

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, April 13, 2010, in the Public Meeting Room of the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

John DeCotis, PhD
Thomas Faulkner
Don Haddix
Robert Horgan
Lynette Peterson
Lyn Redwood
Michael Strain, MD

Staff Members Present:

Michael Brackett, MD
Glenda Bryant, RN, MN, FNP
Merle Crowe, BA
Rick Fehr, BS
Scott Bennett, County Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM January 12, 2010: Mr. Haddix made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Peterson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with two abstentions and no further discussion.

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT:

Legal Easements: County Attorney Scott Bennett addressed the board with his opinion on legal issues concerning proposed Legal Easements. He thought that notice of a legal easement should be required to be recorded on any deed; that it should state type of easement and its purpose. That would serve to notify any future purchaser of the property of the easement during a title search. There is currently a requirement that any donor property must have enough area for its original septic field, total replacement field area, and sufficient area reserved for the septic field in the legal easement.

The board has two options: total denial of any legal easement as is done in Gwinnett and Fulton counties or grandfathering in those legal easements already in place but allowing no further legal easements on commercial and/or residential properties with certain restrictions. However, the board had concerns that if legal easements were allowed, some marginal land would be developed, with intent of the developer to get a legal easement on adjoining property for installation of septic systems, because the original property was unsuitable for such a system. The board felt that sort of development would lead to high density development. After discussion, Ms. Redwood made a motion to allow no Legal Easement for new construction, with existing agreements grandfathered in, seconded by Mr. Haddix. The motion passed unanimously, with the caveat that under current regulations, property owners could request a variance due to hardship. There was no further discussion.

There was no Public Comment.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget: Ms. Crowe presented the FY 2011 Budget. She reviewed the budget, going over each line item. Salaries comprise about 80% of the total budget. The total budget was down due to staff attrition: there are two less nurses and one less Environmental Health (EH) secretary, with the total effect of reducing salary and benefits costs.

Other expenses have been increased: pharmacy costs are up due to the prohibitive cost of travel vaccines. Staff has promoted travel vaccine administration in an attempt to offset the loss of revenue from reduction of Grant-in-Aid (GIA), but vaccines must be purchased before travel immunizations can be administered. The board requested more information on the line item *Indirect Costs*; this expense is paid to the District Office for pharmacy support, computer technical support, and personnel support. If the cost were not reduced by economy of scale over the twelve county districts, it would be far higher. The line items *Out Patient Clinic Fees* and *Environmental Health Fees* are current year fees that are pledged to cover expected current year expenses. This is not the best fiscal policy; state authorities recommend reserving current year fees for the forthcoming fiscal year. However, due to the current economy, staff felt there was no choice because GIA funding has been -- and continues to be -- reduced.

Ms. Redwood requested information on how State and Federal funding is allocated among the twelve counties. Dr. Brackett explained that State GIA and Federal funding is paid in one lump sum, and routed through Troup County, which is the lead county for District Four. It is allocated by percentage based upon volume of services and program, with Troup County receiving only its share. Dr. Brackett said that Federal and State funding is allocated by an antiquated GIA formula, which is under discussion right now. The board requested a spreadsheet that showed dollars allocated to each county from the lead county, so that it could be determined that Fayette County received its fair share. One issue currently under discussion is that counties -- such as Gwinnett -- which have grown in population the most since the last revision of the GIA formula feel that their funding is inadequate, and rural counties that have perhaps lost population have other concerns such as lack of transportation and poverty. Dr. Brackett said that resolving the issues would be extremely difficult due to politics, and that it might even be necessary to redefine the mission of Public Health entirely.

Motion was made to approve the budget as presented by Ms. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Haddix. The motion was approved unanimously with no further discussion.

The board asked if any pharmaceutical stock would expire; only stocks of H1N1 would expire due to short-dating and production issues.

Dr. Strain commended Dr. DeCotis for his service to the Board over the past eleven years, since this would be the last board meeting prior to his retirement.

Minimum Lot Size: Mr. Fehr informed the board that a rare request had come before EH staff regarding a "lot of record" that had been approved *circa* 1920, prior to establishment of minimal lot sizes for sewage system disposal. The board was provided with relevant documentation regarding lot sizes (attachment #1). In this instance, the lot is less than the area required by county ordinance, but does appear to have area sufficient for a sewage system and replacement. No action was required from the board.

Mr. Haddix asked if the county has an “overlay” system but Mr. Fehr was not familiar with that term; he will check with Planning and Zoning and report back next meeting.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Fehr hoped that the board would review the “Ghost Out” video.

Dr. Brackett mentioned that H1N1 was still around, averaging one or two deaths of healthy middle-aged people a month. He said the most relevant current concern was the exodus of talent in upper Public Health management. Many of those leaving are being replaced by staff members with no previous knowledge of Public Health; this does not bode well. Some of the departing people are retiring early; some are frustrated with the current state of affairs and leave accordingly; and some are accepting positions with the Federal Government or the Centers for Disease Control. The situation is volatile and loss of seasoned leadership is most worrisome.

There were no further staff reports.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Redwood, seconded by Ms. Peterson. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 AM.

Michael Stain, MD

Merle Crowe, BA
Secretary, Fayette County Board of Health