

Halifax County Board of Health (BOH)

Minutes

Regular Meeting Special Meeting

May 26, 2020 at 6:00 pm

Commissioners Room in Historic Courthouse
10 North King Street, Halifax, NC 27839

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Mr. Justin Blackmon called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm. Meeting held through Conference Call. No quorum was present.

Members on Conference Call	Mr. Justin Blackmon, Chairperson/Engineer Mr. Louis V. "Pete" Mann III, At-Large Ms. Kimberly J. Mack, At-Large
Members Not on Conference Call	Ms. Belinda Jones-Hill, Vice-Chairperson/At-Large Ms. Carolyn Johnson, Commissioner Dr. Melissa Woodruff, Pharmacist Dr. Eric Nicholson, Dentist Ms. Eloise Hardee, Nurse
Staff Members On Conference Call	Mr. Bruce L. Robistow, Health Director Ms. Betty Reese, LPHA, Finance Officer Ms. Laura Ellis, Health Educator Ms. Patricia Tann, Medical Records Manager/HIPAA Officer
Others On Call	

II. Invocation

No invocation was done.

III. No Quorum

Approval of the Agenda or the minutes from the February 24, 2020 meeting couldn't be done as there was no quorum. These items will be carried over to the next BOH meeting on June 22, 2020.

IV. Reports

A. Department Focal SOTCH Report	Ms Laura Ellis, Health Educator, performed a detailed review of the 2019 SOTCH Report with BOH members and other attendees. She stated the hospital and the
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Health Department are required to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment every three (3) and four (4) years respectively. However, in 2018 the Health Department joined with 32 other counties in Eastern North Carolina that included hospitals and Health Departments from those counties, to complete the 2018 Needs Assessment. Vidant North and the Health Department worked together to complete the assessment for Halifax County.

In the years that a Needs Assessment is not completed a SOTCH report is then produced to share updated progress, data trends, accomplishments, etc. and that's what Ms Ellis shared through a PowerPoint Presentation. Included in the pertinent information she provided was charts and graphs to show the racial make-up and current population of Halifax County. Population for our county has dropped 7.4 % since 2010.

Also included were the 2018 Community Issues and Unmet Needs Assessment that highlighted the continuing problems with physical activity, nutrition and obesity. It was found however, that in 2018 issues relative to Maternal, Fetal and Infant Health had rose to the top of the list. Ms Ellis's presentation also showed that since 2015 there has seen a 3% increase in obesity in Eastern North Carolina. Unfortunately, this has been a consistent trend for the past three (3) years. Obesity is one of the health priority areas that was identified in the Health Assessment in 2018 with 70% of Eastern North Carolinians classified as overweight or obese. In regards to physical activity, the graph shows that in Eastern North Carolina approximately 71% of the population has engaged in physical activity at least once in a one (1) month period.

There was a slight decline in chronic disease deaths related to the heart from 2015-2017. Heart Disease is the second leading cause of death following closely behind Cancer. Typically heart disease and cancer trade off the top two (2) spots as leading causes of death each year.

Chart data also showed the prevalence of diagnosed Diabetes. The percentages of those diagnosed with Diabetes increased from 13.8 % in 2017 to 14.4% in 2018. Again this data is for Eastern North Carolina as well and was pulled from the State Center for Health Statistics.

Maternal, Fetal and Infant Health reveals the infant mortality rate did climb to 11.2% per 1000 live births in 2018 after declining to 6.7% in 2017. The teen

pregnancy rate has decreased from 42.6% in 2017 per 1000 population to 37% in 2018. Breastfeeding data is provided through the WIC program. The Breastfeeding Initiation rates in Halifax County have increased since 2016 by about 13% compared to only a 2.5% increase in North Carolina as a whole. The percentage of Mothers who are still breastfeeding at 6 months of age has increased since 2014 by 9%. However, we still remain lower than the state of North Carolina.

Progress and Interventions- Presented a snapshot of some of the activities that are going on at Halifax County Health Department.

- The You Quit, Two Quit Program is provided for Maternity patients by trained Clinical staff. The Nurses were trained in The You Quit, Two Quit program to assist with smoking cessation and providing cessation counseling during maternity visits.
- The BESST (Baby's Easy Safe Sleep Training) program continues as well. Ongoing since 2015, this program provides pregnant women and caregivers of children under the age of one (1) with educational information that encourages safe sleep practices. This past year over 500 individuals have received a free Pack 'n Play for their infants by attending the class. During this class we also provide the Ready, Set, Baby, breastfeeding educational program, which surely contributed to the increase in our Breastfeeding Initiation numbers. Our WIC director, Meggon Hammack, provides this service to those Moms who are interested in breastfeeding education as well as the caregivers who come to offer their support during that initial breastfeeding class.
- The Child Passenger Safety Checkpoint offers Certified Child Safety Seat Technicians at the Health Department. The Social Workers have been trained to perform this service. They ensure the car seats are appropriately installed by demonstrating and providing proper installation techniques for parents either during home visits or at visits to the Health Department.
- Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition related programs were discussed. One of those was the CATCH program that has been very successful. It was implemented in grades K-8 but was expanded to include Pre-K and After-School

Programs and has reached about 4,500 to 5,200 children per year. This program was funded by Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and we are still providing this program. Also coordinated with this program is the Walk and Bike school events with typically 10-12 schools participating in the Halifax County School System and Weldon City Schools. Fruit samples, bottled water, and healthy snacks are provided to our participants. Parental support is encouraged for this program. The Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative is empowering healthy lifestyles while reducing childhood obesity. This program was funded for 5 years through Kate B. Reynolds and was just awarded another 3 years through Kate B. Reynolds to continue this work. Lots of great partners are at the table for this initiative and a lot of community support.

- New Initiatives are the Diabetes Smart Program which is a local physician referred Diabetes educational program. This program provides a one (1) hour Initial visit, six (6) hours of instructional class time and a one (1) hour follow-up to assist patients with lowering their blood sugars. The Minority Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) which targets minorities at high risk for Type II Diabetes is a yearlong educational program. The Eat Smart Move More Take Control Program partners with the Youth and Tobacco Prevention Program to develop strategies to prevent the use of all tobacco products, including emerging products. CATCH My Breath is a new youth based program that was very well received. Its focus is on e-cigarettes and vape prevention and targets grades 6 through 12. It has a 4-6 weeks curriculum. Implementation of that program will begin again in the fall when schools reopen. The Health Department now has a Certified Lactation Counselor. It is our WIC Director, Ms Meggon Hammack, who has provided educational instruction in our WIC, Ready, Set, Baby, and Breastfeeding Curriculum and Outreach Community Program. There is also a new WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor who provides lactation education to all WIC clients.

There were no questions from the group after Ms. Ellis's presentation. Mr. Robistow emphasized that there is a ton of work that goes into those programs Ms. Ellis discussed and she

does a fantastic job networking to get whatever is needed to keep them sustainable.

B. CFPT Report

Mr. Robistow announced there have been no Child Fatality meetings at the local or state level due to COVID-19. He stated members are still trying to move some legislation through related to vaping and child illness and fatality from vaping, but had no formal report to share.

C. Financial Report

- a. Financial Report- End of Fiscal Year (FY17-18 and 18-19)

Revenue & Expense Report

Ms. Betty Reese, Finance Officer, gave the End of Fiscal Year Report (FY 17-18 and FY 18-19), and HHHH Revenue and Expense Summary for October 2017 and 2018. (*Accreditation Benchmark-Comparison of two (2) Financial Reports*).

End of FY 17-18-Halifax County HD

	Budgeted	Actual	%
Expenditures	\$7,370,698	\$6,152,437	83.47%
Revenues	\$7,370,699	\$6,709,607	91.03%

End of FY 18-19-Halifax County HD

	Budgeted	Actual	%
Expenditures	\$7,586,013	\$6,237,614	82.23%
Revenues	\$7,586,013	\$6,798,204	89.61%

Detailed discussion regarding Expenditures and Revenues for both fiscal years followed. Ms. Reese informed members that the State Consultant advised her not to budget in Medicaid Cost because although it is received now, it is money that could stop at any time. At Mr. Mann’s request she presented an in-depth visual picture of the expenditures, revenues, County Appropriations, Fund Balance, Medicaid payments and their effect on the Budget. Mr. Mann then asked her about the Fund Balance because he stated he understood her to say that even though the Fund Balance wasn’t used...it was used, and he wanted her to expound on that in greater detail. Ms. Reese explained that Fund Balances are used to balance the budget and that the less money budgeted for Fund Balance the better. She added that Fund Balance is budgeted for the current year, if needed, in order to balance the budget. When looking at the Financial Reports it is evident that for FY 18-19 Fund Balance money budgeted from FY 19-20 was added to that year’s budget leading to a surplus, while Fund Balance money budgeted in FY 17-18 lead to a reduction. Those examples clearly show the difference between having to add Fund Balance money and having to take away Fund Balance money even though the expenditures and revenue from both years were basically the same. Again Ms. Reese reiterated the less money budgeted for Fund Balance, the better which

helped members grasp a bit better what she was explaining. Responding to a comment by Mr. Blackmon about looking at the trail money, Ms. Reese stated she was going to work with Ms. Mary Duncan, County Finance Manager, to see if she can come up with another format for this Financial report and to see if adding some graphs and charts could make the process easier to understand for next year. Mr. Blackmon then asked how the Budget was looking for 2020 since we are five (5) months into this year. He wanted to know if our expenditures were less than our revenue currently. Ms. Reese stated due to being exceptionally busy with COVID-19 she really couldn't say for sure but offered to send that financial information to BOH members tomorrow if he'd like. Mr. Blackmon later agreed to Ms. Reese sending that information. She added that she and Mr. Robistow were trying to come up with Financial Reports that were more detailed.

Ms Mack asked about any potential shortfalls in regards to COVID-19. Stated she knew facilities performing testing were booming but didn't know about other avenues and wanted to know if there were any projections for state money. Ms. Reese stated from a clinical standpoint there was a decrease in patient numbers because of having only skeletal crews available. However, she added that as far as assistance from the state, the Health Department had received \$75,000 in COVID-19 money in which half of that was spent in April and the rest will be spent in May. Ms. Mack then inquired as to whether or not anything had been done to make staff safer. Ms. Reese stated the work stations have been adjusted, if possible, to include space between each worker. Mr. Robistow is requiring the wearing of masks by staff unless in their offices, social distancing of six (6) feet or more, and rotating use for common areas such as breakrooms. Hand sanitizer has been placed in numerous places in the entire building for patients and staff. Patients are seen by appointments only to limit the numbers in the waiting rooms. Mr. Robistow added that when staff was scheduled to come back to work full time these added measures helped to allay some fears and apprehension about returning. Ms. Mack asked if the Health Department had received any COVID funding. Ms. Reese said \$1.3 million had been received from the County.

Mr. Robistow shared that he had great meetings with Management leaders in each department and asked them to document anything they could fathom that would be needed to handle another outbreak. He noted that immunizations would be the big thing. Stated mass

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Involvement • State and Local PH • Chair NENCPPH • Radio • Cross-Training Staff to Meet Demand • Contact Tracing 	<p>social distancing guidelines.</p> <p>He has organized weekly meetings with the Vidant Group which includes Roanoke Clinic and subsidiaries, Vidant North, Rural Health Group, Northampton and Vance County Health Departments. This group has been working so well together and Mr. Robistow is very impressed with how things are progressing.</p> <p>Mr. Robistow is involved with all the State and Local Health Department meetings. These are currently held weekly with one meeting for the State one week and a meeting for the local group the next week.</p> <p>The NENCPPH is chaired by Mr. Robistow. This group normally meets quarterly, but since unable to meet as usual to compare notes he decided to schedule weekly meetings for that group as well. This has been going on for two (2) months now and members are happy with the arrangement. There are 29 member counties working closely together so he implored them to inform him if any conflicts arose from having the meetings weekly. Guidelines from CDC and DHHS are received and the members have to decide how to make those recommendations work for the communities they serve.</p> <p>Radio broadcasts are used to explain and update information to help our citizens know what's happening with COVID-19.</p> <p>There were only two primary (2) Nurses, Frances Vick and Ashley Griffies, handling all of the data and performing the entire contact tracing for COVID-19. Mr. Robistow saw the need for additional assistance for these duties. So, two (2) more Nurses were trained and assigned to perform those duties, which enabled Frances and Ashley to take some much deserved time off here and there. This process is already in effect and working extremely well.</p> <p>Contact tracing is very complicated and is becoming even more so. Initially, contact tracing was a little more basic but now they want tracing done extensively. The State developed an electronic system that we can all work out of. Presently, we are seeing fewer patients and doing it by scheduling only so we have Nurses with time available. Therefore, starting this week they will begin formal online training managed by the State</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Department Updates • Health Director’s Update • Extend No-Tethering Until 9/1/2020 	<p>recommendations” which means he has no record of this patient being positive or “Isolation” which could mean they may have or does have the disease and the Officers can make their decision within those guidelines. No HIPAA violations are made under this process as no names are disclosed by Mr. Robistow. This proved to be a tremendous help to the Officers and our Front Line Nurses as it freed them up from this very tiring and time consuming duty. Mr. Robistow was happy to devise a process that has resulted in fewer calls from Law Enforcement since it was usually chronic offenders responsible for most of those calls having to be made. This is another example of the way we are working with the entire County to keep the citizens as healthy as possible.</p> <p>The Health Department was accredited with honors in 2019 and we are very proud of that. However, because of COVID-19 we received formal notice today that our Accreditation with Honors status will be extended from 2023 until 2024.</p> <p>Triple P, our Positive Parenting Program, is being handled incredibly well by Cheyenna Francis, Health Educator, who is in charge of that program. Although it’s now difficult to go into homes, there are funds currently being used for an online program to assist with continuing to educate and instruct participants in positive parenting.</p> <p>Mr. Robistow updated the group on his medical condition. Radiation treatments have been completed and he will be taking hormone injections for two (2) years. He is experiencing some side effects but is very optimistic and has high expectations that he will beat this disease. His Oncologist strongly recommended that he work from home. He received strong support from Mr. Blackmon, and Tony Brown, County Manager, when he discussed that suggestion with them. Mr. Robistow is extremely grateful to be able to do the majority of his work from home, however, he can still be easily contacted whenever needed by email or cell phone.</p> <p>Another item Mr. Robistow wanted to run by the BOH members that is still a work in progress is extending the deadline for the No-tethering Ordinance. He referenced the 6-month period given to County citizens to educate and provide time for them to become compliant and felt things have went very smoothly. He is very impressed</p>
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by the response of people in the County that were willing to comply with the Ordinance. Overall, he feels the process has worked out very well. After a discussion with Robert Richardson, Animal Control Supervisor, Mr. Robistow felt it would be good if the deadline could be extended another couple of months until September 1, 2020. He sensed that because of the present situation caused by the pandemic which has led to high unemployment and other financial difficulties, many citizens aren't able to purchase kennels for their animals. Allowing the people a little more time to conform to the Ordinance requirements would show empathy by County Officials for their predicament. Therefore, on June 1, 2020, Mr. Robistow wanted to present to the County Commissioners asking them to extend their approved deadline to September 1, 2020 to give people additional time to comply. He asked the BOH members if there were any problems or concerns with that extension proposal.

Mr. Blackmon asked if they were still getting non-compliance calls or were the majority of the people on board with the Ordinance. Mr. Robistow answered that the majority were on board and most of the responses received have been very positive. Most owners acknowledge they have too many animals and aren't capable of caring for them properly, so they will surrender them with no ill-will toward the Animal Control Officers. He thanked the BOH members for helping get the Ordinance approved. Ms. Mack added she thought getting the deadline extended would be great. She questioned what happens to the animals that are surrendered. Mr. Robistow explained that it depended on the type of dog. Halifax County doesn't adopt out Pit Bulls and Rainbow doesn't either so usually they end up being euthanized. There are national Pit Bull places that we will allow to take them. We do attempt to adopt out other breeds of dogs. That emphasizes why the No-tethering Ordinance is so important. Dogs that are tethered for a long time become mentally insane and are very difficult to adopt out. Unfortunately, most of them are euthanized. Ms. Mack asked if the majority of the dogs handed over were Pit Bulls and Mr. Robistow answered yes. Ms. Reese added that Robert Richardson does adoptability assessment on all animals received including Pit Bulls.

It was reiterated again by Mr. Robistow that there are national places that will take Pit Bulls if they feel they can be salvaged.

An incident was relayed by Mr. Robistow about three (3) cats Animal Control Officers collected from his street. He stated cats are usually kept for 72 hours and Robert was distraught about them because he saw that they were good animals. Robert told Kristie Davis about the cats and she posted that on Facebook. One of Mr. Robistow's neighbors came by his home and said how happy he was and how great a team the County has in Animal Control. It turned out one of those cats were his and had been missing for a couple of days. Needless to say he was ecstatic about being reunited with his pet. Ms. Mack thanked Mr. Robistow for that information.

Since there was no quorum all were aware there could be no vote on extending the Ordinance. Mr. Mann added that he had no objections to the extension but felt it would take longer than September for COVID-19 to resolve and suggested an option to extend rather than give a date so the process wouldn't have to be revisited again. Ms. Mack asked if votes could be done by emails and a discussion ensued regarding this topic. Ms. Reese stated she would investigate since she didn't know for sure. Mr. Robistow mentioned that a recommendation from the BOH wasn't required since this was a County Ordinance but felt it was always good for him to do things under the guidance of the BOH. Mr. Blackmon stated there were many things to take into consideration and if people were compliant an extension wouldn't harm anything. Mr. Robistow said he would continue to monitor the situation and give ample time for discussion of any forthcoming issues.

After referring to the fact that many feel there will be a second wave of COVID-19, Ms. Mack questioned whether it would be better to request an extended period immediately rather than going back asking for another extension later. Mr. Robistow replied that as far as the second wave the experts are unsure if this virus is seasonal or not as there are many variables which make that difficult to assess. Most of the focus now regarding COVID is on a vaccine. He felt the increase in positives recently were due to the ease on restrictions. It seems

	<p>that many people are following the recommended safety precautions although some aren't taking any precautions at all. He added, however, that if too much time was added to the extension of the Ordinance it may lead to complacency and affect its effectiveness. But, due to constant changes with the Coronavirus this item can be left on the agenda for further discussion.</p>

V. New Business

A. Bad Debt Write Off (*benchmark 33.7*)—Mr. Robistow explained that outstanding patient accounts are considered uncollectable after 2 years of no activity. These amounts can be written off per Policy requirements (Fees, Eligibility, and Billing) with permission from the Board of Health and Health Director. The Debt Write-off amount for 2020 is \$984.72 which is \$2,054.06 less than last year. This decrease in the Write Off can be primarily attributed to the hard work of the Front Desk and Billing Staff. They make sure patients seen have Medicaid or other payer information entered into the system. There is constant contact with DSS workers to ensure patients' Medicaid information is entered into the State system so visits and incentives can be billed in a timely manner, specifically for our Maternity patients. The Billing Staff and Nurses work closely with our Maternity patients with language barriers to ensure visits are productive and Presumptive Eligibility is received to cover those visits. All of this impressive work has contributed to this small write-off amount.

There was no motion for approval of the Bad Debt Write-Off due to No Quorum. This will be added to the June 22, 2020 meeting agenda.

B. Health Director Evaluation

Mr. Blackmon informed the group that he hadn't received evaluations for Mr. Robistow from Ms. Johnson, Dr. Moore, or Dr. Woodruff. He indicated no compilation had been done to get the scores of those he had received. Noted there was No Quorum, but added if no opposition he wanted to meet with Mr. Robistow personally and share the information he had and transfer that to Kristie Davis so it could be completed. Ms. Mack objected stating she would rather it be done as a group. She felt the entire Board should be present when it came to doing evaluations. Mr. Blackmon assured the group that nothing would be held back and each evaluation received would be discussed and emailed to Kristie Davis in Personnel since Ms. Reese had stated earlier they could assist him with everything except the scoring. He stated he had already looked through them and nothing was out of place. He added that Mr. Robistow needed to social distance and due to Executive Orders there could be no meeting of more than ten (10) people anyway so no BOH meeting could be held. Mr. Mann said he totally agreed with Mr. Blackmon's assessment. Mr. Robistow interjected and reminded members that the timeline for his evaluation has already been exceeded and was actually due in February or March. Since it was already late due to COVID-19 restrictions he asked if it could please be handled quickly although he wasn't trying to steer the decision in any way. Ms. Reese added that the Human Resources Manager specified that if the previous year's evaluation isn't available, the current year's evaluation will not be payable until the prior

evaluation is received and processed. After consideration of the viewpoints and reasons given by the other attendees Ms. Mack was agreeable to Mr. Blackmon handling Mr. Robistow's evaluation as he previously stated. She did however stress her desire for copies of the final results to be sent to every BOH member. With everyone present now in agreement, Mr. Blackmon told Mr. Robistow he would contact him to set up a time to review the evaluation.

VI. Comments

A. Board of Health

There were no BOH comments.

B. Public (*Accreditation benchmark 41.1*)

There were no public comments.

C. County Management-None

There were no County Management comments.

VII. Closed Session

Because there was no quorum no Closed Session was held. Mr. Robistow informed the BOH members present that he would send emails to all BOH members regarding news he wanted to share with them personally.

VIII. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2020 at 6:00 pm in the Commissioners Room, Historic Courthouse, 10 North King Street, Halifax, NC 27839. Mr. Robistow stated the next meeting will probably be held by Conference Call as well.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Tann
Recording Secretary

Approved:

Mr. Bruce L. Robistow, FACHE, MPH
Health Director

Date