



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
3/28/2023**

Members: Mitchell Bishop, Engineer; Vacant, Pharmacist; Nathan Brenner, Dentist; Paul Higdon, County Commissioner; Ellen Shope, Nurse Representative; Michael Dupuis, Physician; Roy Lenzo, Veterinarian; Vacant, Optometrist; Members of General Public Vacant, Jerry Hermanson, Chair; Dr. Charlie Vargas

Members Absent: Ellen Shope, Michael Dupuis, Paul Higdon

Staff Present: Kathy McGaha, Jennifer Garrett, Jimmy Villiard, Tara Raby, Melissa Setzer, Jen Germain, Lynn Jenkins, Charles Womack

Guests: None

Media: Thomas Sherrill

Call to Order: Jerry Hermanson called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Welcome/Intro: Kathy McGaha began the meeting with introducing new employees. We have one new employee here, Lynn Jenkins. She works in Environmental Health with Tiffany at the front window. She has been with us for about a month. Everyone is happy to have her as a new addition to the office. We have a couple of other people who are new to the agency, but they are not here. We have a new animal control officer, Jade Ferguson, who transferred from the detention center. Chelle Wright is our new part time shelter attendant. In the Billing office we have Kelsey Crawford, she has been with us for about 6 months. We are happy to have all of you with the Health Department.

I would like to share some very sad news, one of the gentleman who has been helping with Environmental Health as a contract worker, his name was Slade Smathers. He has passed away about 3 weeks ago. He was working with us while he was employed at Haywood County. Our thoughts are with his family and friends during this time.

Public Comment: None

Agenda Approval: The Agenda shows we have Board of Health Training items, and this is currently a standard item on the Agenda, but we do not have anything at this meeting. In addition, we do not have anything for closed session as well.

Dr. Nathan Brenner made a motion to approve Agenda, Mitchell Bishop seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Presentations:
State of the County
Health Report
(SOTCH)**

Jen Germain presented the State of the County Health Report (SOTCH). This is the State of County Health Report which was completed in 2022. Please look in your binder and the whole State of County Health Report is in there for you to review, along with the information to find links. The topics we are covering are Access to Care, Obesity, Substance Abuse, and as much as we can on Affordable Housing. The progress on our Community Health Improvement plan are step by step at this point.

Access to Care - one of the main things we can do is promote recruitment and retention of additional medical personnel. We need to advertise a lot more, and pay a lot more, so that people can afford to live here. Everyone is short staffed at the moment, which is common in all of the Health facilities. In addition Vecinos will be opening a health hub in 2024/2025.

Obesity – there is a need for chronic disease management and other health education classes. Macon County Public Health post educational information on social media, but not everyone has internet, so we like to offer classes. Currently, our partner Mountain Wise is providing classes on diabetes management, as well as Smoking Cessation. People are referred to the Quit Line. Macon County Public Health will start conducting classes on Living Healthy with chronic conditions at the library in June.

Substance Abuse – This will take a lot of collaboration to address. Behavioral Health Task Force meets every other month. It includes a lot of members from the county and outside of the county. So we all will know what the current status of substance abuse in the county.

Affordable Housing – Macon County Public Health is participating on a committee to try to address the affordable housing. We want to find out how we can improve housing in this area, so people can come to our town.

Significant/Notable changes in Morbidity and Mortality – there have been no significant morbidity and mortality changes in our community. If you look at the County Health rankings we are ranked higher in the state.

Emerging changes Impacting Health – These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2022 that were not identified as priorities in our CHA.

1. Cost of health food has increased with inflation.
2. Increase in property values at the beginning of 2023, which will make it even more difficult for new buyers to purchase home and current owners to keep their home.
3. Change in county leadership, transferring the lead on substance abuse and mental health related issue from government to the private sector.

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2022.

1. Mental Health Task Force rebranded to help potential stigma. It is now called the Behavioral Health Task Force.
2. Grant received the Duke Empowerment to help better access to healthy foods within this county.
3. Amazon announced the opening of a distribution center with the county, which will help with unemployment.

Dr. Vargas asked, could Mrs. Germain give an example of an Emerging change of Impacting Health? Mrs. Germain shared how Ronnie Beale was a county commissioner and the county was the host for the Mental Health Task Force. Since he is no longer a county commissioner they voted on if they wanted the county to continue to host it. The vote was no, and now it's under a private sector.

Jerry Hermanson asked how often does the Behavioral Health Task Force meet? Mrs. Germain answered every other month.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Dr. Nathan Brenner made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Roy Lenzo seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Tobacco 21 Resolution

Kathy McGaha discussed the Tobacco 21 Resolution, at the last meeting, and the Board voted to prepare the resolution. We have prepared the resolution, and Jerry Hermanson has signed it and we will forward it to Tobin Lee.

Molar Roller Bid Package Update

Mrs. McGaha shared an update on the Molar Roller. We went to the County Commissioners Meeting to request a new Molar Roller. They voted and approved for us to put it out for bid, but for us to check on repairs in the meantime. We had to repair the undercarriage of the unit, and we have to keep what we have until we get a new one. Repairs took place last October, and it currently needs more repairs. It's scheduled to go back to the shop on May 18th. The bid package has been developed and the county Finance office has the package. They are currently prepping the budget and once they are finished they will start reviewing the bid package.

Jerry Hermanson asked, do we know how many companies can build the Molar Roller? Melissa Setzer answered, we currently have 3 companies at this time. Are they regional? Mrs. Setzer answered, there is one by the coast, one up north, and one out west of the country.

Mrs, McGaha says the current estimate is about \$720,000 and we have built in another \$150,000 for contingencies which puts it about \$870,000. Mrs. Setzer shared each year we go through the Medicaid cost settlement. We just received

back the Medicaid cost settlement. We usually budget \$250,000, but this year we were notified that the total Medicaid Cost Settlement for FY2022 is \$816,378. So once they deduct the \$250,000 the balance can go towards purchasing the new unit. The funds are expected to be spent on Medicaid and Medicaid Services since the Molar Roller sees Medicaid patients we can use the money towards purchasing a new one. It's difficult to tell how much we will get, it is determined by how many Medicaid patients we have served. Mrs. McGaha says we are waiting to hear from the county manager, and commissioners to see what our next step will be.

Budget

Melissa Setzer presented the FY2024 proposed Budget. The first group of figures are the original budget. The "Projection figures" in blue is what we are predicting for the year. The figures in "red" are the amounts we are predicting for FY2024. Then looking further at the first page, the highlighted areas in blue are the programs for the Health Department, and then below those are the programs for Mountain Wise.

You will see on the next page are the COVID AA Funds, but they do not have amounts. These are all going to be rollover funds, so we do not know the amounts at this time to include in the budget.

If you go over to the next form, this is the Proposed FY24 Budget Expenditures which is broke down again into the Health Department, Mountain Wise, and COVID19 AA's. As you review the amounts, you will see that Child Dental Health is the largest amount. This amount is for the proposed bid amount for the Molar Roller. The amount in "red" is what we have estimated as our FY2024, and the last line is the difference between FY23 and FY24.

Kathy discussed the highlights of the budget; besides the Molar Roller amount, most of our programs are not going up. There will be a little bit for Salary increases. Animal Control is seeing an increase for a couple of reasons. We are trying to transition into another Animal Office position. They also have budgeted to replace the pen doors at the Animal Shelter. In addition, there has been an increase in their supplies, medical care, and vaccines since they have had more intake of animals.

In addition, you will see an increase in the amount of the salary for the Physician position, we are transitioning from a contracted position to a permanent position.

Dr. Nathan Brenner made a Motion to Approve the Budget, and Dr. Carlos Vargas second the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Medicaid Expansion

Kathy McGaha discussed the Medicaid Expansion. As of Monday, Governor Cooper signed the bill to pass the Medicaid Expansion. What would this look like for Macon County? This would extend insurance for 6478 uninsured individuals. We know that at the Health Department we have to get ready for people who use the services, and we know it could impact the free clinics. Jerry Hermanson shared he feels it would impact the free clinics by approximately 5%. Jerry also stated that access to care would be a concern because we may not have the staff or the appointments available. The same story is true for the Health Department, it's hard

to find the staff to fill the positions. We have 4 open positions in WIC that need to be filled, and we still have 3 positions open for school nurses. We will keep you informed as this moves forward.

Environmental Report

Charles Womack discussed the Environmental Report. The first page shows the Food and Lodging Inspections. The numbers in 2022 are higher than the year 2021, part of this is because of the increase of staff. In addition, we have had the increase of food establishments, and the Highlands Food Festival increased the numbers. Kathy asked if when they transfer a new establishment to a new owner, do they have to come up to the current code? Charles answered, yes they do, which they have a 30 day transition period to come up to the standards. Jerry Hermanson, asked do you review every establishment each year? Charles answered, yes we are supposed to, but last year we did not get 100%. Mitchell Bishop asked what's the standard inspections? Charles answered, it's normally quarterly. The numbers also include Tattoo Artist as well, we currently have over 30 artist in the County.

The Private Drinking Water wells report is consistent. We have some months that did increase. We had a subdivision that their shared well went dry, and we had over 20 well applications, so there was an increase. If you look at how many well permits were issued in 2021, it's 255 and in 2022, it's 211. The permits did drop a little in 2022. Jerry Hermanson, how many people can hook up to the shared well. You can have up to 14 connections and 25 or more people. If you are more than 25 people, then you become a community well, and it has to have a water operator. In addition, you have to have a water test every quarter that has to be reported to the state. The process from permit to completion can be lengthy. They have to it drilled, then we will go back to see if they have power, and it's completed. Then we take a water test for bacteria and Inorganic, which is reported to the state. Sometimes the whole well process can be a couple of years, depending on the owner. Mr. Hermanson asked, do we still analyze water samples? Yes, we still do water tests, and we supply the water bottles for collection which are sterile.

The next page is the Onsite Waste Water Applications. These are people who do not have access to municipal sewage, and they will have their own septic system. In 2022 it did drop a little from 2021. We are still behind on applications, they are currently 4 to 6 weeks out. We are trying to streamline the application process, and it can be very difficult. It has come a long way, some people email them to us. The permits dropped a little bit from 2022 to 2021. Charles says we have had a lot of repairs this year. The year prior, when it was just Charles and Jon, they issued more permits than applications. This was because they were trying to dig away at the bag log, and it just shows how hard Charles and Jon worked to get through it all. We have learned a lot during this process, about 60% of the permits we can issue pretty quickly. About 40% get put aside because the property is not ready. We are trying to educate people on what we need for them to do to prepare the property for the Inspectors.

The last page summarizes where the office is currently. We are close to fully staffed, 9 out of 12 of the staff are training at some level. All programs are under review for Accreditation. In addition to add to the food and lodging is pool inspection process, the state has changed the rules, so it's a lot more involved.

We are looking for a new work flow software application, which we hope will allow them to work closer with building inspections to speed up the process for permits.

Board of Health Training: No Board of Health Trainings

Closed Session: No closed Sessions

Discussion:

Announcements: No Announcements

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be May 23, 2023

Adjournment: Mitchell Bishop made a motion to adjourn. Nathan Brenner seconded the motion. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by: Tara Raby

