions to be lowered to 5 days. Dr. Roy Lenzo did not agree to shorten the hold time due to the concern that 5 days would not allow enough time for signs of rabies to present

itself. The shelter Volunteers feel that if the hold time on the animals were reduced, it would help free up room and overcrowding in the shelter. Dr. Jimmy Villiard announced that the ASPCA will be providing free spay and neutering. Dr. Matt Corbin spoke on the need for more square footage and repairs on the shelter that was brought to the board. Dr. Matt Corbin said it would be more beneficial to go before the Commissioners with a long-term plan rather than continuing to request smaller, several short-term requests. Garrett Higdon made the suggestion on getting the wheels moving now on requesting a new shelter being built. Garrett Higdon said that it would be necessary to begin working on this plan because of the length of time it takes to have improvements this large approved. Kathy McGaha asked the board how they want to proceed with these concerns. Dr. Matt Corbin suggested on getting a subcommittee together consisting of board members, staff and volunteers to come up with a finalized plan to present to the town manager. Garrett Higdon made a motion on pursuing a new kennel worker. Dr. Michael Dupuis 2nd the motion. Kathy announced there is a hiring freeze until the middle of January 2025 due to the new HR system. Dr. Matt Corbin addressed that some of these issues can and need to be resolved within the department and not all need to be brought to the Board of Commissioners to be resolved. Jerry Hermanson asked for updates on the motion for a new shelter employee.

Garrett Higdon clarified that his motion stood, pursuing a new kennel worker. Dr. Michael Dupuis 2nd the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Health Fees Update:

2. Kathy McGaha updated the Board of Health on the Environmental Health fee proposal failed 3 to 2. Fees last established are still in place. Dr. Michael Dupuis along with Dr. Matt Corbin both agreed to leave the matter of the fees alone until July of 2025 and then bring it back to the commissioners.

New Business:

1. Approval of the 2025 Meeting dates. They will fall the third Tuesday of the month, with the exception of November due to Thanksgiving. Kathy McGaha also reviewed the Committee and Members list.

Dr. Matt Corbin made a motion to approve minutes. Dr. Michael Dupuis 2nd the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Nominations for and Appointments for Chair and Vice Chair. Jerry Hermanson agreed to serve another term as chair. Ellen Shope agreed to serve another term as vice chair.

Dr. Michael Dupuis made a motion to approve the chair fulfillment. Kathy McGaha 2nd the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

3. The Board reviewed the Operating and Procedures policy.

Dr. Michael Dupuis made the motion to approve the Operating and Procedures policy. Garrett Higdon 2nd the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Board of Health training was placed into Health Stream to make training more efficient and time friendly. Jerry asked that the training to be completed by January 28th 2025.

Next Meeting Date: The next Board of Health meeting will be January 28th, 2025. (We will have general updates and emerging issues, etc.)

Adjournment: Garrett Higdon made a motion to go into adjourn the meeting and Matt Corbin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously at 8:06 pm.

Minutes Recorded
by: Christina Stamey

