

Cherokee County Health Department BOH Meeting Minutes
Monday May 15, 2015
5:30 p.m. – Health Department Conference Room

Members Present: Alan Keith, Curtis Brown, Mike Davis, Dr. Amanda Gambill, Chris Dickey, John Hyer, Holly Gutierrez, and CB McKinnon

Absent: Dr. Mark Gilbert, Audrey Hughes RN, and Dr. Don Ambler

Press: No press was present

Public Present: No public was present

Public Comment: None

Meeting Call to Order: Chairman Alan Keith called the meeting to order

Invocation: gave the invocation

Public Comments: No public comment however, Commissioner McKinnon requested a short meeting and Mike Davis stated “I was just tickled pink with the nurses who represented the health department at the Senior Games.” There were three of them, Maria, Tammy and Lena and I was very proud of them.

Approval of minutes: Members reviewed the minutes from the March meeting.

Departmental Reports: As requested by Board of Health Members at the March, 2015 Meeting, all departmental reports including; Environmental Health, Rabies Prevention and Control, Clinical and Financial Reports were emailed to board last week and hard copies handed out before today’s meeting. Members were provided time to review reports and ask any questions they had. Holly Gutierrez asked if there was a reason for the increase in complaints to the Food and Lodging staff. Towanna reported she did not know the answer to this question, but felt if it was anything significant, Kim would have reported it to her. Chris Dickey stated “The Environmental Health department is very efficient as usual”. Heather Gutierrez asked about whom to call in instances of stray dogs. Towanna told her to call the sheriff’s department if the dog was dangerous. Commissioner McKinnon informed everyone that the county does not have an animal control department.

Health Director Comments:

New BOH Member Orientations: Towanna proposed dates for new board member training to be held. Members present chose Thursday June 4, 2015 at 4 pm. Alan Keith asked if seasoned members could also attend. Towanna replied yes that everyone is welcome.

Outreach: Health department staff has been involved in the Senior Games, Community Health Fair at Murphy First Baptist Church, and Immunization Week at the Murphy and Andrews Health Departments.

Credit Cards: Charges of \$1,267.00 for Health Department Services have been applied to credit cards in the last two months.

Overview of Budget Request from County: The Health Department requested 3 new vehicles; the county manager has approved two, as the majority of current vehicles are two door small Ford Ranger trucks which are not conducive to Health Department staff's traveling needs as normally at least two or more people (up to five) travel to Raleigh at the same time. This requires the utilization of two trucks for one trip which doubles the expense of fuel. The Taurus Station Wagon is beyond repairs; we have transferred one truck to DSS and will give one more back to the county for other department utilizations in return for the purchase of two new vehicles. Additionally, Towanna has requested to turn the White House back over to the county. For the last two years, the house has only been used for storage. The Health Department has continued to pay utilities for this house. The house could be utilized by another county department. Next, our budget request includes an increase in pay for all nursing staff. Three options were presented: 1) Increase salaries to meet state level salaries. 2) Increase salaries to match Clay County level salaries. And 3) Match Nurses with one of the two proposals and increase all other employees 4%. Finally, tuition reimbursement models were proposed and requested. Tuition reimbursement would be distributed as a loan which would be paid back by the employee's continuing employment for the same amount of time tuition reimbursement was received i.e. two years to complete degree would required two years of employment at the Health Department.

The cost of degrees currently is:

BSN at WCU	\$8,246.00
MSN at WCU	\$12,755.00
MHS at WCU	\$10,456.00

Alan Keith has spoken with Randy and denied the request to consider tuition reimbursement as the county feels they would not get the loan paid back if employees left before the loan was paid off. He also asked proposed pay incentives and asked that the director and supervisor be allowed to drive a Health Department vehicle as they are on call 24/7 for the health department. The use of a vehicle would increase their compensation and show them that they are valued for the job they do at the county's rate of pay. Mr. Keith was told by the county manager, that this would have to be written into their job description and compensations package.

Commissioner McKinnon said DSS also wants to give raises but those are not going to happen either. He also stated that if everything works out there will be a raise to all county employees. Alan Keith reminded everyone that the county employees have been under a salary freeze with no increases for the last seven years. He also said that the county's current pay scale is only at 90% of the state's salary scale.

The health department's budget hearing is currently scheduled for May 18, 2015. Commissioner McKinnon stated he had no knowledge of this meeting. Towanna reported this date was given to her by Maria Hass. She also invited all board members to attend the budget hearing.

School Based Health Centers Update: Towanna met with the Hiawasse Dam School Based Health Clinic and Advisory Board members. The receptionist retired April 30, 2015. The Nurse Practitioner there would like to replace her with a Certified Medical Assistant. The school will be responsible for hiring this position as they provide contract services at the HDSBHC. The HDSBHC is doing a good job and they are on task to almost break even at the end of this fiscal year, however some large expenses including liability insurance and MD supervision are not taken from their budget.

The ASBHC continue to operate in the red. There is no full time provider there and no money budgeted to hire a provider there. The Murphy Provider goes there on Tuesday and Thursday to provide services. WIC continues to provide services there every Wednesday.

The state SBHC grant has been approved for three years for both sites in the amount of approximately \$45,000 each.

Memo of Understanding with EBCI/Recommendation to BOC: Towanna told the group of the recent meeting she had attended with the EBCI and Health Directors from Jackson, Swain, Haywood and Graham Counties. She briefly reviewed the five counties Memo of Understanding with the state of NC and the EBCI. There has been an agreement for over 30 years. It is now time for the agreement to be reviewed and signed again. Towanna said the EBCI had asked each county manager and/or commissioners to submit a letter of intention to them ASAP. This was requested because Swain and Cherokee county health directors were not able to commit to their counties signing the agreement for another 4 years. The EBCI has requested that if our county is not willing to sign for another 4 years, we sign an agreement for at least one year to give them enough time to start programs, hire and train employees if we are no longer going to provide, Food and Lodging Inspections, Emergency Preparedness, and Communicable Disease Services for the EBCI. Towanna reminded the board that the ultimate goal of Public Health is to protect the health of everyone in our county regardless of whether they are residents or visitors. Towanna asked if the BOH should submit a letter of intention to the Cherokee County Commissioners. After discussion, Alan Keith agreed to draft the letter of intention and submit it to the county manager.

Executive Session: No need for an Executive Session

Other Comments: It was noted that the General Statues for Public Health in North Carolina require on call staff at all times to accept communicable disease reports as required.

Being no further business, Chris Dickey made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Davis. Alan Keith dismissed the group at 7:20 pm.

Next Board Meeting: The next board meeting will be held on Monday July 13th at 5:30 pm at the Murphy Health Department Conference Room.

Cherokee County Health Department
Board of Health
05/12/2015

Towanna Roberts, RN
Health Director

Alan Keith
Board Chairman