

Moore County Board of Health
August 2, 2021

Members Present: Leo Santowasso, PE, PLS, Chair
Mark Brenner, MD
Louis Gregory
Paul Kuzma, MD
Kamron Monroe, DDS
Tony Price
Benjamin Wacker, OD
Robert R. Wittmann, MPH, Secretary to the Board

Members Absent: Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM; Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA;
William Mang, PharmD; Max Muse, RN, ME, Vice Chair

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting of the Board of Health was held in the Board Room of the Moore County Health Department in Carthage, NC. Chair Leo Santowasso called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Health Department staff present were: Teresa Forrest, Administrative Officer; Matt Garner, Health Educator; Miriam King, Health Educator; and Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer. Moore County employees present were: Tami Golden, Budget Manager and Moore County Internal Auditor; Caroline Xiong, Moore County Finance Officer; Dawn Gilbert, Moore County Human Resources Director; and Stephan Lapping, Deputy County Attorney.

Board members and staff introduced themselves. Laura Douglass, reporter with the Pilot newspaper, was present.

Invocation: Robert Wittmann gave the invocation.

Secretary to the Board: Robert Wittmann read the following statement: *Does any Board Member have a conflict of interest concerning agenda items the Board will address in this meeting?* None were noted.

Approval of, and/or Adjustments to, Agenda: Kamron Monroe made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Tony Price seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Presentations: Health Department COVID Grant Funding Report

Tami Golden passed out a list of COVID health grants, including the amount of each, the service period, the date approved by the Board of Commissioners, etc. Grant funds are not received until the funds have been expended and reimbursement is requested. Payment is requested through the State's WIRM (Web Identity Role Management) Portal. The funds have

to be spent during the grant service period but the funds can be drawn down through the payment period. Tami Golden noted that each grant has a contact person at the State to verify allowable expenses. She reviewed details of the COVID grants with the Board. She noted that Grant 543, total amount \$807,957, and Grant 716, total amount \$320,355, have had their service period and payment period extended through fiscal year 2022, possibly longer. She stated that the County can use these grant funds to cover salaries for COVID-related activity. An option would be to have the Board of Commissioners apply the grant funds for salary expenses and then use the previously budgeted County money (which is less restrictive), for other COVID needs. The Board of Commissioners would have to approve utilizing the budgeted County money for grant-related expenses. Tami Golden stated that, since these grants are restricted to a certain time period, it was better, in her opinion, to reallocate the salary money. Leo Santowasso asked about the approval process. Tami Golden stated that the Board of Commissioners first approves the budget amendment to accept the grant funds; the Health Department proposes a use for the funds; and the grant authority has to approve that proposed use. The Board of Commissioners accepts grant funds based on the agreement addendum. It was noted that the amount of funding offered to the County was determined by the State. The State accepts federal money and then determines how much to distribute to each of the 87 health departments. Louis Gregory asked about the timeline for the funds and plans for spending them. Tami Golden referred to the Health Department's itemized budget, prepared by Margaret Davis. Tami Golden stated that the Department was still waiting on approval for the construction of a negative pressure room. It was noted that the Department's itemized budget detailed the plan for the grant funds. Mark Brenner asked if there might be a time where the Department would not accept funds from the state. Robert Wittmann stated that, if the strings attached were not worth the expenditure, then funds might not be accepted. For example, sometimes the reporting and bookkeeping is so onerous for so few dollars that it might not be worth it, for example a \$2,000 grant which might cause \$8,000 worth of staff time to administer. Tony Price stated that community funding has dried up in the last year and he had told the County Manager, Wayne Vest, that if health money was available, the Moore Free Care Clinic would like to have it.

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

Communications Committee Report: Tony Price stated no report.

Vaccine Committee Report: Paul Kuzma stated no report.

COVID Committee Report: Ben Wacker stated no report. Leo Santowasso asked Ben Wacker to have the COVID Committee look at limiting the spread of COVID, with respect to the variant. He asked that something be put together for the next month's meeting, regarding the charge to the Board of Health and the Health Department to reduce the spread.

Paul Kuzma stated that he had inquired if people who had received the Johnson and Johnson single-dose vaccine would be allowed to get an additional vaccination from another brand, since Johnson and Johnson is not as effective for the variant. The response from the State was that providers in North Carolina have to strictly follow the vaccine protocols and a second shot for Johnson and Johnson vaccine recipients is not allowed. Tony Price stated that there is a lot of guidance from the CDC on masks and asked if there was a specific policy coming out of the Health Department. Robert Wittmann stated that the County has a policy, which the Health Department follows, recently amended based on current information. The County follows the guidance from the CDC and NC DHHS to wear a mask indoors, whether vaccinated or not. Tony Price stated that the County policy should be sent to the press so others could follow this. Robert Wittmann stated that it is the same as the CDC policy and updated guidance is posted on the Health Department website and sent out via news release.

COVID-19 Update: Matt Garner reviewed current data with the Board. Cases have risen. A limited outbreak (two cases) has been identified at the Coventry Assisted Living facility, which was the first outbreak reported in over 3 months. Paul Kuzma asked if there was more interest in vaccination now. Matt Garner stated that there was a slight rise in vaccination after the Delta variant came into prominence. Recent community vaccination events included the Robbins Farmers Day event and an event at West End Presbyterian Church. The Department continues to advertise vaccination information on billboards throughout the County. The Department has advertised in the Pilot newspaper, both print and digital. Robert Wittmann stated that the Health Department has discussed offering vaccinations on-site with Moore County Schools. Weekly vaccination clinics continue at the Health Department, on Thursdays. It was noted that the Board of Education had yet to decide on whether or not to require masks in schools. Matt Garner stated that the Health Department had reached out to Goshen to again offer mobile testing in Moore County. Goshen will set up at the Health Department on Friday mornings, indefinitely, with no out-of-pocket costs for the tests. Robert Wittmann stated that the Health Department continues with case investigation and contact tracing, anticipating an increase when school starts. Paul Kuzma asked if the Health Department had been asked to provide information to school board members. Robert Wittmann stated that he and the COVID Management Team provide information to the Superintendent and Moore County Schools Administration, at least weekly. Moore County Schools Administration, in turn, gathers information for the school board and presents that. Health Department recommendations are from NC DHHS and CDC guidance. Robert Wittmann stated that, if invited, he would go directly to the Board of Education, but that he would not go uninvited.

Department's Fourth Quarter Activity Report: Robert Wittmann presented the report to the Board. Kamron Monroe noted that it had been mentioned that Tammie Fox, Dental Hygienist, had been reassigned. She asked if there were any plans or discussions about school dental health. Robert Wittmann stated that he and Tammie Fox have discussed this and will see what the Health Department can provide when we know more about how the school process will go this year. Tammie Fox will have time to do both COVID-19 duties and dental health, but it's not known right now what will be appropriate for the school setting. The schools have a lot to make up for and a lot of constraints.

FY 21 Fourth Quarter Fiscal Report: Robert Wittmann stated that the County might have some final adjustments before fiscal year 2021 is completely closed out. For the Health Department, fee revenues were up, including for the Environmental Health section.

Department's Performance Measures: Robert Wittmann stated that staff had done very well. He noted that inspections were down last year, due to a large number of restaurant closures.

Health Director's Report: Robert Wittmann distributed the monthly update on long-term care facilities from Tamiko Gland, Regional Prevention Support Team Coordinator (Region 6). Health Department vacancies include: a WIC Nutritionist/Supervisor position; two Public Health Nurse positions; and two Environmental Health Specialist positions. Services are still being provided, with contract and resource staff. Robert Wittmann has negotiated with County Management to increase the hiring amount to step 5 on the salary range for all qualified Environmental Health Specialists. Current Environmental Health Specialists below step 5 were moved to step 5 and those staff who were already at step 5 were given a 5% pay increase, effective July 17, 2021. Robert Wittmann stated that he had requested help from Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services, to locate, at the county level, migrants crossing our southern border, in order to test and vaccinate for COVID-19, as well as other appropriate vaccinations. He received a call from the State that they would do their best

to help. The State Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response has reviewed our Department's preparedness program and accounting records for performance and compliance. The Moore County Health Department was given a low-risk status after this review, indicating the Department is at low risk of not responding adequately and appropriately to a public health emergency.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Consent agenda contained the minutes for the July 12, 2021 meeting. Kamron Monroe made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Tony Price. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Health Department FY 2022 Budget – Robert Wittmann stated that the Board of Commissioners had adopted the FY 2022 budget and it appears that the Health Department has adequate funding to meet our mission.

Leo Santowasso stated that the Board's next meeting is set for September 13, 2021. Robert Wittmann asked if the Board of Health would want food available at that meeting if masks were still required to be worn. It was the consensus of the Board not to serve food in that case. However, Louis Gregory requested beverages still be available.

Closed Session: Leo Santowasso asked for a short recess before the Board went into closed session. Kamron Monroe made a motion to close the regular meeting and go to a closed session after a short recess. This was seconded by Paul Kuzma. All were in favor at 7:17 pm. The Board was asked to return at 7:25 pm.

Paul Kuzma made a motion to return to regular session, seconded by Mark Brenner. All were in favor at 8:18 pm. Leo Santowasso stated that there was discussion, but no decision was made and no action was taken during the closed session. He stated that there will be another closed session at the September 13th meeting, for additional discussion.

Adjourn: Tony Price made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Paul Kuzma. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.