



Macon County
Public Health

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
5/27/2021

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: Gosia Tiger, Melissa Bell, Paul Higdon & Ellen Shope

Staff Present: Kathy McGaha, Melissa Setzer, Jennifer Garrett, Jimmy Villiard, Jamie Waldroop

Guests: None

Media: Jake Browning Franklin Press

Public Comment: Dr. Tracey Dogan came to speak with the board in regards to the Animal Control Ordinance. She has asked the board if she could form a small committee to review ordinances from other counties and revise the Macon County Animal Ordinance. The reason for this revision would be increase Animal Services' enforcement authority and to make the laws tougher on animal owners who abuse and/or neglect animals. Ms. Dogan described where a property owner had horses, goats and dogs tied up in their yard. Animal Services was called, but there was nothing they could do according to General Statues and the county ordinance. She tried to help the neighbor, but he told her that he would press trespassing charges on her. She is here today to ask if she can make a small committee to change the ordinances so that animal control can do more to protect the animals. Dr. Dogan has read other counties ordinance and found where they have added more protection into their ordinances. She would like to have a large animal person and animal control on the committee to update the ordinance. She would also like to make it to where the complainant's information is not released to the owner of the animal this is in question. She is asking for permission from the Health Department to do research and make changes to the ordinance and then present it to the county commissioners. Mrs. McGaha stated that the Board of County Commissioners would have to appoint the committee to look at any changes to the ordinance. Ross Dodge asked if the Board of Health could form a committee to research this item before it is taken to the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Villiard from Animal Services stated that they do follow the NC G.S.. Mr. Bishop stated that he would like to research this before any committees are formed. It was decided that this would be placed on the agenda for the June meeting.

Call to Order: Mitchell Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:25 pm.

Welcome/Intro: Mrs. McGaha announced to the board that Dianna Harkins has retired.

Mrs. McGaha also stated that Macon County Public Health received the Above and Beyond Award at the Chamber of Commerce Meeting for their efforts with the COVID pandemic.

Agenda Approval: Ross Dodge made a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the Annual Child Fatality Prevention Report. Teresa Murray seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Presentations: Jamie Waldroop, Communicable Disease Nurse presented the Communicable Disease Annual Report. In 2020, Macon County faced a challenge unlike anything we had ever seen before. The COVID pandemic arrived in Macon County with its first case on March 15, 2020. Macon County began preparing for the virus early in the year by holding meetings to determine what the response to the Coronavirus would be when it arrived in the county.

Coronavirus testing began with the first COVID test administered to a patient on March 11, 2020. To qualify for a COVID Test initially patients had to have symptoms and had to have traveled to a foreign location the CDC deemed susceptible for COVID. Early testing was a challenge due to the fact there was a shortage of testing kits worldwide. Staff nurses began testing patients at home. After testing kits became more readily available testing moved to a drive thru format outside the health department. Macon County Public Health began providing COVID vaccinations in late December of 2020. Macon County has had approximately 3,171 cases of Coronavirus since the pandemic started, has provided over 9,500 COVID tests and has given over 12,000 vaccines. From the beginning the staff at Macon County Public Health responded quickly and efficiently to insure the health and safety of the community. The year of 2020 ended with 1856 Positive COVID cases and 16 COVID deaths.

As of this day, the Health Department alone has given over 12k shots through the drive through clinic. They are starting to see a decline in people who want the vaccine. It was stated in the meeting that at this time Macon County is 49 % vaccinated.

The services they normally offered at the department have been scaled down due to COVID. STD numbers for the year has went down mainly because they had to cut down on the number of appointments they were taking. Mr. Waldroop explained that there are 79 reportable conditions in North Carolina (including sexually transmitted diseases). The Health Department monitors these communicable diseases for the entire county. Any private practice or medical facility has to report those diseases to the Health Department.

A few things he highlighted were the fact that there have been no cases of active TB that were diagnosed in 2020. There was one influenza outbreak in 2020 and only one case of Hepatitis A in 2020, compared to two cases in 2019.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Teresa Murray made a motion to accept the minutes. Mitchell Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

COVID-19 Update As of today, we have 7 active positive cases. This is the lowest that has been seen since the beginning. The department had a very successful clinic yesterday giving out Moderna and Janssen to anyone over 18 years of age and Pfizer to anyone 12 and older.

The state has made some changes. The old guidance was that if you received a vaccine within the last 14 days you were unable to have the COVID vaccine. The new guidance states that you may now have the COVID vaccine even if you have received a vaccine within that timeframe. They have also changed the amount of time Pfizer can be stored in a regular freezer or refrigerator making it easier to store. Mr. Dodge asked if there was any information concerning the booster. Mrs. Garrett stated that there is no information at this time. Once the CDC releases it to the state, the state will then release to the providers.

New Business:

FY22 Budget Update

Tuesday night the County Manager presented the FY22 Budget to the Board of County Commissioners. There were a few cuts made to the budget for the Health Department but no drastic changes at this time. The County Manager also gave a snap shot of the salary study to the County Commissioners during his meeting. Mrs. McGaha stated that she has been on the salary study committee since the beginning and Gallagher has now collected all the information for the preliminary data. June 3rd will be a work session for the County Commissioners for the budget. The County Manager has asked for a certain amount of money be set aside to cover the salary study. The salary study is still an ongoing process and results may not be available until August or September.

Plan for Returning to Regular Services

Mrs. McGaha stated that June 18th would be the last day that the call center is off site. The call center will return to the department on June 21st. At this time, the call center is only averaging 70 calls a day. Therefore, there is not a need for a large amount of staff focusing on calls. Mr. Drake and his staff have been wonderful and so very helpful to this department and the community. Mr. Drake has been supportive by offering to house the call center in two of his facilities. Mrs. Garrett stated that they currently have 2 groups helping and they would be CCTO and the National Guard. The CCTO is the COVID Contact Tracing Organization. They have been utilized for testing; vaccinating two CCTO staff members are at the call center. The National Guard has been here since February. They have been working toward taking over the testing and vaccinations so that MCPH staff can open up programs that have been limited or stopped during the pandemic. The National Guard will be taking over the full process from checking patients in to observation. During the transition all operations out front will move to the back of the building since there will be limited staffing outside. CCTO will continue doing contact tracing and staffing the call center at the department.

Adult Dental Needs

Ross Dodge would like to see a review of the adult dental needs within the county and what the Health Department could do to help with the problem. He asked if the board would approve a committee to review and looking at possible ways of redoing or making services better. He would like to see where the dental program has been and where it could go. Also, what where the problems and what options would the Health Department have in order to resolve the adult dental needs within the county. Mrs. McGaha explained the different ways of looking at why we would need adult dental care. Information will be gathered and then brought to the board. Adult dental needs will be placed on the agenda for the June meeting.

Discussion: Animal Control Ordinance and Adult Dental needs will be added to the agenda for the June meeting.

Closed Session: None

Announcements: None

Next Meeting Date: June 22, 2021

Adjournment: Dr. Jeff Todd made the Motion to adjourn made by. Nathan Brenner seconded that motion. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by: Melissa Setzer, MCPH Administration Assistant