

DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Minutes of Meeting
May 23, 2006

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Wolf, R.N., President; Russell Bishop, Psy.D., Vice President; Jean Gastiger, R.N., F.N.P.; Mike Groark, J.D.; Linda Liston, M.D.; John Olson, D.D.S.; Stephen Slack; Scott Starkweather

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Jesus Romero; Deborah Schelkopf, D.V.M.; Mary Beth Shear, M.D.

MINUTES

On a motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Mr. Slack, the minutes of the Board of Health meeting of March 28, 2006, were approved. Motion carried.

DIVISION REPORTS

Mrs. Grush reported that the Emergency Preparedness drill held on March 30, 2006, went very well. Approximately 75 Health Department staff worked the event, including all Public Health staff and some staff from Home Care. One physician from NIU Health Service, one from KMA and one from DeKalb Clinic also participated, as did all Health Department nurse practitioners and two nurse community volunteers. It is estimated that between 800 and 1,000 volunteers would be needed if an event occurred requiring treatment of all county residents. She pointed out that, in a real event, there would also be staff members that would be ill or that did not feel they could leave their families. Observations, recommendations and pictures of the drill were included in the Administrator's report.

Mrs. Grush announced a \$3 million increase in the Local Health Protection Grant funding to local health departments. This increase in funding was a major focus of the Administrators' Association this legislative session. This funding must be divided between 102 counties, and a formula is being developed for distribution of this grant to local agencies.

Mr. Drake reported that there was a sewage backup in the food preparation area of a local fast food establishment, and it was necessary to close the facility for clean-up. He updated the Board on the bird head found in a can of beans, which remains a mystery as the company claims they tested the can of beans and determined it was not there during the processing, while the FDA claims that they never gave the can of beans to the company for testing; thus, the investigation is still ongoing.

Mr. Wolf asked about the electronics collection held on the 22nd of April. Mr. Drake, Director of Environmental Health, stated that the collection was very successful. A second electronics collection is scheduled for October 7, 2006. Mrs. Grush expressed appreciation to the DeKalb and Sycamore Kiwanis clubs for volunteering in helping with the event.

Mrs. Lux, Director of Personal Health Services, distributed an educational flyer from the Family Planning Program on preconceptual pamphlet, which is a grant requirement this year. The brochure was developed by Lake County Health Department and was modified to fit our program. Another brochure, "The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS" was presented. This was developed by

Erica Barnes, HIV Prevention Specialist, who planned a special program in conjunction with New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. A presentation was made as part of a national effort to address the disproportionate impact of AIDS on the African-American community. To date, our Communicable Disease Program has reported seven possible and one lab-confirmed case of mumps, with ten additional cases being investigated, for a total of 22 cases reported. Mrs. Lux added that one of the probables will most likely become a lab-confirmed case. Mrs. Lux included in her report the investigation of Norovirus and gastroenteritis outbreak, including how it is determined what the infection is, timelines, and education of employees, followed by a summary report written by Peg Carroll, Communicable Disease Program coordinator, that is sent to the State.

Mr. Wolf asked if, nationally, the majority of mumps cases were in college-age individuals. Mrs. Lux responded that 38% were college students; however, in DeKalb County, this was not the case. One confirmed case was a 46 year old. Mrs. Grush added that it was recommended that health care workers be tested for mumps immunity; consequently, titers were drawn of the majority of Health Department employees. Five of these tested negative for immunity to the disease, which meets the national average of 5% being unprotected. Mr. Wolf stated that one probable case from Valley West Community Hospital was a 75 year old. Mrs. Lux added that positives were received on asymptomatic people, and the national average for this is 20%. Mrs. Grush feels this situation could have been much worse had it occurred earlier in the school year.

Mrs. Baj, Director of Home Care, stated that at one time, it took six months to replace one nurse. Now, the Home Care Program is down a couple of nurses, with no prospects of hiring in sight. An occupational therapist has been contracted, a position that has remained unfilled for over a year. She reported on a number of medical leaves in the program.

Mrs. Grush stated that it has been some time since it was necessary to monitor referrals in the Home Care program to determine whether they could be accepted. Several patients have been turned down because of the lack of staff to care for them. Mr. Wolf asked how much advertising the agency does. Mrs. Grush responded that ads are run in DeKalb County newspapers and also in Rockford, which cost about \$400 for four days. The ads are also on the county's website. Mr. Slack asked if there was a private organization that did some nurse recruiting. Mrs. Grush responded that she did not know of any, and didn't think it would benefit a nurse to use a recruiting agency as nursing jobs are so readily available.

On April 1, Connect Two (our answering service for many years) sold their business to Wagner Communications. Mrs. Baj reported unending problems with the new service, but they are all working at getting these problems rectified. Mrs. Hills, Director of Office Support, indicated that there have not been as many problems with Public Health and Animal Control. Wagner assumed the same charges as those of Connect Two at \$65 as the base charge, 30 cents per call received (100 free) (dial in) and 40 cents for each call dialed out. Dr. Olson suggested looking at using the 911 dispatch for our calls. Mrs. Grush stated that she could ask, but it is her understanding that they are already short-staffed. Mr. Wolf asked if there was a signed contract with this organization, and if not, perhaps another service could be found. Mrs. Grush reported that no contract has been signed to date.

Mrs. Zanellato, Director of Health Education, reported that 112 of the volunteers participating in the Emergency Preparedness drill on the 30th of March were community volunteers, with the remainder being NIU students. She added that, of the 112 community volunteers surveyed before participating in the drill, 43% said they had an understanding of what the role of the Health Department would be in an event. After the drill, 94% reported having an understanding of the Health Department's role. Mrs. Zanellato wants to begin to focus on personal preparedness, starting with an awareness campaign. She reported that thank you notes were sent to the 112 participants, asking if they would like to be a volunteer should an event occur. Of those, 20 responded that they would participate.

The Health Education Division is in its third year of the School Health Education Grant. A one-year extension was received with the requirement that the CATCH program, focusing on nutrition and physical education, be added. Chesebro Elementary School agreed to participate and will allow the State to come in and do a baseline study before the new component is implemented. Mrs. Zanellato reported that the Tobacco Grant has been restructured with health departments choosing their own level of funding that is tied to the number of program requirements they are willing to do.

FINANCIAL DATA

On a motion by Mrs. Gastiger, seconded by Dr. Schelkopf, the Financial Statements for the months of March and April 2006 and the Claims for the months of April and May 2006 were approved. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mid-year Merit Raises

Mrs. Grush stated that the FY 2006 Budget of the Health Department authorized merit pay increases of 0 to 2%, effective May 28, 2006. She recommended that the merit-based increase be changed to 2% across the board for all eligible full- and part-time permanent employees and part-time temporary nurses. Mrs. Grush is recommending this because the evaluation process is very time-consuming to complete with self-evaluation by the employee, written evaluation by the supervisor and then individual meetings with each staff person. Mrs. Gastiger pointed out that it was clarified at the Personnel Committee meeting that this 2% did not need to be split among employees, but rather was budgeted as if all employees would receive the full 2% merit. Mrs. Grush stated because this is a change from past practice, approval from the Union will have to be received.

Mr. Starkweather made a motion to approve a change from a merit-based increase to an across-the-board increase of 2% for all full- and part-time permanent staff, as well as part-time temporary nurses. Dr. Olson seconded. Motion carried, with Mr. Groark voting no.

Compensation Above Entry Level for Animal Control Warden

Mrs. Grush reported that agency policy dictates that non-nurse positions can be employed up to 10 percent above entry without Board of Health approval. A new Animal Control officer with over 15 years of veterinary clinic experience has recently been hired, and Mrs. Grush asked to adjust her salary to \$14.00 per hour, retroactive to her start date of April 11, 2006. She pointed out that 10 % above entry for this position would be \$13.18.

Dr. Olson made a motion to approve the salary of \$14.00 per hour, retroactive to April 11, 2006, for the new Animal Control officer, seconded by Mr. Groark. Motion carried.

Assistant Administrator Position

Mrs. Grush reported that it has been difficult for some time for her to fulfill the responsibilities of her position because of the growth and complexity of public health issues. The agency is faced with major projects, including union negotiations and contract settlement, the Home Care building project, emergency preparedness planning requirements, and recertification of the Health Department in 2007. She is requesting that the Assistant Administrator position, vacant since 1996, be reinstated. She added that agency employees have grown by 30% and expenditures by 128% since 1996.

From 1992 to 1996, Jane Lux was the Administrative Assistant. Because of significant growth, in 1996, Mrs. Lux assumed the role of Director of Personal Health Services and Mrs. Baj, the Director of Home Care. Due to funding for this building and as a cost-savings measure, the Administrative Assistant position was left vacant. Mrs. Grush reported that not filling this position over the years has saved approximately \$570,000. She shared a 2001 IDPH survey of 91 health departments with 42 having business managers, 24 having personnel managers and 41 having assistant administrator positions; our agency has none of those positions.

Mrs. Grush has met with the Personnel Committee recommending that Jane Lux be promoted to this position. She added that the cost of the position would be partially offset by an expected increase in the Basic Health Services Grant and savings in replacement positions.

Mr. Groark moved to approve the reinstatement of the Assistant Administrator position, seconded by Mrs. Gastiger. Motion carried.

Open Meetings Act Amendment

Mrs. Grush reported that amendments have been made to the Open Meetings Act, with many of the requirements becoming effective July 1, 2006. Most of the amendments are in regards to the posting of meeting dates, agendas and minutes on the agency's website and public notice of agendas. It also states that governing bodies shall periodically, but no less than semi-annually, meet to review minutes and recordings of closed meetings and make a determination that confidentiality still exists and the records will remain closed or that the minutes can now be made available for public inspection. The amendment also addresses the destruction of the verbatim record of closed meetings

The executive session minutes of May 24, 2005, were presented and approved for public inspection.

On a motion by Mr. Starkweather, seconded by Dr. Olson, the executive session minutes of May 24, 2005, were approved and released for public inspection. Motion carried.

Executive Session

Personnel Issue

At 8:55 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Groark, seconded by Mr. Starkweather, the Board of Health moved to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussion of a personnel issue and evaluation of the Public Health Administrator. On a roll call vote, those voting yes included Dr. Bishop, Mrs. Gastiger, Mr. Groark, Dr. Liston, Dr. Olson, Mr. Slack, Mr. Starkweather and Mr. Wolf. Motion carried.

At 9:19 p.m., Mr. Starkweather moved to enter into regular session, seconded by Mr. Groark. On a roll call vote, those voting yes included Dr. Bishop, Mrs. Gastiger, Mr. Groark, Dr. Liston, Dr. Olson, Mr. Slack, Mr. Starkweather and Mr. Wolf. Motion carried.

Mrs. Gastiger stated that the Board of Health feels extremely fortunate to have an outstanding administrator and recommended the maximum increase of 2%. Dr. Olson seconded. Motion carried.

Mrs. Grush expressed her appreciation to the Board of Health for their support, as well as that of the County Board. She indicated that she would continue to do her best for the agency.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newspaper articles for the months of March and April covered Board of Health appointments, the mumps outbreak in DeKalb County, the Emergency Preparedness drill held in March, denial by the processing company of a bird head in the can during the sealing process, a sewage backup at McDonald's, the Future is Ours program, the granting of awards for the Smoke-Free DeKalb Coalition, the encouraging of vaccinations for DeKalb County dogs, the problem of coyotes in the county, and Public Health Month in April.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Dr. Olson, seconded by Mr. Groark, the Board of Health adjourned at 9:26 p.m. Motion carried.

Deborah Schelkopf, D.V.M., Secretary
DeKalb County Board of Health