

DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Minutes of Meeting
November 29, 2005

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Kuhn, P.A.-C., President; Steve Wolf, R.N., Vice President; Russell Bishop, Psy.D.; Secretary; Mike Groark, J.D.; Carl Heinisch; Julia Fullerton, J.D.; Jean Gastiger, R.N., F.N.P.; John Olson, D.D.S.; Deborah Schelkopf, D.V.M.; Mary Beth Shear, M.D.

MINUTES

Mr. Wolf requested the deletion of a sentence in the OB Referral Agreement discussion. On a motion by Julia, seconded by Dr. Olson, the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of September 27, 2005, were approved, as amended. Motion carried.

DIVISION REPORTS

Mrs. Grush reported that the new fiscal year started this week, and she would have an unaudited financial report available at the January meeting.

Mrs. Grush indicated that she received a phone call last week from the States' Attorney's office reporting that they had received a call from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asking why DeKalb County was not going to be implementing the new Animal Control Act amendments. She reported that there is a newly developed Statewide Committee of animal control providers proposing amendments to the Act that will be bringing it to the legislature in the Spring session. Mrs. Grush reported that she has been in contact with a couple of individuals from the committee, and the general consensus is that counties are not implementing the Act until the Rules and Regulations are published by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). IDPH has indicated that there is some concern as to whether some of the newly implemented fees are legal. Consequently, Mrs. Grush recommended that the Health Department not implement the fee collections in the Act until direction is received via published rules and regulations by the State. Mrs. Grush expressed her concern about our agency becoming a collection agency for the State of Illinois as it is hard enough to collect Animal Control fees that stay local.

Mrs. Grush stated that the Governor was successful in getting his "All Kids" health care coverage expansion passed through the House and Senate. While the Health Department supports health insurance for all children, there is a concern about the ability of the state to pay for this program, as well as to attain and retain providers. She added that this program passed very quickly with no written rules and regulations in place.

Mr. Drake reported that the restaurant closed by the Health Department three months ago remains closed. Mr. Kuhn noted that there were 40% more dog bites this year. Bob responded that this is a worrisome problem, with a lot more people in our area and dogs running loose. Mr. Wolf asked if DeKalb County has had any pit bull incidents. Mr. Drake reported that we have not, and he has been following this issue. Mrs. Grush added that she thinks the recent incidents have perked the interest of the States' Attorney's office. Marilyn Stromborg of that office had shown an interest in this area and indicated she was willing to work to strengthen our local ordinance. Unfortunately, Mrs. Stromborg is no longer with that office.

Ron Matekaitis, DeKalb County States' Attorney, did indicate that he would assign someone after the first of the year to address the vicious dog issue.

Mrs. Grush stated that the agency ran out of flu vaccine very quickly this year. Last year, childhood vaccine was returned, but it has been requested much more this year. Mr. Wolf asked if staff were still receiving calls requesting the vaccine. Mrs. Carroll, Communicable Disease coordinator, indicated that several calls were received today. Mrs. Grush added that more vaccine could probably be ordered at the end of December, but there is no demand for it.

Mrs. Gastiger noted an increase in the gonorrhea statistics. Mrs. Carroll pointed out that a fair share of them is not NIU students.

Mr. Kuhn asked if TriCounty Community Health Center is up and operational. Mrs. Lux responded that staff has been added and appointments are being made for nurse practitioners, and they are still working on expanding services. Currently, they are seeing about 15 patients a day and are hoping to hire a full-time nurse practitioner. She noted that patients are able to get in quicker now than previously.

Mr. Kuhn asked if IPA patients were experiencing any problems with not being able to find a provider in DeKalb County. Mrs. Lux reported that all newborns delivered by Dr. Baumgart are referred to Dr. Goswami. It is unclear if Dr. Goswami will see siblings of the newborns. Health Department staff still receive a number of calls regarding sick children, and they are referred to either TriCounty or Crusader Clinic.

Mrs. Grush reported that the Home Care Program is still working on streamlining processes and is making great headway on the recommendations of the consultants. The financial consultant will be back in December to spend another day addressing billing processes. She added that the hiring of these consultants was money well spent. While the program was really doing nothing wrong, it was good to have someone from the outside come in with new insight to evaluate the program, recommend elimination of some old processes and implementation of some new.

Mrs. Zanellato, Director of Health Education, stated that the Tobacco and School Health Grants are off to a strong start. The ten-session *Future is Ours* starts next week and will be at an additional school in December. This program offers fun ways to stay physically fit and provides nutrition education.

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Mr. Kuhn asked if the handwashing program would be taken to all the schools. Mrs. Zanellato responded that this program has been on the back burner with many different health educators working on it from time to time. She explained that this is a program where staff go to the schools with a special spray that is applied to objects that children touch and then, under a white light, will show the germs remaining after a child has washed their hands after touching the object. It provides an opportunity to talk about germs and basics of good handwashing. Mrs. Zanellato reported that the schools are overwhelmingly thrilled with the program. She added that it would be nice to do a solid campaign and work with the teachers at different times throughout the day. Studies have shown a reduction of 37% to 55% in classroom illness after this presentation. Mr. Kuhn cited recent statistics that show that 45% of high school girls wash their hands after using the restroom as compared to 35% of high school boys.

FINANCIAL DATA

On a motion by Mrs. Fullerton, seconded by Dr. Bishop, the Financial Statements for the months of September and October 2005 and the Claims for the months of October and November 2005 were approved.

Mr. Heinisch asked how much money the State owes the agency for IPA payments. Mrs. Grush responded that she did not know at this time, but would have that information available at the Board of Health meeting in January after accounts receivables have been calculated, adding that the agency generally has about \$500,000 of receivables at the end of the year. Mr. Heinisch stated that this reinforces Mrs. Grush's concern about why a fund balance is needed. Mr. Heinisch explained that this governmental agency does not have profit; it has negative and positive cash flow.
Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Petition by Health Department Employees to the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board to form a Union Represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Mrs. Grush reported that a letter was received from the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board on November 16, 2005, indicating that AFSCME was requesting certification as the collective bargaining agent for Health Department employees. Since unions in our country seem to be shrinking, union representatives are going more and more to government organizations to recruit members. Mrs. Grush reported that the union activity was very quiet, and she was in the process of writing a letter for all employees when she learned that the union had already been established via the card-signing method.

Mrs. Grush explained that, prior to 2003, employees had to obtain 30% of a "defined unit" to sign a petition to have an election. The petition had to be certified by the Labor Board allowing an election. Prior to the election, both employees and management had an opportunity to speak to the issues. Employees were then given the opportunity to privately vote for or against it, with the majority prevailing. In 2003, Governor Blagojevich passed a law to facilitate the development of unions. Elections are no longer required, and a union is established if 50% + 1 of the employees in the proposed unit sign a card saying they want representation. This is done publicly through meetings and individual employee contact.

Mrs. Grush stated that management has no indication of what the problems are that lead to the establishment of the union. She wishes the issues could have been discussed openly and resolved without the need for a collective bargaining agent. She added that she feels agency benefits are exceptional as compared to other employers and that the agency has worked hard to keep salaries competitive for the market. For the past four years, Health Department staff has received an average salary increase of 5.25% annually and Home Care nurses 5.4% annually.

DeKalb County has a retainer with Laner Muchin Dombrow Becker Levin and Tomenberg, Ltd., a Chicago labor law firm. Jill O'Brien has been assigned to us. She has indicated that it may take at least one year before a contract is in place. She reports that, generally, the first contract is the most difficult to develop. A meeting has been set up for December 20, 2005, with Ms. O'Brien and agency management staff.

Mr. Heinisch stated that he feels Mrs. Grush and the Board of Health has gone out of their way in being sensitive to the employees and their requests. Dr. Olson cited the example of the mileage reimbursement given at the end of last year because of the cost of gasoline. Mrs. Grush pointed out that the Health Department was the only department in the county that gave employees additional money for mileage at the end of the year. Mr. Wolf stated that he is curious to see what the issues are, adding that it was salaries in Kane County. Mrs. Grush stated that managers have told her that there is a group that is upset the union has come in and that a significant number of employees feel they were blindsided by this, with no opportunity for information. There are 64 eligible positions and documentation verifying signatures has been sent to the Labor Board. Temporary part-time positions are not a part of the union.

Mrs. Gastiger asked the role of the Board of Health. Mrs. Grush responded that the Board would have to agree to the contract. Mrs. Gastiger asked if the DeKalb County Rehab and Nursing Center (DCRNC) is unionized. Mrs. Grush reported that most of the staff is, but the nurses are not.

Mrs. Grush reported that staff do not have to join the union, but all have to pay fair share, which she understands is about 80% of full dues. She indicated that she would encourage staff to pay full dues as they are then allowed to vote. Mr. Wolf added that the union rationale for paying fair share is that all staff reaps the benefits of what the union negotiates. Mrs. Grush pointed out that collective bargaining eligible staff does not include managers, coordinators, or supervisors and team leaders.

FY2006 Salary Increases

Mrs. Grush reported that the FY2006 Health Department Budget included a 3% COLA for all employees in December. In light of the establishment of the union, Mrs. Grush asked Jill O'Brien if they are to receive the 2006 COLA. Ms. O'Brien indicated that they should receive the 3% COLA since it was included in the budget. Historically, the Health Department has followed the salary recommendation for non-union positions approved by the County Board at its November meeting. This year, employees not covered under a collective bargaining unit are receiving a 3.3% COLA.

Mrs. Fullerton made a motion to approve a 3.3% cost-of-living increase for non-union employees and 3% cost-of-living increase for those employees covered under the conditions and terms of collective bargaining, effective December 1, 2005. Mr. Heinisch seconded. Motion carried.

Employment Above 10% Entry

The agency has been advertising for a part-time Health Educator for a number of weeks. Two acceptable candidates wanting to work two days a week have been interviewed. Mrs. Grush reported that their previous experience and educational background warrants compensation above the 10% entry level. The entry salary for a Health Educator is \$15.54 with a maximum hiring salary of \$17.09, and she wishes to hire these staff at \$17.77 (a 4% increase). One candidate is a former Health Department employee with an M.P.H. and the other is an eight-year military person with many credentials who is getting her MPH at N.I.U.

Mr. Wolf made a motion to employ the two part-time Health Educators at \$17.77 per hour, 4% above the maximum hiring salary of \$17.09 per hour, seconded by Dr. Shear. Motion carried.

Mrs. Grush presented a listing of authorized agency positions, which must have Board of Health approval before being sent to the Finance Office.

The County is trying to get all exempt positions into the definitions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Mrs. Grush listed the Standards and provided a listing of exempt positions.

Mr. Groark moved to accept the listing of Health Department authorized positions and the listing of positions considered exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act, seconded by Dr. Schelkopf. Motion carried.

Home Care Building Update

Mrs. Grush reported that there has been a lot of discussion about the proposed building during the budget process, and that communication has not always been very clear. A recent letter to the editor of the Daily Chronicle made it sound like a \$5 million office building was being constructed for Public Health. Mrs. Grush clarified that if a \$5 million dollar building is built, it would include several tenants such as the Home Care Program of the Health Department, Superintendent of Schools, Veterans Assistance Commission and the Mental Health Board. While there has been concern about the building by some members of the County Board, those Mrs. Grush has spoken to did not have concern with the Home Care portion as the Health Department has agreed to fund up to \$2 million of the building and have \$1.3 million in the bank at this time. The DeKalb County Board did vote to place the Veterans Assistance Commission funding on a referendum on the April ballot to see if DeKalb County residents would approve a tax for the Commission. The County recommendation is that an architect be hired to design the building in 2006, however this process will not begin until after the April election.

Membership Committee

Board of Health Replacements

Mr. Heinisch presented a listing of Board of Health memberships expiring and recommended the following replacements made to the DeKalb County Board. Those changes include: Mr. Heinisch being replaced by Scott Starkweather, Vice President of Castle Bank in DeKalb; Mr. Kuhn replaced by Jesus Romero, Owner of Taxco restaurant in Sycamore; and Dr. Lane by Dr. Linda Liston of NIU Health Services.

Mrs. Fullerton indicated that her new job is demanding with a long commute, so has asked for a replacement for her on the Board. The County Board chair will make this appointment at the December meeting.

Nomination of Officers

Mr. Heinisch presented the 2006 Slate of Officers as Mr. Wolf as President, Dr. Bishop as Vice President and Dr. Schelkopf as Secretary. No other nominations were received.

Mrs. Gastiger moved to approve the Board of Health replacements and 2006 Slate of Officers, seconded by Mr. Groark. Motion carried.

Mrs. Grush thanked Mr. Kuhn, Mr. Heinisch and Mrs. Fullerton for their service to the Board. She also thanked Mr. Kuhn for serving his last two years as President and for his support with the County Board and an advocate in the community. Mr. Heinisch stated that each member goes back to the community

as an advocate on Board of Health issues, adding that the issues faced today are different than they were 30 years ago. He stated that it has been a pleasure to serve another term with this Board.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newspaper articles included in Board packets included information on the flu season, the proposed building, the closing of a restaurant by the Health Department, the requirement of names for HIV positive test results, "All Kids" program, and October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Mrs. Fullerton, the Board of Health meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m. Motion carried.

Russell Bishop, Psy.D., Secretary
DeKalb County Board of Health