

District Board of Health Meeting Minutes
District Office Conference Room
Monday, June 22, 2015
12:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Judge David Fields
Dr. Ben Kutnicki
Dr. Gary Minch
Judge Ken McFarland
Joe Mylor, Chairman
Judge Bobby Lee Westrick

Members Absent:

Delbert Cox
Judge Casey Ellis

Staff Present:

Rachele Cobb
April Harris
Dr. Georgia Heise
Allison Napier
Justin Pittman
Candice Selph
Jim Thaxton
Michelle Wilburn
Debbie Young

Welcome: Chairman Joe Mylor called the meeting to order at 12:28 p.m. A quorum was present.

Public Remarks: Chairman Mylor asked for introductions. Gary Minch, DVM, was introduced as the new District Board of Health representative from the Owen County Local Board of Health. Dr. Minch was nominated to this position as a result of the resignation of Mr. Robert Walker.

Topic: Approval of March 25, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Discussion: The Board reviewed the previous meeting's minutes included in their packet. There was no discussion.

Action: Judge Ken McFarland made a motion to approve the March 25, 2015 minutes. Judge Bobby Lee Westrick provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Discussion: Three Rivers District Health Department had no old business for Board review.

Judge McFarland inquired about the success of the new fleet of vehicles in regard to agency savings. Justin Pittman replied that it is still somewhat early to tell, but that the transition and operation of the new fleet is running smoothly. He shared that the vehicles could receive maintenance services anywhere Enterprise is accepted. While fulfilling coding and reporting requirements to the state has been fairly complex, Michelle Wilburn has found a way to master those requirements. Ms. Wilburn added that the sale of the agency's previous vehicles resulted in \$32,000.00 that was applied to the agency's leasing costs. Employees seem to be enjoying the new vehicles, and Jim Thaxton shared that they receive great gas mileage.

Judge Bobby Lee Westrick asked about the turnout of the 5K races held across the four counties. Dr. Heise reported that the Gallatin County 5K had the biggest turnout. This event typically attracts a large

number of people since it is held at the Kentucky Speedway. Despite a rainy day for the Pendleton County race, the other three races averaged a rate of sixty-five to seventy-five participants. Harper Smith, a participant from Frankfort, competed in all four races and received first place in three races.

Judge David Fields inquired about bids received for the Pendleton County Health Center roof. Mr. Pittman responded that he had received limited bids, and was open to receiving suggestions for other companies to contact.

New Business

Topic: Financial Update

Topic: FY 15 Budget Amendment Approval

Discussion: Dr. Heise referred the Board to two handouts in their packet. The first handout showed the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 15 budget amendment. Dr. Heise explained that the agency's expenses could be seen at the top of the form, and that revenue was depicted at the bottom of the form. Overall, the net difference between the projected budget and the amended budget was approximately \$37,000.00. Dr. Heise explained that this cost variance from the original budget occurred as a result hiring contract employees versus merit employees. As depicted on the handout, the majority of the costs for the agency are incurred through salaries and benefits.

Judge McFarland noted that the biggest discrepancy appeared to be in funds to the school board, and asked what might cause such a large discrepancy. Ms. Wilburn explained that all services provided by the school nurses are billed to Medicaid. Any claims that Medicaid does not pay for are billed to the school boards. The school boards then reimburse Three Rivers for those services.

Action: Judge McFarland made a motion to accept the FY 15 budget amendment as listed. Judge Fields seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: FY 16 Budget Approval

Discussion: Dr. Heise referred the Board to the second handout showing the proposed FY 16 budget. Ms. Wilburn passed out another handout that depicted the amount of money currently in reserve. Although many health departments have a larger reserve, Dr. Heise believes that more reserve than necessary for emergencies should go back to the taxpayers. The reserve usually totals one million dollars and is useful in allowing Three Rivers to continue operations when payer sources like Medicaid, the state, or other grant funds experience delays in providing payment. In such instances, Three Rivers often spends down the reserve and replenishes it when payment is received.

Going into FY 16, Dr. Heise shared that Three Rivers was facing a \$115,000.00 deficit in the operating budget. In order to prevent layoffs, Dr. Heise proposed using money from reserves to cover that deficit. She explained that several employees would be retiring over the next few months. These pending retirements will prevent Three Rivers from incurring some budgeted expense. Judge Fields

asked why using reserves was not necessary last fiscal year. Dr. Heise replied that our budgets are a product of how health departments are funded in general, what programs are added or cut, and what level of reimbursement is received for services from year to year. If funding continues to decline, Dr. Heise stated that she would examine the potential for consolidation and/or layoff.

Action: Judge McFarland made a motion to accept the FY 16 Budget. Judge Westrick provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Heise pointed out that the FY 16 budget does not include an annual increment or raise for employees. She explained that a provision is in place to provide a one-time lump sum merit payment to employees who receive a Proficient and Commendable rating (PC or 4) or a Highly Commendable rating (HC or 5) on their annual evaluations. The range of the evaluation scale is one (1) at the lowest to five (5) at the highest. Dr. Heise proposed that the Board maintain the rates of these payments at 1.5% of the employee's annual salary for a PC rating, and 3.0% of the employee's annual salary for a HC rating. The provision for such a lump sum payment was included in the FY 16 budget.

Action: Judge Westrick made a motion to maintain the lump sum merit payment percentages at 1.5% for a PC evaluation rating and at 3.0% for an HC evaluation rating. Judge Fields seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: Strategic Plan

Discussion: Dr. Heise presented the Board with the latest version of the 2015-2019 strategic plan. She emphasized the four strategic priorities within the plan: Three Rivers is a Great Place to Work, Assessment and Health Status, Assurance and Funding, and Policy Development and Law. Funding is of particular interest. Dr. Heise desires that our legislature provide funding for identified community needs instead of providing funding that may be restricted to only one particular program or issue. To counteract this trend, Dr. Heise hopes to educate our legislature and look for alternate funding sources that allow the agency to address current needs to make the biggest impact possible. Dr. Heise introduced Three Rivers employee, Jim Thaxton, as the Coordinator for the Northern Kentucky Heroin Impact Response Task Force. She remarked that Mr. Thaxton would speak to the heroin issue, which is part of our Assessment and Health Status priority.

Topic: Senate Bill 192

Discussion: As coordinator of the Northern Kentucky Heroin Impact Response Task Force, Mr. Thaxton has been working on a four-pronged approach to the heroin issue in our communities: support, treatment, protection, and prevention. Mr. Thaxton gave a presentation to the Board about the implications of Senate Bill 192 that was passed during the last legislative session. This bill amends KRS 218A.00, adding sections (5) (a) – (c) which enables:

local health departments to operate a substance abuse treatment outreach program which allows participants to exchange hypodermic needles and syringes with the consent of the local board of health and the legislative body of the city and county in which the program would operate

To provide context for why such a syringe access exchange program (SAEP) is needed, Mr. Thaxton quoted some of the latest data and statistics regarding drug overdoses and deaths; emergency room visits and hospitalizations; arrest and incarceration rates for drug trafficking and possession of heroin; and communicable disease rates such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV. He also provided numerous personal and local examples of community encounters with uncapped, used needles in our parking lots, playgrounds, cars, and rivers.

Mr. Thaxton emphasized that one of the most obvious reasons for initiating an SAEP is to protect the public against communicable diseases. This type of program would provide sterile syringes, needles, and clean injection equipment to intravenous drug users; as well as provide them with a way to properly and safely dispose of contaminated equipment. However, Mr. Thaxton stated that a SAEP is not just about needle exchange. Interaction with heroin users provides trained, health care professionals a window of opportunity to provide pregnancy and disease testing for participants, administer vaccinations against disease, distribute naloxone kits, enroll them in healthcare coverage, provide counseling and education, and refer them to treatment options or other health services.

SAEPs have been around for over thirty-five years, with research and demonstrable proof that they are effective in reducing disease. Other research has touted cost savings to the taxpayers who normally bear the burden of expensive treatment options intravenous drug users with Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and HIV. These benefits are in addition to the amount of disease that has been reduced by SAEPs. Mr. Thaxton provided numerous research examples of communities like Scott County, Indiana that are implementing these programs with success. Louisville, Kentucky now has a mobile unit providing their syringe access program. As of June 19, 2015, Campbell and Boone counties have come together to form the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Policy. This group plans to work independently of the Northern Kentucky Heroin Impact Response Task Force, and will work on issues that local judge executives would like to see addressed. These counties raised \$120,000.00 to create this new office.

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Thaxton proposed that the Board of Health seek to develop and implement a phased SAEP in the four counties covered by Three Rivers District Health Department to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases. Phase One would include outreach, disease testing, treatment resources, counseling, and referrals to other services in addition to needle-exchange. Phase Two would include naloxone kit distribution, enrollment in health care coverage, and other treatment options. Mr. Thaxton reiterated that implementation of an SAEP would require approval by not only the Boards of Health, but also by the Fiscal Courts and the City Councils, depending on where the SAEP takes place.

Judge McFarland asked if an SAEP could require that a needle recipient receive a blood test to check for diseases before receiving the free needles. Mr. Thaxton was unsure that could be a requirement, but said any recipients would be encouraged to be tested and that we would have the means to provide the testing. He shared that the current research suggested that participants will seek the testing if the option is provided. Judge McFarland shared that without a requirement for receiving free needles, (like consenting to a blood test), the public might view an SAEP as enabling continued drug use.

Judge McFarland also asked about the funding for an SAEP program. Dr. Heise interjected that this

law was an unfunded mandate, but that she planned to implement a program using the funding from the current budget. If the implementation of an SAEP program would create savings, Judge McFarland requested that those savings be applied to help fund the program. Mr. Thaxton emphasized that there are some organizations that are so concerned with the heroin problem that they are willing to provide some funding to operate a SAEP. Judge McFarland questioned whether or not this program would be used for people only within the county or if it would be open to other counties also. Mr. Thaxton replied that it would be up to the Board on how to how implement the SAEP.

Judge Fields asked if any cost estimates had been made on the amount needed to operate an SAEP. Mr. Thaxton responded by saying it depends on how and where the program is implemented. A mobile unit is more expensive than operating out of a building since there would be continual maintenance on the vehicle. According to Mr. Thaxton, operating out of a building like a health center also helps to remove the stigma around drug use. When people come to a clinic, the purpose for their visit is not immediately apparent. Having a mobile SAEP unit would immediately indicate the purpose for the visit. In addition, many counseling and testing services are already available and being done at the health centers. Three Rivers also has staff that could help implement a SAEP program. Often, staff time and counseling are the most expensive and time-consuming. Dr. Heise reiterated that one of the biggest challenges is finding a place to refer patients to for treatment. Part of the goal of the Northern Kentucky Heroin Impact Response Task Force is to find more treatment options.

Action: Dr. Heise proposed to return to the Board in September with a policy and protocol for how an SAEP could work on our counties; and then present it to the Board for a vote. The Board agreed to this proposition. Mr. Thaxton reassured the Board they could contact him or Dr. Heise at any time with any questions, comments, or suggestions for the SAEP program. He also reminded the Board that he is available to speak to fiscal courts or city councils regarding this bill.

Topic: Adjournment


Action: Judge McFarland made a motion to adjourn. Judge Westrick provided a second. The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.


Board Chairman

09/09/15
Date


District Director

9/9/15
Date


Board Secretary

9/9/15
Date