

Moore County Board of Health January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Members Present:

Leo Santowasso, PE, PLS, Chair  
Tony Price, Vice Chair  
Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA  
Kamron Monroe, DDS  
Jayne Lee RN, BSN, MPH, CIC, FAPIC  
Mark Brenner, MD  
Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM  
Benjamin Wacker, OD;  
Matt Garner, Secretary to the Board

Members Absent: Paul Kuzma, MD; William Mang, PharmD; Louis Gregory

**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 6:02 p.m. Health Department staff present were Melissa Fraley, Nursing Director; Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer; and Miriam King-Gill, Administrative Officer. Stephan Lapping, Deputy County Attorney, was present for the meeting. Introductions were made around the table. Jaymie Baxley, with the Pilot newspaper, was present.

**Invocation:** Matt Garner gave the invocation.

**Secretary to the Board:** Matt Garner 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:** There were no adjustments to the agenda.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

**Presentations:** There were no presentations.

### **Board of Health Committee, Education/Staff Reports:**

Matt Garner displayed the Second Quarter Activity report. There were no questions nor comments on this report. Matt Garner displayed the Fiscal Year Report, Tony Price asked if the amounts could be represented in dollars on the report.

The Communication Committee of the Board of Health met on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tony Price reported that there is an ongoing solicitation for Health Director. There are currently 16 applicants under review by the State. Leo suggested that the subcommittees continue running and that an adjustment of members would be considered by the New Chair.

**COVID-19 Update:** Matt Garner provided the Board with an update of our COVID19 metrics. Moore County reached a new record number of cases surpassing data from the Delta variant. Matt shared that COVID19 infections skyrocketed to a seven-day average of more than 480,000 cases in the United States. According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the number of individuals currently hospitalized with COVID19 has nearly doubled since the beginning of December. Of North Carolina's admitted patients and those in Intensive Care, 87.8% of them are unvaccinated. Omicron is the variant of highest proportion particularly across the United States. In Region 4 which North Carolina is a part of, Omicron accounts for approximately 95% of newly confirmed cases. Matt explained that due to Omicron's ease of transmissibility our county's seven-day average has risen to 212.9 new cases. This average is up by nearly 71 cases from last week. Several statistic-based graphics specific to Moore County's COVID19 metrics accompanied the presentation. As of the meeting, Moore County has 17,102 confirmed cases. Of those positive cases, 14,955 are estimated to have been recovered. Individuals who are considered "recovered" have completed the 10-day isolation period. Matt noted that the "recovered" percentage of individuals is declining due to the glut of active cases, not due to COVID19 related deaths in the county. Currently hospitalized at Moore Regional Hospital are 25 Moore County residents. North Carolina's State average for COVID19 test positivity currently stands at 31.1% which is well above the State's goal of 5%.

Matt reviewed vaccination availability as well, stating that COVID19 vaccines are available to everyone ages 5 and older and that boosters are available to all North Carolinian's 12 and older. The recommendation now stands that you should get a booster if you are 12 years or older and have received the primary doses of a two series vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or if you've received one dose of the single shot (Johnson and Johnson) vaccine. Booster timeframes have been moved up and can be given five months after completing the primary two-series vaccine and two months after receiving the one-dose Johnson and Johnson. The Moore County Health Department offers a COVID19 vaccine clinic every Thursday and citizens may call 910-947-SHOT to schedule an appointment. At the State level, 63% of the total population has been vaccinated with at least 59% of them fully vaccinated. In Moore County, 58% of the total eligible population has received at least one dose and 54% are considered fully vaccinated. Moore County's data shows 63% of our population ages 12+ are fully

vaccinated, 65% of residents ages 18+ are fully vaccinated, 91% of residents ages 65+ are fully vaccinated, and 96% of our population ages 75+ are fully vaccinated.

Matt Garner reported that testing through Goshen Health Inc. will resume beginning this Friday January 14<sup>th</sup> and run every Friday thereafter from 8:30 to 12:30. Information on testing will be we will be forth coming to the public.

Matt updated the Board on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) new guidelines as it concerned quarantining and isolation for COVID19. The CDC recommends a shortened isolation and quarantine timeframe for those who have tested positive, and anyone exposed to a COVID19 positive individual. A five-day timeframe would allow the end of isolation on the sixth day in the absence of symptoms and fever for 24hrs—however, case specific quarantines and isolations can be applied to individual scenarios. Melissa Fraley outlined the effect that the new guidelines from CDC would have on our school system. She shared that the Health Department frequently speaks with members of school administration and that both parties are working together on issuing proper guidance to all staff and parents of children in Moore County Schools (MCS). The majority of guidance listed by CDC that can be found in the "Smart Schools Toolkit" strongly encourages the use of masks and is presented from a universal masking standpoint. Since MCS is a mask optional school system, applying and giving concrete guidance intended for a setting of universal masking presents a challenge. Concurrently, the Moore County School Board is holding a meeting at which a vote on making MCS a mask required district again will be held. Depending on the results of the masking vote coupled with updated CDC guidance, the Moore County Health Department will continue to keep the Board of Health updated what's occurring within MCS.

**Nursing Director's Report:** There was no report given.

**Health Director's Report:** Matt Garner mentioned that the CDC's latest isolation and quarantine guidelines have been adopted by the Moore County Health Department. He encouraged the CDC's recommendation of Booster dosing and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses for those children with compromised immune system. The Moore County Health Department will be conducting an outreach vaccination clinic at Sandhills Community College and at Zion Grove AME ZION church Wednesday January 12<sup>th</sup>. COVID19 funding was used to reconstruct the Health Department's waiting area seating to make it more accommodating for patients. Funding was used to upgrade the Agriculture Center's front doors to sliding doors in order to ensure ease of access for disabled patients. Funding will be further used for the fob and security system at the Health Department. There is a successful bid out for the public relations request, and there has been consideration to expedite the contract. Tony Price asked if the contracts approval would occur within the next 30 days. Matt answered that the approved plan should be back within a few weeks. Attorney Stephen Lapping said that it could be expected to arrive

within days. The Health Department's request for three additional Environmental Health positions two for on-site and one for food and lodging have been approved by the Board of Commissioners and will move to the Office of State Personnel after which the position can be advertised. Matt Garner detailed the transitions of job positions in both Environmental Health and at the Health Department.

**Approval of Agenda Minutes** Leo Santowasso asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Health's December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kamron Monroe made a motion that was seconded by Tony Price. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Leo Santowasso asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Health's December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. BJ Goodridge made a motion that was seconded by Jayne Lee. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

**Old Business:** Tony Price expressed that there has been little to no progress in movement of the RFP that is not COVID19 based. Tony mentioned that the County Manager had verbally approved funding, but further meetings and formal paperwork must be done. Leo encouraged all Board Members to review the operating Procedures of the Board of Health.

**New Business:** Leo opened the floor for additional nominations for Chair to the Board; there were none. Leo asked for a motion to formally nominate Tony. Kamron nominated and it was seconded by Janice. All were in favor the motion carried.

Leo asked for nominations for a temporary Vice Chair to the Board. He expressed that member Paul Kuzma is willing to accept this position but is currently working out of the country. Still, an interim would be beneficial in the meantime. BJ recommended that Leo keep his leadership role and become Interim Vice Chair. BJ nominated Leo as an Interim Vice Chair and Kamron seconded. All were in favor and the vote was approved.

Tony encouraged the board to continue fighting COVID19 and emphasized that cohesion would be present in support of the new board members, and the Interim Health Director.

Jayne Lee who is the Director of Infection Control at FirstHealth mentioned that COVID19 numbers are rising rapidly and at an alarming rate. There are over 500 people per day who are seen at FirstHealth's drive-thru testing and because of this, positive results will skyrocket since laboratory turn-around time is long. Jayne proposed that Moore County as a whole return to a mask required mandate. She stated that our hospital is at full capacity and our Emergency Department is overrun. Jayne expressed that the Board should be continuously recommending vaccinations and do all that they can to support masking and other means of mitigation vocally and outwardly. Matt

Garner vocalized that the BOH has rule making authority and briefly outlined the process; Stephan Lapping, the Assistant County Attorney, further detailed due process. Concerns rose among board members about individuals who refuse to mask and those who are expressing mask-fatigue. Dr. Brenner mentioned that Local Boards are to take State and Federal information to disseminate it and encourage its compliance, not to overreach by enforcing more stringent actions. He made mention that the politicizing of this pandemic is causing a lack of trust among citizens, and something needs to be done at the Federal Level. Tony suggested that the Board of Health devise a toolkit for COVID19. The capabilities of the public relations firm were discussed by all members of the board. Tony Price asked for a motion to designate the budget for costs associated with the public relations firm—Leo made the motion and BJ seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Resolution was reviewed and approved. These policies of the Board of Health were reviewed and approved with no amendments:

Board of Health Orientation and Training Policy, Board of Health Approval of Minutes Policy, Board of Health Policy on Policies, Environmental Health Fee Policy, Clinical Fee Policy.

**Closed Session:** There was no closed session.

**Adjourn:** Tony Price asked for a motion to adjourn. Kamron Monroe made a motion, seconded by Janice. All were in favor and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.