

Chatham County Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 28, 2022

The Chatham County Board of Health held its monthly meeting on Monday, February 28, 2022, virtually on GoToMeeting.

**Attendees**

**BOH Members:** Karen Barbee, EdD, Chair; Zachary Brian, DMD; Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner; Judith Malone, RN; Ashley Pappas, PharmD; James O'Keefe, P.E.; Tammy Lynn Morris Lloyd, MD; Carol Reitz-Barlow, RN; Marcia E. Herman-Giddens, PA, MPH, DrPH

**CCPHD Staff:** Michael Zelek, Vicky Guetgemann, Zachary Horner, Zach Deaton, Anne Lowry, Dorothy Rawleigh, Maia Fulton-Black, Gary Thomas, Brandy Prieto

**Others:** Danielle White

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Dr. Barbee started the meeting at 6:03 pm.

**Introduction**

Anne Lowry introduced Brandy Prieto, Environmental Health Technician. She has been with CCPHD for more than a month now and has already been doing a good job. She is filling in for Roxana Sandria, Environmental Health Technician, who was called up by her Army Reserves unit.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

None reported.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Dr. Herman-Giddens made a motion to approve the agenda, Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Consent Agenda Approval**

Dr. Barbee referenced a revision to the Board of Health Operating Procedures policy regarding virtual meetings. The change clarifies that meetings can only be held virtually when a State of Emergency is in place issued by the governor. Dr. Barbee said there it is highly likely that the state of emergency will be lifted at some point, meaning it would be mandatory to return to face-to-face meetings in the Board Room of the Dunlap Building. This language was added to the policy. Dr. Barbee added that the next meeting, the March meeting, will likely be moved back to the Board Room. Ms. Malone mentioned she would like to keep an eye on mask policies. No other opposition was expressed by Board members, and Dr. Barbee mentioned it would depend on case numbers.

**Dr. Brian made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Dr. Herman-Giddens seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Public Comments**

None.

### **Health Director Report**

Mike Zelek, Public Health Director, reported that Friday was the last day for Beth Dickens, QA/QI/Compliance Officer. She has moved to a new role with the Chatham County Sheriff's Office. Her position has been posted. Since this is an accreditation year, it is important to fill that role. Additionally, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer role was posted today and will be part of the Administration division. This role builds off the work that Michelle Wright, former Equity and Community Engagement Initiatives Lead, did while she was with the department. Additionally, a position focusing on community engagement has been requested that would remain with the Health Promotion and Policy Division.

The Chatham Health Alliance (CHA) is moving forward with its nonprofit transition. The Board of Commissioners has approved the sole-source contract and transfer of Alliance items to the new nonprofit. The CHA is still working through some things with its fiscal sponsor, but the hope is to move forward soon.

The CCPHD recently conducted a staff engagement survey. Mr. Zelek said it is important to engage with staff to see how the department is doing and how it can get better. The department's leadership team is discussing the results and staff will be engaged in next steps.

The clinic recently had monitoring visits for immunization and compliance visits, receiving a 100% grade and deemed in full compliance.

The CCPHD was recently named NCDHHS' vaccine provider of the week, and Cristal Ruiz will be featured as one of Chatham Magazine's Women of Achievement in an upcoming issue.

Mr. Zelek spoke about the CCPHD's shift from a traditional clinical model to more public health-focused and wraparound services. About one year ago, the department divested of pediatric primary care. Maternal care is the last primary care service with the department and transitioning out of this program has been a topic of discussion. No new patients have been accepted in the last year since the program coordinator left for a different position. Staff are assessing capacity of other providers to determine need. Mr. Zelek said he is planting a seed that potential divestiture is being discussed internally and it will likely be brought to the Clinical Services Committee and the full board in the coming months with a full plan.

### **COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Zelek said COVID trends are moving in the right direction. Case rates are just over 100 but are coming down quickly, as are positivity rates and hospitalizations. He said this is something we have wanted for some time. With these improving trends, certain measures, like mask requirements, are being relaxed. Mr. Zelek mentioned that for some, the shifts on masking are long overdue, while for others the transition may be stressful. Mr. Zelek said it is important for people to be respectful to each other as this shift happens.

Zachary Horner, Communications Specialist, provided an update on the N95 community distribution initiative. He shared that the CCPHD has been offering N95 respirators at no cost to the Chatham community. Mr. Horner reported that more than 155,000 N95 respirators have been given out across the Chatham County community, including through libraries, churches, the Moncure Fire Department, and others. Multiple board members said they or family members had received N95s through this effort.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Board of Health Engineer Seat**

Dr. Barbee said that the Board is still looking for someone to fill the engineer seat. The requirements for the seat are that they be a Chatham County resident and have an active engineering license. The announcement has been reposted. Mr. O'Keefe said he would share the opening with local engineers to find someone.

### **Clinic Fees**

Zach Deaton, Clinical and Community Health Services Division Director, said the Board of Health approved in 2019 to shift from a flat fee approach to a formulary approach. He said this has given flexibility to the clinic to adjust charges based on various factors. So far for fiscal year 2022, the clinic has had 6 vaccine-charge changes, 5 of them increases, along with some lab-charge changes. Most of the changes have been \$1-2. He said the changes have benefitted the agency and thanked the board for their support of the shift.

### **Proposed Budget Discussion Overview**

Mr. Zelek and Mr. Gary Thomas, Finance Officer, presented the proposed budget for FY 2022-23. Mr. Zelek said a proposed budget is developed for each fiscal year. The budget is reviewed by the Board of Health Budget Committee, who makes a recommendation to the full board for consideration. The committee made a unanimous decision to recommend the budget to the full Board. The Board of Health then makes a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners, who ultimately approves the budget for all County departments.

*Administration:* Mr. Zelek said this division usually is the most straightforward in the budget. The revenues are non-county revenues. The increase to the Grants line is from the Blue Cross Blue Shield grant for the EMBRACe project. The salaries and fringe benefits line increased by 3% due to a 2% increase in health insurance costs and a 1.2% increase in retirement for next year.

*Clinical Services:* Mr. Zelek said revenues decreased in this division due to fewer state funds and a decrease in insurance funds. That number could end up being higher due to Medicaid Cost Settlement. Salaries and benefits have a similar increase to Administration.

*Health Promotion and Policy:* Mr. Zelek said COVID funds from the state sit in HPP's budget. State funds will decrease since it is not certain if we will receive more COVID funds. Duke Endowment funds ended in December, so grant funds decreased as well. The addition in Salaries/Benefits is driven by the expansion request for a new position.

Ms. Dorothy Rawleigh, HPP Division Director, said the new position in HPP is for community engagement. It is split off from Michelle Wright's old position as Equity and Community Engagement Lead. She said the position will allow us to understand and respond to health needs of the community by maintaining relationships with the community, with a focus on marginalized populations and faith-based communities. She said equity will continue to be a primary focus on this position. Healthy Community grant funds and COVID funds have been in place and will fund the position at least through next fiscal year, but we may not receive them in future years. With a strong focus on building relationships and establishing trust with the community, it is important to have a sustainability plan to continue this position. The county budget office recommended that the CCPHD submit this request for expansion from county funding. Ms. Rawleigh said Healthy Communities funds will likely be reliable, but county funding will help sustain this position in the long run.

*Environmental Health:* Mr. Zelek referenced an increased demand on Environmental Health staff, and there is an expected 20% increase in fee revenues based on demand. He said this does not include the proposed

increases to fees discussed in the last meeting. Three new positions are being requested, showing in the increase in Salaries and Benefits, as well as new vehicles for those staff.

Ms. Lowry stated that unprecedented growth and Chatham Park are necessitating the addition of on-site wastewater and food and lodging staff, which is why there is an expansion request from Environmental Health this year.

*Overall:* Mr. Thomas said the department is asking for a 17% increase in budget, noting the increase in grant funding for EMBRACe and Smart Start. The CCPHD plans to cover the first year of funding of the new Community Engagement Specialist position with grant funding but with county funds in the years following. The total new expansion funding request is \$391,048. The overall increase does not consider funds that will roll over from FY 22 to FY 23, so this increase can be difficult to interpret given the impact of grants received.

Mr. Zelek said putting together the budget is a lot of work for Mr. Thomas and the divisions. Mr. Zelek said that expansion requests are not made lightly but only when there is a real need.

**Dr. Herman-Giddens made a motion to approve the budget proposal, Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### **Policy and Procedures Policy**

Mr. Zelek said he had been speaking with Ms. Dickens about this policy before her departure. He said the policy lays out the policy development and review process, something that has been worked on internally to streamline the process. There was some confusion about what goes before the board for approval and what does not, noting that some more internal administrative policies are going to the board.

The revised policy specifies that the policies that require board approval include those involving fiscal management with budgetary impact, statutory authority, hiring, workforce development, diversity and inclusion, and significant public or political impact. Mr. Zelek said the number of policies that are reviewed by the board each year should be cut in half with these changes.

Ms. Reitz-Barlow thanked staff for this change, noting there have been many policies that have come to the board that probably did not require board input. Mr. Zelek said annual review is an accreditation requirement, but the department is trying to streamline that process.

**Ms. Reitz-Barlow made a motion to approve the revised Policy and Procedures Policy, Dr. Pappas seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### **Adjournment**

Dr. Barbee said the next meeting will be in the board room of the Dunlap Building.

**Dr. Herman-Giddens made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Reitz-Barlow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**



Karen Barbee, EdD-Chair

Stephanie Freese - DVM Co-Chair



Secretary Ex-Officio

Michael Zelek, MPH, Health Director