

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, in the Public Meeting Room in the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

Dr. John DeCotis
Lynette Peterson
Tom Bowman
Lyn Redwood
Dr. Michael Strain, Chair
A. G. VanLandingham

Staff Members Present:

Michael Brackett, MD
Laurie Cook
Merle Crowe
Cynthia Grant
Rick Fehr
Wanda Scarborough
Dennis Davenport, Attorney

Call to Order:

Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from November 13, 2001 and January 8, 2002:

Motion to approve was made by Lynette Peterson, seconded by Lyn Redwood. The minutes were approved as written, with Dr. DeCotis abstaining.

Old / Unfinished Business:

Dr. Strain asked if there was any old or unfinished business. Mr. VanLandingham brought up the issue of Lake Edith and asked if there was further information available since the last meeting. Dr. DeCotis answered that the organization whose representative presented his plan to treat Lake Edith was indeed in the process of treating the lake by means of chemicals. He stated that Pam Young would have further details.

Mr. VanLandingham also requested more information about the septic system letter or brochure that was to be developed and distributed.

Mr. Fehr stated that he was working with the author of the copyrighted material to see if some arrangement could be reached.

Mr. VanLandingham requested that this issue be followed up, either by a board member or staff, as he felt that such information was needed by homeowners. He said that some members of the public were not even aware that their property had a septic tank and therefore were in need of information on care and maintenance.

Ms. Peterson reminded the board of the two-page draft that Mr. Fehr had written, and asked if that could be given to people who need it. She said she had brought in a copy of another information sheet from Minnesota.

Ms. Redwood requested that this item be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

Mr. Fehr said the County Environmental Committee would try to get something out before the next board meeting.

Dr. Strain felt that was a good idea, and wondered if it would be possible to address the question of funding the cost of this copyrighted material with the budget discussion, or if it was too costly an expense for the Board of Health budget to bear.

Mr. VanLandingham stated that if there was a hard copy to present, committees that are meeting would probably participate in production and distribution. He said there were many ways to go about getting information out. He felt that something must be given to the public, because many people had little or no idea what is necessary for septic system care. He said that property transfers cause people to inherit problems with no idea of what they have gotten into.

Ms. Peterson said it would be nice to send this information out in the water bills.

Mr. VanLandingham said the problem with that is people who had wells would be excluded. He said that once the material is available, then the board could decide how to get it out to the public; preferably before system failure.

Ms. Cook said that this was a district-wide issue, and that District IV had formed a committee that is currently working on providing information for all twelve counties. She said one of the committee's considerations was public distribution of information through property tax bills. She mentioned that it would be nice to have someone from Fayette County on the committee, and requested that Mr. Fehr attend the next meeting, since discussion would include ways to distribute information. She said some suggested methods of distribution would be very inexpensive; such as Public Health Announcements through the media. She stated that this was a very real issue that the district office had been working on for about six months.

Mr. Bowman asked if Ms. Cook was working on the plan itself, as well as distribution.

Ms. Cook replied that she was.

Mr. VanLandingham stated that he had been discussing gray water issues with state personnel; that to eliminate borderline septic problems some states no longer allowed gray water in septic systems. He said this was another area that needed investigative work, to see if it could be adopted in the state of Georgia. He said such a change in regulations would necessarily come out of the district level; that he did not feel that it would come from the state level or county commission level.

Ms. Cook said that conversation on this issue had been ongoing across the state, and that one obstacle was the rule that gray water must pass through septic systems. She said that this rule would need to be changed. She said that the wave of the future was not to run gray water through septic systems. She said that the committee had wanted to take a regulatory stance, but had decided not to pursue that position. She said they were working on it, but were not there yet. She said that several county managers were on the committee and that she wanted Mr. Fehr to attend the next meeting if his schedule would allow.

Dr. Strain requested that Mr. Fehr attend, to translate Fayette County Board of Health's intent to provide information and education, not create regulations.

Mr. Fehr said he would carry that message to the committee.

Presentation of Budget:

Ms. Scarborough discussed the proposed FY 2003 Budget with the board. She went through the budget page by page. She stated that the first page was a summary of the budget, providing information on expected expenses and sources of revenue. She said the second page began the actual budget. Ms. Scarborough stated that page two provided a list of Personnel and changes. She said the salary for regular employees totaled \$750,212, and the fringe benefit cost was \$233,747, for a total of \$983,959. She said there were proposals to upgrade some of the staff also listed on this page. She said there were two secretaries who had been with the department for one year at the level of Secretary I, and the district policy was that employees who had one year of service be promoted if they qualify; so there was a recommendation for promotion for these two employees to Secretary II. She said the cost to promote the first secretary would be \$2,833, and the cost to promote the second secretary would be \$2,344. She said the second part of the proposals covered Environmental Health raises, and that this was a recommendation expected to result from a state committee investigating the ongoing problems Environmental Health departments had retaining staff. She explained that the committee compared salaries paid by Public Health to those paid by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). She said that the committee's recommendation was that an upgrade and a 10% increase in salary be given to Environmental Health staff with two years seniority and who qualify. She said this would be effective July 1. She said those Fayette County Environmentalists who qualify were listed on the Personnel sheet, along with associated costs. She said Deborah Straight would get a promotion, even if this proposal had not been put in place. She said that Ms. Cook had worked on the state

committee and would be glad to answer any questions. She pointed out that total staff costs were listed at the bottom of the Personnel Page, for a total of \$1,019,753.

She said the next page was the Equipment Page, which included a color laser printer for Environmental Health, to provide maps and educational materials. She said the third page included monies budgeted for repairs and maintenance of equipment; this year the only section that went up was equipment maintenance. She said that amount was to cover expenses experienced this year and those expected to occur next year as well.

She said the next page was Per Diem costs, including the cost for paying Board members for attending the board meetings, which was \$840. She stated that this section also included a nurse for 20 hours a week for 10 weeks @ \$17 an hour, to help with flu season. She said this had been included previously but had not been used; this year Harriett Hazelton will be available during that time.

She stated that the next page was Intra/Inter Expenses, which are governmental transfers of monies between agencies. She said these expenses are paid to the district office for services provided to Fayette County Health Department. She said the first amount is for Personnel Support services, and that the cost was \$4,177. She said Computer Services Support was for three computer specialists; that district office pays for two and counties divide the cost for the third specialist. She said Pharmacy Services are also provided through the district office. She explained that drugs are sent from the state and divided up for use by the counties. She said this cost is broken down by percentage of use by each county. She said the cost was \$5,320 this year.

She said the final page lists supplies and materials. She gave the amount as \$45,000, which was the same as last year. She said pharmaceutical costs were \$100,000, also the same as last year; Printing was \$2,000, which was a reduction of \$1000. She said Other Operating was \$20,000--a reduction of \$5,000; Travel, \$7,450 that was the same as last year; Telecommunications--\$8,000, which was a reduction of \$500; Postage--\$5,500-- a reduction \$680. She said the next page showed the total budgeted amount as \$1,254,629, which is a reduction of \$3,747 from last year.

She stated that the sources of funds to cover expenses were Grant-In-Aid at \$355,197, which was the same as received last year. She said the news indicated that there would be a reduction in Grant-In-Aid, but that the state usually provides funding to cover salary increases and many years this was actually an increase, even though the state cuts funding. She said this amount is not yet known so the budget lists the same amount as last year. She continued on with WIC funding set at \$26,250, which is a reduction of \$15,605. She said the district office gave out an allotment during FY 2002 that will not be given out during FY 2003.

She said Prior Year Program Income (PYPI) was money earned this year and carried over to next year's budget; that amount increased by \$64,833, due to an increase in the amount of fees. She said those Environmental Health fees that were put in the budget

last year were taken out this year, due to the increase in fees and the resulting increase in PYPI.

She said this budget asks for \$278,903 in County Participating funds, which was an increase of \$19,932. She said this request to increase was put in place to avoid using current year fees, and carry those fees over to the next year. She explained that it is the goal of the health department to use current year fees the next fiscal year, to keep the health department financially stable. She said that last year the county told staff to ask for what was needed, and it is felt that this is what is needed. She asked if there were any questions.

Dr. DeCotis asked if the Environmental Health salary increases would help with the problem of keeping experienced staff. He wanted to know if these increases would bring them up to par.

Ms. Cook provided a handout which compared Environmental Health staff (attachment #1) to salaries of the Environmental Protection Division, and Ms. Scarborough referred the board to page three of that handout, saying she did believe that staff would be brought up to good standing.

Dr. DeCotis said he remembered this being an issue last year and that he was delighted that it was being addressed.

Ms. Cook pointed out that the average state-wide salary of the EPD staff placed the bulk of its employees in the level 15 range, whereas the bulk of Public Health staff are stuck at level 13 or 14. She said committee discussion involved the fact that the EPD pays more than public health. She said this was really a flaw in the system, such that public health staff get stuck at level 13 or 14 and cannot move up. She said that job descriptions are being re-written at the state level now, to allow environmental health staff to move up, so they can have a career path. She offered to answer any other questions the board might have.

Mr. Bowman asked what the current staffing level was for Environmental Health. He wanted to know if Environmental Health was fully staffed.

Ms. Cook replied that one position was vacant, that had been left so by last year's agreement. She said one employee was still part-time and would become full-time July 1, after finishing her master's degree.

Dr. DeCotis commended staff on providing reductions in the budget, saying it was hard to reduce a budget as it required examining what was done and being honest about where these reductions can be taken. He felt that staff had done a good job with this budget.

Ms. Scarborough thanked Dr. DeCotis.

Ms. Redwood asked if she could explain the WIC reduction.

Ms. Scarborough said she could: that in the past district had received allocations from the WIC program twice a year; in July an allocation was received for the first part of the year and another one for October through September. She said WIC was on a different accounting system than District IV. She said that in January or February another allocation would normally be received, which was held until the next year, similar to how PYPI was held to the next fiscal year. She said holding this money was to help cover expenses in case of a funding cut; but this year the rules were changed and it could no be held over, due to accounting difficulties at the state level. She said district therefore paid out the additional allocation that normally would have been held for the next fiscal year. She said next year counties would receive funding with no extra payout.

Dr. Strain asked if there were further questions.

Mr. VanLandingham commented that he thought that this year's budget process was well presented and that the county funding request was in line with the work performed. He said that he had no problem with a budget increase of \$20,000. He commended staff on the budget process.

Mr. VanLandingham made a motion to have a vote on the budget; Dr. Strain seconded the motion, and called for a vote.

The budget was approved unanimously. Ms. Scarborough said she appreciated the support of the board.

Dr. Strain said he also felt that the budget was very well presented and that he appreciated the sheet that explained budget changes.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Fehr shared with the board that the State of Georgia recognized Robert Kurbes' work as Coordinator of Fayette County Safe Kids Coalition with a special award. He said that Robert was noted for his work with the local chapter.

He mentioned the work of Ms. Grant, Ms. Crowe, and himself with Fayette FACTOR, which is the local Family Connections chapter. He said that he had been selected and had accepted the position of Director of the FACTOR Collaborative.

Ms. Grant mentioned that the state requires a certain number of training hours for WIC, and that the next two day inservice will be April 29th and 30th. She said that all nurses in Fayette County Health Department perform WIC services and therefore would be required to attend this inservice. She mentioned that nurse services would be suspended those two days if approved by the board. She said administrative staff would still be in the office. She said that there were so many changes in WIC that this training was necessary

on a yearly basis. She said to keep everybody on the same page at the same time it was best to send the nurses for training at the same time. She also informed the board that Thursday, March 14th there was an inservice scheduled for the purpose of updating staff on immunization changes. She said Michelle Heard, from District IV, would give the inservice, which would cover vaccine shortages, effects of such shortages, and how to deal with them. She said this would involve keeping files and recalling those who needed vaccines when supplies increase. She also felt that keeping varicella vaccine in stock was going to be a problem, and said that tetanus vaccines already have been in short supply. DTaP is possibly going to be a problem as well, she said, although to date it has not been for Fayette; and that there is an anticipated shortage of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) as well.

Ms. Redwood asked what rationale was given for these shortages.

Ms. Grant replied that one vaccine shortage was caused by a manufacturing problem, wherein the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) inspected and then it was two months before the company could get back up to production. She said she did not know what caused the other shortages, but did anticipate problems in the near future. She said that Hepatitis B is on back-order now.

Ms. Redwood asked if the Hepatitis B vaccine administered to middle school students was pediatric or adult.

Ms. Grant replied that it was pediatric.

Ms. Peterson asked if there were many adults who come in for Hepatitis B shots.

Ms. Grant replied that there were; most of whom were traveling. She said there were many Hepatitis A shots given to travel patients as well; and that there was no shortage of Hepatitis A.

Mr. VanLandingham made a motion to allow nurses to attend the two-day WIC training class. Ms. Redwood seconded the motion.

Dr. DeCotis asked Ms. Grant about the meeting to talk about de-icing fluid contamination of Fayette County's water, and wanted to know the status on the meeting. He asked about the role of the Health Department, if any.

Ms. Grant said that the only role the health department would play was to secure a place for them to do their inservice. She said the health department was not on their agenda or involved in any way, except finding a venue for the inservice.

Dr. Brackett apologized to the board for his absence the last two meetings; he said he felt that quality staff and good boards of health allowed him to work on post-September

11th issues while normal business continued. He said he appreciated the board's support and that he would be present as much as possible for future meetings.

Mr. VanLandingham asked about filling the Peachtree City board of health position.

Dr. Strain said he could update the board on this issue. He said he had been emailing the mayor and that Mr. Brown was attempting to appoint a council member to the Board of Health. He said there were work-related scheduling problems and Mr. Brown was following up. He said Mr. Brown hoped to have an appointee by the next board meeting.

Mr. VanLandingham asked if it was a requirement of Peachtree City's charter that a council member serve on the Board of Health?

Mr. Davenport replied that it was state law. He said that Mr. Brown had informed him that work schedules prevented anyone on the council from serving.

Ms. Peterson mentioned that she had gone to the Bioterrorism Workshop; that Fayette County Health Department Director staff were all present, and that it was an extremely good experience. She said that having all county emergency personnel in one place was a very good example of teamwork. She said Pete Nelms ran the whole thing and did a wonderful job.

Dr. DeCotis said all attending school personnel commended the workshop as well.

Adjournment:

Ms. Peterson made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Redwood. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

Michael Strain, MD

Merle Crowe, Admin. Ops. Coord. II

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