

Moore County Board of Health
November 1, 2021

Members Present: Leo Santowasso, PE, PLS, Chair
Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM
Mark Brenner, MD
Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA
Paul Kuzma, MD
Kamron Monroe, DDS
Tony Price, Vice Chair
Benjamin Wacker, OD
Robert R. Wittmann, MPH, Secretary to the Board

Members Absent: Louis Gregory; William Mang, PharmD

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting of the Board of Health was held in the Community Room of the Rick Rhyne Public Safety Center in Carthage, NC. Chair Leo Santowasso called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Health Department staff present were: Teresa Forrest, Administrative Officer; Melissa Fraley, Nursing Director; Matt Garner, Health Educator; Miriam King, Health Educator; and Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer. Dawn Gilbert, Moore County Human Resources Director, and Stephan Lapping, Deputy County Attorney, were present for the meeting. Jaymie Baxley, with the Pilot newspaper, was present, along with several members of the public. Board members introduced themselves and noted their role on the Board. Staff members introduced themselves.

Invocation: Robert Wittmann gave the invocation.

Approval of, and/or Adjustments to, Agenda:

There were no adjustments made to the agenda.

Recognitions – Max Muse: Leo Santowasso presented a service recognition plaque to the family of Max Muse, in memoriam. Family members present were: Jim Muse, brother, and his wife, Jackie Muse; and Carol White, sister, and her husband, Paul White. Max's wife, Jeannie Stocks Muse, was unable to attend. In addition to being the Nurse member of the Board of Health, Max was also a Vice Chair. His contributions, both to the Board and to the Health Department, will be missed.

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.

Public Comments:

The following offered public comments: Tom LoSapio; BethAnn Pratte; and Mike Freidel. Leo Santowasso extended the time for comments from three minutes to five minutes for each person. Joanne LoSapio had signed up but ceded her time to Tom LoSapio.

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

There were no reports from the Board of Health Communications, Vaccine, or COVID Committees.

COVID-19 Update: Matt Garner presented current data on the Health Department's COVID-19 response. Cases continue a steady decline, although per the CDC map of community transmission, Moore County was still experiencing high transmission, as was most of the State. Matt Garner reviewed the FirstHealth report of vaccinated versus unvaccinated patients. The FDA approved the Pfizer vaccine for patients aged 5-11 years and it was anticipated that the CDC would also approve this pediatric vaccination. The Department continues to offer vaccination opportunities throughout the community as well as on-site. Testing is offered on-site each Friday, 8:30-12:30 pm, through Goshen Labs, with the exception of the week of Thanksgiving.

Department's First Quarter Activity Report: There were no questions from the Board.

FY 22 First Quarter Fiscal Report: Members of the public asked if they could engage in the discussion. Leo Santowasso agreed. There was a question about the FirstHealth report, asking where partial vaccination would be represented, in the vaccinated or unvaccinated numbers. There was another question regarding whether a person needed a booster shot to be considered fully vaccinated. Robert Wittmann stated that he believed unvaccinated meant no vaccination and not partial but would contact FirstHealth to confirm this. The public asked about comorbidities for those deaths attributed to COVID-19. Robert Wittmann stated that, on the Department's website, there is information regarding whether deaths are related to COVID or not. The consensus from the public was that they wanted a clear breakdown of COVID-19 deaths, with comorbidities, and a breakdown on vaccination status, including full, partial and no vaccination. Regarding tests, they wanted to know if those testing positive had some symptoms or no symptoms. It was stated that the public appreciated that the Board engaged them and allowed questions. There was a statement about pcr tests being unreliable. Robert Wittmann stated that he had spoken with the State and was not told anything contrary to the CDC fully supporting pcr testing for COVID-19. Robert Wittmann asked for the Board Chair's permission to have the physician members of the Board of Health research this claim. Leo Santowasso stated that the Board would

provide answers but not that night. He stated that the public should attend more meetings.

Department's Performance Measures: Robert Wittmann reviewed the report.

Nursing Director's Report: Melissa Fraley stated that the Department continues to vaccinate homebound on Thursdays, as well as some group homes, by request. This is in addition to the Department's other outreach activities.

Health Director's Report: Robert Wittmann reviewed the report from Tamiko Gland, Regional Infection Prevention Support Team Coordinator for Region 6. The team continues to visit and offer support and guidance to area long-term care facilities. There are currently no COVID-19 cases in a Moore County nursing homes.

Robert Wittmann stated that two applicants for environmental health specialist positions are going through the hiring process. There is one WIC Nutritionist / Supervisor position vacant, with no qualified applicants. The new Public Health Nurse / School Health Liaison position is being advertised. Local print and electronic media sources continue to inform the public on COVID-19 and help to promote control measures. The Health Department continues to work with partners, including Moore County Schools and FirstHealth of the Carolinas. Robert Wittmann and staff met with the Board of Education that day to review benchmarks the community should reach before deciding to discontinue the mask mandate. With the upcoming holiday season to consider, the next School Board review will be on January 10.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Consent agenda contained the minutes for the October 11th, 2021 meeting. B. J. Goodridge 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: Follow up concerns from the October 19th Board of County Commissioners Meeting: Robert Wittmann stated that he felt it would be appropriate for the Board of Health Committees to look at the concerns from the public and report back. Leo Santowasso stated that he would like the COVID Committee to look at testing. The Vaccine Committee could look at concerns about vaccination. Mark Brenner asked the public for a single representative for the Board to communicate with and BethAnn Pratte was nominated by the group. Mark Brenner stated that the Board takes these questions seriously and wants to address the public concerns. Robert Wittmann stated that an email, summarizing specific questions aired at the Board of Commissioners meeting, had already been emailed to the Board of Health. BethAnn Pratte was to email a summary of the questions from tonight to Robert Wittmann, who would forward them to the Board of Health. Tony Price asked if there was an update on the RFP (request for

proposals). Robert Wittmann stated that a request was sent to the State to use grant funding for public relations and the request was refused as presented. The funding is limited to expenses related to testing for COVID-19, vaccination, and public information regarding COVID-19. The RFP has been revised, after discussion with Leo Santowasso at the Health Department, and was re-sent to the State. Their review was pending. The current request was limited to \$49,900 since the Health Director cannot approve contracts over \$50,000. However, the State suggested that more money might be needed for the scope of the request. Robert Wittmann will talk with County Manager, Wayne Vest, and Internal Auditor, Tami Golden, about increasing the amount of the proposed contract, since the County Manager can approve contracts up to \$100,000. Tony Price stated that the Board of Health, specifically the Communications Committee, should be able to review the proposal before it is approved. Robert Wittmann stated that he had reviewed it with the Board Chair but the RFP could not be public until the State approved using the funding. Tony Price asked if there was funding from the Board of Commissioners available for this and Robert Wittmann replied that it would have to be discussed with the Board of Commissioners. B. J. Goodridge asked when the Board would know about the decision and asked to have this as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Closed Session

Kamron Monroe made a motion to close the open session and start a closed session, seconded by B. J. Goodridge. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

After the closed session ended, Health Department staff were recalled and Leo Santowasso stated that no decision was made at the closed session and it was for informational purposes only.

Board Members reviewed the prior public discussion. Robert Wittmann noted that, if the Board strayed from their established policy, then there should be a motion, a second, discussion and a vote. The policy is that the Board listen to public comments but not engage in back-and-forth. Robert Wittmann stated that Board of Commissioner Chair, Frank Quis, writes down notes and questions during public comment sessions for the Board of Commissioners' meetings. Mark Brenner stated that the public needs to know that this is a forum for the Board to listen, not for discussion but to plan an intelligent response at the next meeting. Expectations need to be set. Although written copies of the procedure are available with the sign-up sheet, he stated that most people probably don't read them. Robert Wittmann stated that the Board should outline the rules and then stick to them. Janice Baker stated that the Board could summarize an announcement that they would take questions or comments from the public and then the questions would be referred to the appropriate Committee or member and responded to at a later date. Robert Wittmann stated that we could simply read the appropriate part of the operating procedure. He noted that the procedure mirrors the procedure of the Board of Commissioners and has been in place for years. B. J. Goodridge stated that it was nice to be consistent with the Board of Commissioners. Tony Price stated that it would be more professional for the Board members, when

speaking, to have a microphone and stand at a podium so the people could hear. Robert Wittmann stated that, if a large number of the public were present, the Board would need to consider continuing to meet at the Rick Rhyne Center, rather than the Board Room of the Health Department, which is considerably smaller.

Paul Kuzma stated that he would be leaving in two weeks and would be out of the country for the next three months, working with Doctors Without Borders at a refugee camp in the South Sudan.

Kamron Monroe asked if the Board could revisit the ability to participate remotely in Board of Health meetings. Stephan Lapping noted that, if one Board member participates remotely, then the meeting converts to an online, remote meeting. Robert Wittmann stated that, with an in-person meeting, the public has more access to the Board. He stated that the Board of Commissioners meet in person but also broadcast their meetings. However, they cannot vote unless they are physically there. Stephan Lapping stated that if the Board is given remote access, then it has to be given to everyone.

Tony Price noted that the Board is currently down one member, the Nurse member, and Paul Kuzma will be absent for three months. In the next year, other members will be going off the Board. He asked about a plan to restaff the Board. Leo Santowasso stated that he had spoken with Wayne Vest about the members on their third (last) term who could not continue. Leo Santowasso reminded the Board that they would need to nominate a new Vice Chair at the January meeting. Robert Wittmann suggested that the Board speak with Laura Williams, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, since the Board of Commissioners is responsible for appointing Board of Health members. He stated that the Board of Commissioners would appreciate recommendations for open slots. He asked that if any Board members knew of a nurse who would want to serve then to reach out and suggest that they make an application. Tony Price asked if these applications would go to the State or to County Human Resources. Robert Wittmann stated that they would go to Laura Williams to vet for the Board of Commissioners' review.

Adjourn: B. J. Goodridge made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Janice Baker. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.