

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, November 13, 2001, in the Public Meeting Room in the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

**Board of Health Members Present:**

Thomas Bowman  
Dr. John DeCotis  
Carol Fritz  
Lynette Peterson  
Lyn Redwood  
Dr. Michael Strain, Chairman  
A. G. VanLandingham

**Staff Members Present:**

Laurie Cook  
Merle Crowe  
Cynthia Grant  
Rick Fehr  
Deborah Straight  
Dennis Davenport, Attorney  
Robert Morgan

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Carol Fritz, Acting Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:45 a.m.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes of September 11, 2001 were changed to read comment on Page 8 made by Laurie Cook, not Ms. Peterson. Motion made by Dr. DeCotis, seconded by Carol Fritz. Minutes were approved with this change.

Minutes of October 9 Meeting were tabled until December meeting.

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**OLD BUSINESS:**

Acting Chair Ms. Fritz asked if there was any old business or an update on Lake Edith.

**ENVIRONMENT HEALTH UPDATE:** Mr. Fehr commented that there had been no further information received concerning Lake Edith.

Lyn Redwood said she had followed up with a phone call to Jim Summerfield at EPD. She said he said he had contacted Marnelle and made a number of suggestions. She said Mr. Summerfield stated that he would consider reopening the permit, not that he was going to reopen it. She said after meeting with Marnelle, he had asked for additional sampling of the discharge, both up and downstream; he also wants them to sample for total residual chlorine at the facility. She said he requested records of any engineering data or information concerning capacity of the facility, and he needed a written request from the Board of Health

which outlined its concerns and formally asked for Marnelle's permit to be reopened. Ms Redwood said she had drafted a letter which re-worked the original letter to Mr. Hankinson and included pictures of the conditions at Lake Edith. She said she had also discussed the classification of Lake Edith with Mr. Summerfield; that current EPD regulations allow for two classifications: Swimmable/Fishable and Recreational. She said these sound very similar but have different limits of what discharges can go into state waters. She said that Swimmable/Fishable has a limit of fecal coliform of 200 per 100 millimeters, whereas waters classified as Recreational have limits of 50 per 100 millimeters. Ms Redwood stated that Mr. Summerfield felt that Lake Edith could be classified as Recreational due to the activities conducted there. He also said that some bodies of waters in the state are not classified, like Lake Edith, so by default they fall into Swimmable/Fishable, and that the board's letter should include a request to change Lake Edith's classification to Recreational.

Ms. Redwood said she was impressed with Mr. Summerfield's request for sampling from Marnelle, and she recommended getting the letter out to him quickly, hoping for resolution of this matter before next summer and the YMCA's use of the lake. Ms. Redwood shared the results of her collection of data on county NPEDS permits. She used Peachtree City's permit for an example, saying its biological oxygen demand (BOD) was set at 8, with total suspended solids for effluent limits set at 20, whereas Marnelle's is 90. She said Peachtree City is also required to sample for total residual chlorine, whereas this facility is not. She also stated that the fecal chloroform count for Marnelle is 200 per 100 mils and for the Charles Redwine facility it is 20 per 100 mils. Ms. Redwood said that Mr. Davenport had helped her get information from the Fayette County Water System regarding flow, so that the board can compare actual water usage against what has been reported. She felt that asking for higher limits on effluent would not be arbitrary and capricious, and said she would continue to get this information together for the board. She asked that other members of the board meet with her to go through the information collected, to see if Marnelle is meeting their permit requirements.

Ms. Fritz asked if the letter was going to be sent to Mr. Summerfield, or if anything needed to be added to it.

Ms. Redwood said she would like all board members to look over the letter first; that she had a question about whether the board could approve it pending Dr. Strain's approval, since he would be signing it.

Dr. DeCotis said he liked the letter and felt that it was a good idea to compare Marnelle to other facilities and their requirements.

Ms. Peterson made a motion to approve the letter unless there was an objection from Dr. Strain. Dr. DeCotis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fritz commented that the board would send the letter, and work on getting the information together for the next step.

Mr. Fehr asked if the board would consider the letter being sent for absent board members' approval.

Ms. Fritz agreed and asked that Mr. VanLandingham be included. She said the letter would be sent pending Dr. Strain's approval, asked for other discussion. There was none.

**BIOTERRORISM UPDATE:**

Ms. Grant discussed bioterrorism, stating that she had shared emails with the board on this topic. She said that there had been a downtrend in the number of bioterroristic calls, and that the health department had been in close contact with the EMA Director and EMS. She commented that a Bioterrorism Task Force had been put together by Captain Pete Nelms, which included law enforcement, the hospital, the health department, and many of the people who will be called upon in the event of a bioterroristic event.

Ms. Grant told the board that the task force had met about two weeks ago, and had identified as a key goal physician education on bioterrorism. She commented that such knowledge would not be in the everyday work of most physicians. She said it was felt that any bioterroristic event on the news or in the paper might send people to their physicians, who would need to be prepared to deal with these patients. She said physicians needed to be able to determine, based upon exams or patient history, whether the patient would need to be treated; what to do with the blood samples if taken; where to send samples and so forth. She stated that this information needed to be brought to physicians, and that the health department had a listing of first responders, thanks to Merle, who worked to put the list in the computer. She said the list included area emergency room physicians, pediatricians, internal medicine physicians, and OB/GYN doctors. She said thanks to the list, information can be faxed to physicians, as had recently been done; particularly when Georgia Public Health put out laboratory diagnostic guidelines. She said it had been noticed that when physicians had no answer for patients, they would refer them to the Health Department. She clarified that the Health Department does not draw blood and test for anthrax; its job is to give direction; physician's offices are to do that. She stated that in cases where a substance is found in a letter, package or in the environment, that substance is collected by law enforcement because the chain of custody has to be maintained. She said those samples are then taken by law enforcement to the Georgia Public Health lab. She said that type information needed to be put out to the community, so the board had a handout which was an agenda for the planned *Public Health Forum: What Physicians Need to Know*. She said this forum would present attending physicians with information to better deal with patients who call, as they surely will. She told the board that Dr. Brackett will speak on clinical aspects of bioterrorism; that she would speak on the role of the Health Department, and that Captain Nelms would discuss the emergency protocol he had put in place for Fayette County.

She said that one of the things that the Task Force has done, as demonstrated by the incident in the post office in Peachtree City, is to ensure that all the people in the Task Force are informed as to what is going on. She felt that it was important that the media also be included: such that they know exactly what's going on. She said a concerted effort had been made to include the media and asked if there were further questions.

Ms. Redwood asked where and when would the forum take place.

Ms. Grant replied December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm; that it would be an evening meeting as the thought was to work with the schedule of busy physicians, as well as to provide a meal. She said it was hoped to get the invitations out by this week so as to allow them time to plan around their schedules.

Dr. DeCotis said he felt that this was a great idea. He mentioned an incident in the school north complex and commended the response of the emergency service people and how efficiently and orderly it was all handled. He felt that this type of incident would happen more and more, and that he appreciated the effort at coordination. He felt that the more that was done, the better.

Ms. Grant mentioned that the Health Department had heard about the school incident and said she also felt that it was wonderful to have communication between service providers. She informed the board that there were informative PowerPoint presentation available, furnished by the district. She said one of these gives information on how to handle suspicious packages or substances and was for first responders; the other was more clinical, giving signs and symptoms of bioterrorism agents. She commented that she was the person who would meet with and present this information to any groups needing it, which made it difficult as she is also involved with flu clinics as well as other demands on her time. Ms. Grant mentioned that thus far there had been no calls for in-services, but that the health department was well-prepared to respond with handouts and information received from the CDC and the state.

She said she had filed this information in a very thick book, as well as some other things that were given by the district. She said the information was very good; that it went into detail about signs and symptoms, treatment and that sort of thing for all the agents that had been discussed. She thought that there are about 60 agents in all, but said the concern was about the 10 most likely to be used. Ms. Grant said that there was not a lot of in-depth information on all these; just on the top 10. She commented that if anyone needed that kind of information it was available in her office. She mentioned that she had her big blue book of information at home on weekends, and that she had a beeper now and could be reached by telephone or beeper at need.

Ms. Redwood commended the entire health department for taking on this additional workload: being on call on weekends and becoming knowledgeable on an area about which there is very little information. She felt that the health department had done a good job.

Ms. Grant thanked her.

Ms. Fritz asked Gus Morgan about any additional funding from the state to cover these additional duties, considering the existing budget cut.

Gus Morgan stated that the district office had contacted several different people at the sate office, because this has been a load for all health departments as well as the district. He said his estimate was that Dr. Brackett was spending 80% of his time on bioterrorism, and the district staff was spending at least 60% of their time as well. He felt that the Feds would probably drop some money to combat bioterrorism, but had no estimate of how much of that

money would reach local health departments. He commented that a letter had gone out from Dr. Brackett to local board of health members and chairs, inviting them to contact local representatives regarding funding, especially since the Grant-In-Aid funding cut in July. He mentioned that both the economy and funding was down, but it was hoped that the supplemental budget would come through on federal dollars, even though this was not a sure thing. Mr. Morgan felt confident that public concern and support would lend support to additional funding.

Ms. Fritz asked if he thought the current formula based on the 1970 census would be used

Mr. Morgan replied it was most likely.

Ms. Fritz said the board should work on getting that changed, and thanked Mr. Morgan.

**NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no new business or public comment.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Mr. Fehr requested permission from the board to close the health department for a 12 county district meeting being held on December 14 for in-service training.

Ms. Redwood asked if this was something held each year.

Mr. Fehr replied that it was an annual event.

Dr. DeCotis made a motion that the health department be closed on that date for in-service training.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fehr thanked the board. He then introduced the newest environmentalist in the department, Deborah Straight. He said that she had been doing quite a bit of training, of course, with just starting out. He said she had been a welcome addition.

The board welcomed Ms. Straight.

Mr. Fehr commented that the last item was an update from the Fayette County Safe Kids Coalition, which Robert Kurbes, environmental health staff member and Coordinator of the Coalition, had made up for their information.

Ms. Fritz asked if there were any other reports.

Ms. Grant reported that physical health was going to experience the loss of its most senior nurse, Harriett Hazelton, at the end of December. She said Ms. Hazelton was retiring after 22 years of service. She mentioned that the other clinic nurse supervisor, Diana Gaskins, an

infectious disease and immunization nurse for 17 years, left in August to go to the State Immunization Program after she finished her master's degree in public health nursing. She said physical health was experiencing the loss of senior staff in the clinic. She said two nurses were hired to replace two who left in the summer. She commented that one of these was ahead of the game because she was already in public health. Ms. Grant said this nurse had been a supervisor in infectious disease and that she had wanted to get back to direct patient care; that it would take a little time to get her clinical skills up to where she wants them to be. She explained that the other recently hired nurse is new to public health, and is an excellent nurse who will need training to perform expanded role nurse functions.

She said what that means is that the clinic now has only three people, Harriet being one of them, who can do annual and initial exams. She said scheduling has had to be cut back, and will probably have to be cut back further when Harriet leaves. She said that Virginia came right in and picked up immunization and TB monitoring. She commented that she was doing some of the other things that Diana Gaskins handled, like auditing the schools for immunization and doing flu clinics.

Ms. Grant said she was not in the office a lot at this point. She said she was aware of the state freeze on hiring which extended to nurses and environmentalists, and had sent in a request for an exception in order to fill Ms. Hazelton's position. She felt that the clinic would not be able to see as many patients if the slot was not filled. She commented that the clinic nurses tried to see patients within 15 minutes of their appointment time, but with staff shortage that was sometimes not possible, which had a negative effect on staff morale. Ms. Grant said she was doing everything possible to maintain high standards and accommodate the patient load; but unless Ms. Hazelton's position is filled problems would continue. She said she hoped a positive ruling would be received sometime between now and before Ms. Hazelton leaves.

#### **FLU SHOT UPDATE:**

Ms. Grant stated that 5,000 doses of flu vaccine had been ordered and between 4,000 and 4,500 shots had been given. She said the post office had received permission to pay for its employees' flu shots, so both Peachtree City and Fayetteville Post Offices had requested flu clinics, which will be completed this week. She said 500 doses were loaned to another health department in the district, and by this Wednesday the supply will be depleted.

Ms. Peterson asked if that meant the supply is out for the season.

Ms. Grant replied that it did.

Ms. Fritz asked if the order was one time only, and if that was that the way it was done for everyone.

Ms. Grant replied yes, that is the way it has been done for the last two years. She said that the first shipment was 500 doses, which lasted two days; then 2,000 doses, and then the rest. She said that this is a problem, especially for the elderly, who get to the health department only to find that there is no vaccine. She said last year it was due to the shortage, and this year she felt that it was to ensure that everyone got at least part of their order. She

said normal shipments are sent once the initial allotments were sent out, and that this was difficult for everyone.

Ms. Fritz asked if there was any other business.

Ms. Redwood asked if they could get some more of the flyers for the forum, maybe 10.

Ms. Redwood asked if dates would be put on the flyers. Ms. Grant replied yes.

Ms. Redwood asked if she could have flyers with dates emailed to her so she could print some up.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Lynette Peterson motioned to adjourn, Lyn Redwood seconded, motion was unanimous. There being no further business to come before the Board, Acting Chairman Carol Fritz adjourned the meeting at 8:20 a.m.

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**Michael Strain, MD**  
Chair, Fayette County Board of Health

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**Merle Crowe**  
Administrative Operations Coord. II