

Moore County Board of Health
May 3, 2021

Members Present: Leo Santowasso, PE, PLS, Chair
Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM
William Mang, PharmD
Kamron Monroe, DDS
Tony Price
Benjamin Wacker, OD
Robert R. Wittmann, MPH, Secretary to the Board

Members Absent: Mark Brenner, MD; Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA; Louis Gregory; Paul Kuzma, MD; Max Muse, RN, ME, Vice Chair

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting of the Board of Health was held in the Training Room of the Rick Rhyne Public Safety Center 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; Melissa Fraley, Nursing Director; Matt Garner, Health Educator; Miriam King, Health Educator; and Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer. Ward Medlin, Deputy County Attorney, was present for the meeting.

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.

Board of Health Oath of Office: The Board of Commissioners had reappointed Leo Santowasso to a new term on the Board of Health. He was sworn in by Miriam King.

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

Public Comments:

Angela Zumwalt, representing the Moore County Citizens' Pet Responsibility Committee, and Tom Daniel, representing the Sandhills Spay Neuter Veterinary Clinic, spoke jointly to the Board. They had partnered with Janice Baker, veterinarian member of the Board of Health, on a recent project in Robbins. They stated that the large number of pets there who had never seen a vet or had vaccinations was concerning. 53 of 90 pets had never had a rabies vaccination, which is required by law. They noted that the pandemic had strained the local system of veterinary care, with a backlog of available appointments. They asked the Board of Health to leverage the veterinarian on the Board to compile and report on what she finds may be useful information for the Board.

Presentations: None

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

Board of Health Committee Reports:

1.) Communications Committee Report – Tony Price stated that the Committee met on April 21st, with Kamron Monroe, BJ Goodridge, Tony Price and Matt Garner in attendance. There were no public comments. The Committee had discussion but no action. Items of discussion included: the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, local mobile vaccination events, and video messaging to disseminate to the public to allay concerns about taking the vaccine. Tony Price said that the Committee is pleased with the activity that's happening and with everything the Health Department is doing. Leo Santowasso asked if the vaccination billboards had gone up yet. Robert Wittmann replied that they had and that different ones would be activated at different times and in different locations, according to availability and the contracts.

2.) Vaccine Committee Report – Bill Mang stated that there was no report.

3.) COVID Committee Report – Ben Wacker stated that there was no report.

COVID-19 Update – Matt Garner presented the update to the Board. COVID-19 vaccinations have been opened to everyone 16 years old and older. The public can call to schedule an appointment at 910.947. SHOT (7468). The Health Department has closed our vaccination site at the Agriculture Center and will now have all vaccinations scheduled for the Health Department or given at community events. Demand has dwindled. After a thorough safety review, the CDC has lifted the recommended pause on the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. The Health Department has had posters printed and they will be distributed locally to address vaccine hesitancy and to promote our vaccine appointment hotline. Space has been purchased on area billboards to promote the vaccine. Several community leaders, including Bill Mang, Tony Price and Christoph Diasio, have contributed videos to address vaccine hesitancy. These videos have been shared widely. Matt Garner played Tony Price's video. The Health Department held vaccination events for Moore County Schools, charter schools and private schools. Vaccinations were given at the National Guard Armory in Southern Pines. Vaccinations will be offered at several other community events, to include the Buggy Festival in Carthage and a church in Robbins. Matt Garner stated that, as of last week, for the first time in a year, there were no active outbreaks in Moore County congregate living facilities. As the COVID-19 impact on Moore County continues to improve, the weekly COVID-19 situation reports and the weekly executive summary for the Board will be discontinued; however, COVID-19 information will continue to be posted on the dashboard on the Moore County website.

Department's Third Quarter Activity Report - Robert Wittmann stated that there were discrepancies in the communicable disease portion of the activity report which was given out at the last Board of Health meeting. This has been addressed and he presented the corrected report. Melissa Fraley stated that the COVID-19 cases have been separated from other communicable disease reports and the outbreaks can be separated as well. Melissa Fraley

stated that individual case investigation and tracing has resumed. Previously, the Department had been focused on groups with the highest rate of positivity.

Nursing Director's Report: Melissa Fraley stated that, for the third year, North Carolina is experiencing a Hepatitis A outbreak, particularly with the homeless and drug users. In 2021, there was a marked increase in cases, which had plateaued during the pandemic. The Health Department has given Hepatitis A vaccinations to inmates at the jail in the past but halted that last March due to the pandemic. We will be resuming that project this month. There must be 14 days between vaccinations for COVID-19 and other vaccinations so we will need to rotate the vaccinations offered. There has also been an increase in Gonococcal infections. The Health Department had limited access to care due to the pandemic and were available on Mondays and Fridays to screen and treat for sexually transmitted infections. Now, that has been expanded to Wednesdays as well. If someone calls and needs to be seen on Tuesday or Thursday, the Department will accommodate them.

Health Director's Report: Robert Wittmann reviewed vacant positions – one WIC Nutritionist Supervisor (the other WIC Nutritionist position has been filled) and one Registered Environmental Health Specialist. The employee who resigned had accepted an Environmental Health Supervisor position at the Hoke County Health Department. The long-term care facilities Regional Prevention Support Team Coordinator's report was provided to the Board. This details the vaccination status of the local long-term care facilities, along with the Coordinator visits to advise staff. Regarding vaccine hesitancy, to alleviate public concerns, the Health Department is posting the facts that the vaccines are safe and effective. In addition, the Department is promoting vaccinations on local billboards as they become available, through news releases, social media updates, and posters to be placed throughout the County. Tony Price asked for a couple of the posters. Robert Wittmann stated that the Health Department has an adequate supply of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on hand and no problem in renewing our supply. Regarding independent living sites and the homebound, we have been working with administrators and residents to assure all have the opportunity to be vaccinated. The home health agencies serving Moore County have been proactive. Sammy Choi, Chief of the Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg has been using a model to track the percentage of the local population with immunity to the disease. Regarding State guidelines for masks and social distancing, the Governor has set parameters based on the number of people actually vaccinated, not to include those with acquired immunity. There is still a large amount of funds available through the COVID-19 grants that the Department has received. However, there are many restrictions on these funds from the federal government. North Carolina needs to build Public Health capabilities at the State and local level. After today, the weekly COVID-19 executive summary and the situation report will be discontinued, as the Department moves into a public education phase.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Consent agenda contained the minutes for the April 5, 2021, meeting. Bill Mang made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Janice Baker. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Robert Wittmann stated that he recommended amending the current Moore County Solid Waste Ordinance. He asked for the Board's permission to move forward with this. The current ordinance is cumbersome to enforce due to language involving three different organizations; Solid Waste, the Health Department and the Sheriff's Office. Currently, the practice would be for Solid Waste to receive a complaint and notify the Health Director. This complaint would be given to the Environmental Health Supervisor who would pass it to a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) to investigate. When we are fully staffed, the Environmental Health section is just keeping above water however, with the recent vacancy, it's a struggle to meet the 10 working days timeframe to respond to an on-site sewage application. Sending out a REHS to investigate trash complaints could adversely impact our service. The Solid Waste Director could send staff and have direct control over the process including the inspection and permitting of solid waste trucks as they enter the County landfill.. Robert Wittmann proposed that the ordinance be changed to replace Health Director with Solid Waste Director, replacing Health Department with Solid Waste Department. This would need to be negotiated with the County Manager, the Solid Waste Director. The Sheriff's Office is involved because if a deputy is on patrol and sees trash blowing out of a truck they could cite the offender. Leo Santowasso asked Ward Medlin if permission to move forward with this process could be handled through a motion and the answer was yes. Robert Wittmann stated that, if all parties agreed, then the Board of Commissioners would have to amend the ordinance by a majority vote. Leo Santowasso asked for a motion giving Robert Wittmann authorization by the Moore County Board of Health to allow him to pursue an amendment to the Moore County Solid Waste Ordinance. Kamron Monroe made the motion, with a second by Tony Price. All were in favor and the motion passed. Robert Wittmann stated that he will set up a meeting and move forward with the process. This may be accomplished this or next fiscal year.

There was no other business or discussion.

Adjourn: Tony Price made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Janice Baker. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.

Due to COVID restrictions, Robert Wittmann noted that the next regular Board meeting is scheduled to be upstairs in the Community Room of the Rick Rhyne Public Safety Center.