

**ROWAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
April 14, 2009**

The Rowan County Board of Health meeting was held in the Community Room of the Rowan County Health Department, 1811 E. Innes Street, Salisbury, NC at 7:00 pm. Members attending the meeting were:

Ms. Barbara Andrews, Chair	Mr. Steve Fuller
Mr. Dan Mikkelson	Mr. Chad Mitchell, Commissioner
Mr. Richard Parker, Vice Chair	Dr. Philip Roels
Ms. Susan Thomas	Dr. Robert Tannehill
Dr. Billy Webb	

Special Guest included: Ms. Kathy Chaffin, Salisbury Post, Carol Ann Houpe, Rowan-Salisbury School, LINKS Project Coordinator. Health Department staff included: Mr. Steve Joslin, Dr. Jim Cowan, Ms. Sandra Long, Ms. Sharon Owen, Ms. Nora Cartner, Mr. Lynn Aldridge, Mr. Clai Martin, Ms. Debra Justice, Ms. Jackie Short and Mr. Leonard Wood. Public members attending included: Jo Ann Bryla and Brenda Kirby

WELCOME:

Mrs. Barbara Andrews called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Ms. Andrews called for approval of the agenda. Dr. Tannehill made a motion to accept the agenda with a second from Dr. Roels. The motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 10th MINUTES:

Ms. Andrews called for an addition to the March 10th minutes concerning the euthanasia discussion on House Bill 6. Ms. Andrews asked the Board to add the following language: Mr. Wood requested that the Board include in their letter language that opposes HB 6 and any other legislative bills that ban the use of carbon monoxide euthanasia (insert on page 3). Mr. Parker made a motion to accept the minutes with the addition and a second from Dr. Tannehill. The motion was approved unanimously.

ROWAN-SALISBURY SCHOOL GRANT SUMMARY:

Ms. Andrews introduced Ms. Carol Ann Houpe to the Board Members. Ms. Houpe gave an overview of the Federal Grant *LINKS – Learning, Intervention, Nurturing, Knowledge, and Student Achievement*. *LINKS* is a grant funded collaboration between three US departments: Department of Education, Department of Health Human Services and the Department of Justice. Over the next four to five years the Rowan-Salisbury School system will receive approximately six million dollars for this project. This grant provides a comprehensive approach to mental health and safe school promotion, violence prevention, and healthy development that reflects the overall vision of the community.

The grant requires local partners that currently include: Rowan Department of Juvenile Justice, Piedmont Behavioral Health Care, Rowan County Sheriff Department and the Salisbury Police Department. Ms. Houpe shared that as the project gets underway the school system will be adding additional partners from the community.

There are five core elements of the grant:

1. Safe school environments and violence prevention activities;
2. Alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention activities;
3. Student behavioral, social, and emotional supports;
4. Mental health services; and,
5. Early childhood social and emotional learning programs.

Issues this grant will be able to focus on are: one out of three eighth graders reported being harassed or bullied on school property; one out of four eighth graders report alcohol abuse; and, one out of three tenth graders report alcohol abuse.

Ms. Houpe stated that the school system will increase the number of prevention programs not only in school but also the number of programs for parents. Within our school system, students are having more drug intervention and students are abusing prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them by a doctor. Ms. Houpe stated that the school system is hoping to reduce the number of students dropping out of school and reduce the number of students using prescription drugs. The grant will provide an outside evaluator for a Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

The school system will be adding new staff members that include five new School Social Workers. They will be working in the middle and high schools, and they will be able to do home visits. Their main role will be to make sure that students have resources they may need in the classroom as well as well as in the community. Finally, she stated that Early Intervention Workers will work with elementary and pre-school age children to ensure that children come to kindergarten ready to learn.

Ms. Houpe provided an organizational chart for the LINKS program Safe School/Healthy Students.

Ms. Andrews asked Ms. Houpe if issues related to physical and sexual abuse would be added to this survey. Ms. Houpe responded yes for high school students but these issues would not be covered in the elementary and middle schools.

Mrs. Andrews thanked Ms. Houpe for sharing the grant information with the Board of Health.

ANIMAL CONTROL POLICY – NO PUBLIC ACCESS:

Mr. Wood shared with the Board Members a proposed Rowan County Health Department Policy regarding the public viewing of animal euthanasia. The policy states that: *no member of the general public will be allowed access to the non-public area of the Rowan County Animal Shelter or to witness an euthanasia. If a request is made from a pet owner to be present during the euthanasia of their pet, the following shall apply: A written request from the owner must be approved by the Rowan County Public Health Director; and the owner(s) of the animal shall be the only person(s) to witness the euthanasia.*

Mr. Wood said he had discussed this issue with the County Attorney and he agrees with this policy as presented. He said issues concerning liability and safety are paramount to the county and that area should be restricted. However, If an animal owner comes to the shelter and ask shelter personnel to view their animal being euthanize, by this policy, staff would allow that owner to view the process. Mr. Mikkelson asked, "Is that a service we provide". Mr. Wood answered, "No, generally folks who have their pets euthanized will go to their local veterinarian, but I would guess that this may happen at some point in time so we tried to address the issue by including it in the policy".

Mr. Parker asked, "How do we determine that the owner actually owns that pet?" Mr. Martin responded that clients show driver license and provide a written statement that it is their animal.

Mr. Mitchell asked, "How often does it happen that someone brings an animal that they would be euthanized at the shelter"? Mr. Martin explained, "We have people that turn their animals in to the shelter for euthanasia. We do have people, from time to time, say that their pet is seriously ill and they cannot afford to take their pets to the veterinarian". Mr. Mitchell asked, "How many have you had ask to view the euthanasia?" Mr. Martin, "We have had a couple recently".

Mr. Mikkelson stated, "When I read about this in the agenda package I thought of another perspective that the Board needs to keep in balance. I think the important part of this policy is that our staff has a job that they do and need to be able to do it safely and without being disrupted by people who are opposed to this method of euthanasia. That is the intent of this policy. I support that element of it but I also think that there are critics of us who would like to observe the process to ensure that we are using a process that is humane. I think there are also people that might come to try to disrupt the process because they are opposed to our euthanasia policy and I think we have to prevent that. So I am willing to support this policy on an interim basis, however, I would like to see us develop some guidelines by which the public will be allowed to observe a euthanasia in a controlled fashion that does not put our employees or our process at risk but allow the public to view what we are doing."

Ms. Andrews asked Mr. Martin if there was a regulatory body that views and inspects the CO process of euthanasia. Mr. Martin stated that, "We have the CO chamber inspected annually by the manufacturer, and when the NC Department of Agriculture Euthanasia Rules go into effect the chamber will be inspected annually by this Department."

Mr. Parker, "I think Dan brings up a good point, and I hate to put more work on the Animal Shelter but an application for the individual to fill out to give verification as to the reason for the request should be developed". Mr. Parker shared the application process for the medical center for this type of request stating that: "The public cannot just show up and expect to view events at the hospital. We have to keep our staff safe".

Mr. Mikkelson, "If we have citizens who are critics of our process and we want them to be educated in the process, observing the process could be a good thing as long as they are not being disrupted or putting anyone at risk. It is my opinion that people who have the strongest feelings of opposition often do not understand the facts to begin with. I also think that since this is a government run operation and is being criticized, it is healthy for the public to have an opportunity to observe and be sure that we are not doing something inappropriate".

Ms. Andrews suggested forming a subcommittee to evaluate the policy further. Mr. Mikkelson has expressed interest, and Mr. Parker agreed to serve on the subcommittee along with Ms. Andrews and Dr. Webb.

Mr. Wood informed the Board Members that he needed guidance from the Board as how to handle the viewing of euthanasia process while the committee is making a decision. Mr. Mikkelson said would it be appropriate for the guidance of the Board to say we are going to study this issue and until we come back with a recommendation that the general public will not be allowed to observe in the euthanasia area of the shelter.

Ms. Andrews asked if in the past has the Animal Shelter ever had request like this? Mr. Parker, "Since last month how many request have you had"? Mr. Martin answered, "Three". Dr. Webb, "How do you determine the worthiness of the individual?" Mrs. Thomas asked if other counties

have similar policies? Mr. Mitchell stated, based on the county attorney's survey of other counties: "The County Attorney indicated to me that basically county animal shelters functioned under three categories...no policy...no viewing...or viewing only by the owner of the animal that has been brought in". Mr. Mitchell stated further that: "It is a pretty decent likelihood that this policy will be litigated, I would think, and I am not so sure that whatever we decide to pass is a on contingency since the Board of Commissioners should also approve this policy and are willing to accept that liability".

Ms. Andrews, I think we can come up with a temporary decision that there be no access to non-public areas at the shelter until the committee has a chance to actual review the policy.

Mr. Mitchell pointed out, for clarity, that because this committee is an official committee of a public body, the committee meetings is also a public meeting and the press should be notified.

Mr. Mikkelson made motion that the Board directs the Health Department staff to deny requests to view any euthanasia until the Board has had time to adopt a formal viewing policy for the animal shelter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parker and the Board approved it unanimously.

ANIMAL CONTROL CONSOLIDATION AGREEMENT WITH SALISBURY:

Mr. Wood shared an Animal Control consolidation agreement with the Board. This agreement was negotiated between health department and Salisbury city staff. If this agreement is approved by the Board of Health, the County Commissioners and Salisbury City Council, animal control services for Rowan County and the City of Salisbury will be consolidated effective July 1, 2009.

In summary, Rowan County will hire the existing staff person currently working for the city. Rowan County Animal Control will continue to provide services while assuming all calls and responses within the city limits of Salisbury. They city agrees to pay the county \$60,000 during FY 09-10; \$30,000 during FY 10-11, and \$15,000 during FY 11-12 (this last allocation will go toward the purchase of a new truck). After that point in time, the animal control program and the costs associated with the program will be the responsibility of the county.

Mr. Wood said, "One of the things he would like for the Board to consider concerning this agreement is that with the addition of the staff member from Salisbury we will feel like we can handle that caseload with the additional territory added in. But I would say to you that there are certainly times when there are a lot of people calling for animal control services that are not necessarily emergency related. We restrict our after hours calls to emergency situations such as injured animals, aggressive animals, attacking animals, or rabid animals. Someone calling about a dog running loose in the neighborhood or barking does not constitute an emergency. From a budget stand point and for future consideration, the Board may have to redefine the definition of emergency and after hours calls."

Mr. Michelson requested to be recused from this discussion since he is an employee of the City of Salisbury.

Mr. Mitchell moved to recuse Mr. Michelson from discussion. Mr. Parker seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Mitchell questioned if the Salisbury Animal Control Officer's salary matches with the Rowan County Officer's salaries? Mr. Wood stated that it matches pretty well. She has thirteen years of experience as an Animal Control Officer in Salisbury. Mr. Mitchell asked if the \$60,000 cover salary, benefits and equipment. Mr. Wood stated that the first year funds from the City should

cover the costs of having an additional Animal Control Officer. Mr. Mitchell wanted to know how the City's call volume compared to the county's volume. Mr. Martin stated that he was not sure about their call volume but the City ACO brings approximately 50 animals a month to the shelter and the County ACOs bring in on average 200 a month. The County is already housing the animals picked up by the city.

Mr. Parker questioned Section 1 Part B of the agreement that refers to the City officers working the duration of the contract contingent upon satisfactory performance? Mr. Wood explained that the agreement is effective July 1, 2009 and if it's accepted by the Board of Health, the Board of Commissioners and the City Council, the contractual agreement will be specific for the funded amount over the next three years. The contractual agreement for hiring existing personnel is contingent upon satisfactory performance by that employee, as it is for any newly hired employee. The existing City ACO will be brought into the county system and will serve a six month probation period just as any other new employee. The city employee will not have seniority with the County but should be able to forward any sick leave she has currently with the City. The County does plan to keep this employee as close to current salary as possible.

Mr. Parker made motion to accept the consolidation agreement with a second from Dr. Webb. The motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF SUSAN B. KOMEN GRANT \$18,000:

Mr. Wood informed the Board that the Susan B. Komen Cancer Prevention Program has notified the Department that we will receive \$18,000 for fiscal year 2009-2010. Staff asked the Board to approve receipt of the \$18,000. The funds will be used for providing contracted services that are not covered by the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program. Mr. Mitchell made motion to approve the funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parker and it was approved unanimously.

WOMEN'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH FUNDS \$14,879:

Mr. Wood informed the Board Members that the Health Department had received \$14,879 for the Women's Preventive Health program. Staff is requesting the Board to accept these additional state funds. Mr. Parker made motion to accept the funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mitchell and it was approved unanimously.

PROCLAMATION – CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH:

Ms. Andrews shared with the Board a Prevent Child Abuse Proclamation for the month of April. Ms. Andrews serves with Mark Wilhelm, Mary Ponds, Lena Belk, Lillian Morgan and Carol Dunlap on a task force to devise a program that will focus on the prevention of child abuse in the county.

Mr. Parker made motion to support this Proclamation. Dr. Roels seconded the motion. Mr. Mikkelson made a friendly amendment to the motion to change the wording to say: Child Abuse Prevention Month in Rowan County instead of "in Salisbury". The motion was approved unanimously.

FY 08-09 BUDGET SUMMARY – 3rd QUARTER:

Mr. Wood presented the third quarter financial to the Board. On the revenue side, the County funding allocation for the first three quarters is at 77.54% of budget. This is slightly ahead of the expected figure of 75%. Of course the department will not spend more than allocated, but over

the past several years, the department returns 7-8% of county budgeted funds at the end of the fiscal year. Regarding other revenues, the department has received additional state dollars that were not anticipated at the beginning of the budget year and Medicaid revenues are above the expected amount for the first three quarters. Medicare receipts have lagged behind schedule secondary to problems with billing and the new NPI numbering system. Overall the billing process has improved secondary to the conversion of an existing clerical position to a full time billing position at the beginning of this fiscal year.

Departmental expenditures for the first three quarters are 71% of budget. Many of the programs exceed the 75% level, but budget amendment submitted to the county will correct these overages in the next month. These overages are due to changes in employee time studies during the course of the year. Expenses are expected to hold at the same level of spending as experienced through the first three quarters. The department should end the year at approximately \$355,000 less than the budgeted expense level. Through the first three quarters of FY 08-09, the distribution of expenses for all Health Department programs was: state expenditures 21%; Medicaid 24%; Fees 7%; Grants 6%; and, Local 42%.

Regarding the budget, Mr. Mitchell asked why the fee projections are down \$200,000 from the approved budget. He also wanted to know how these lower fee projections impact programs and employees that are projected to be paid with these fees. Mr. Wood informed the Board that the largest impact in reduced fees is in Environmental Health where it is expected that the department will be at about one-half of the budgeted revenues for the year. This decrease in fees is secondary to the decrease in the number of new houses being built and a down-turn in the economy in Rowan during the past 9 months. Mr. Aldridge reminded the Board that a local well inspection program was approved by the Board beginning July 2007. Implemented with those new well rules was a well inspection fee of \$225. Secondary to this fee and the number of wells that were being installed, the department experienced a wind fall of fee money for that year. Keep in mind that that windfall of income also meant a significant increase in workload for the EH staff. Mr. Parker asked if the department purchased any new equipment. Mr. Aldridge stated that the main reason the Board adopted well program rules a year earlier than state rules was to take advantage of state seed funds to help start local well rules. The department purchased cameras and other testing equipment with these state funds.

Mr. Parker made motion to accept the FY 2008-09 third quarter report. Dr. Tannehill seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FY 09-10 BUDGET:

Mr. Wood presented the Board an updated version of the FY 09-10 budget. The changes consist of an increase in funding requested from the county. The overall budget increased from 1.45% to 1.85% as compared to last year's approved budget. Nearly all of this increase has resulted in a request for additional county dollars for FY 09-10. The county dollars approved for the FY 08-09 budget was \$2,580,221; whereas, the requested county amount for FY 09-10 is \$2,856,307. The increase includes employee salary and benefit costs given by the county in FY 08-09. On April 13 the county had their first furlough day and there are two more scheduled furlough days for county employees in this fiscal year. The furlough days will have a positive impact on the county budget projections. The county has not given any guidance, at this point, regarding furlough days or other budget cutting issues and how that might impact Health Department services for FY 09-10. The main issue for departmental staff is to insure that we maintain the current level of services from last year in all our different programs.

Mr. Mitchell asked how much of the Medicaid Escrow was available for next year's budget. Mr. Wood shared that the department budgets around \$400,000 in Medicaid escrow each year. He

once again reminded the Board that budgeting Medicaid Escrow is fine as long as the Health Department continues to receive Medicaid settlement monies from the state and the county continues to allow the Department to maintain any earnings over expenses. In response to Mr. Mitchell's questions, Mr. Wood stated that he did not have the actual Medicaid Escrow balance at this time, but he stated that he will provide that information at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the department will use all of the \$448,556 Escrow budgeted since we are only at \$291,000. Mr. Wood answered that it is anticipated that all budgeted escrow funds will be expended by the end of the year.

Dr. Webb asked how the department separates Dental Health Medicaid from the rest of the Medicaid earnings. On the third quarter summary, the Dental revenues are separate from other clinical revenues (Medicaid revenues are approximately 85% of the total Dental revenues), whereas on the Fiscal Year summary budget sheet, all Medicaid earnings are combined into one revenue line item.

Mr. Mitchell made motion to accept the FY 09-10 budget. Dr. Webb seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comment.

ROWAN COUNTY 2009 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT UPDATE:

Dr. Cowan provided an update of the Community Health Needs Assessment process and the preliminary health priorities for 2009. The top five priorities are:

1. Concerns with obesity;
2. Access to affordable health care;
3. Access to affordable wellness programs;
4. Concerns about minority health disparities; and,
5. Access to affordable dental care.

Dr. Cowan stated that these are serious health problems that have not been adequately addressed over the last three to four years. The next step in completing the Assessment is to conduct community health opinion surveys. This information will capture community feedback and will bring together the five preliminary health priorities to come up with a final priority list. The health opinion survey will be submitted to two additional groups, the Board of Health and ≥ 210 randomly selected households throughout Rowan County. This health opinion survey was created in Survey Monkey and is being tested currently. Board of Health members will receive an email in the next few weeks requesting feedback on the health opinion survey. The survey will assist with refining the identification of health priorities and identifying solutions to these priorities.

HOUSE BILL 2: PROHIBITION OF SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES UPDATE:

Dr. Cowan updated the Board on House Bill 2, a bill designed to prohibit smoking in public and work places. The Bill was passed by the House with five amendments that significantly weakens the original intent of Bill. Dr. Cowan expressed concerns with the amended Bill and stated that hopefully the Senate will abolish the House amendments to ensure that HB 2 does protect the health of all citizens in public places.

NC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – EUTHANASIA RULE CHANGE:

Mr. Wood discussed the euthanasia rules recently adopted by the Department of Agriculture. One of the current concerns of these rules is the lack of clarity when the rules will actually be enforced. The best information the department has is that the rules will not be enforced until August or September of this year. Mr. Martin shared that Dr. Lee Hunter, author of these rules, will provide a summary for the public on April 16 at the Rowan County Rescue Squad. These new rules require local animal shelters to euthanize animals 16 weeks and under, injured or pregnant by lethal injection. Mr. Martin stated that the department will have to establish contractual agreements with a local veterinarian to train the animal control staff to become certified euthanasia technicians. Our current staff is not certified. The Department of Agriculture inspects our facility and approves the services that are provided. Animal control staff and I want to make sure the shelter is in compliance with these rules by the first of August 2009.

Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Martin if any of the staff is currently considered to be certified euthanasia technicians. Mr. Martin explained that four of the staff are trained to euthanize with carbon monoxide but according to the new Department of Ag new rules, all staff will be required to become certified euthanasia technicians by going through a comprehensive training course. Mr. Mitchell asked what type of equipment costs will be required to implement these new Department of Ag rules. Mr. Martin explained that the cost of the lethal injection solution and the additional time required to euthanize animals individually will increase costs to the county. Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Martin how many animals will have to be euthanized by lethal injection based on this new rule. Mr. Martin estimated that these new rules would require staff to use lethal injection on about 70 animals a month. On average, the department euthanizes 550 animals per month.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY SUMMARY:

Mr. Joslin presented a brief summary of the 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey serves as a method to inform the Board and the health department about customer concerns and issues regarding our services. Of the 190 surveys returned, 10% were discarded as incomplete. Overall, health department services ratings averaged 64% excellent, 20% good and 3% fair with 13% either not applicable or not answered. Customer comments were reviewed and issues rated at 50% or less were: Given new health info; Offered other services; Telephone services; Fees for services and hours of operation. These issues were discussed with the Management Team and they will share them with staff in group meetings and oversee policy/procedure modifications. Additionally, 78 staff surveys were distributed by email, with 41% being returned. Overall, health department staff rated our services 56% excellent, 34% good, 5% fair and 1% poor with 4% not applicable or not answered.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS: No old business or new business

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2009 at 7:00 pm and the meeting adjourned (the May 12, 2009 meeting was cancelled).

Respectfully Submitted,

Leonard L. Wood,
Secretary to the Board

Lw:dj