

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Health & Human Services Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes, once approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Health & Human Services Committee Minutes
August 6, 2018**

The Health & Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, August 6, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Little called the meeting to order. Those Members present were Mrs. Emmer, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Reid and Chairman Little. Ms. Askins and Mr. Whelan were absent. A quorum was established with five Members present.

Others present included Gary Hanson, County Administrator and Lisa Gonzalez, Public Health Administrator.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Reid and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2018 Health & Human Services Committee Meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Mrs. Emmer, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT & HOT TOPIC UPDATE

Chairman Little introduced Lisa Gonzalez, Public Health Administrator. Ms. Gonzalez thanked the committee for the opportunity to present the DeKalb County Health Department's 2017 Annual Report. Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that additional data is also available at the Health Department and that the highlights are represented in the Annual Report. Hard-copies of the report were distributed to meeting attendees.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that one of the major projects for 2017 was the evaluation of public education efforts. She mentioned that it is typical for the general public to be unaware of the various services available at the Health Department and that she has increased public education efforts, including the development of a marketing committee that has also expanded the Health Department's use of social media. Ms. Gonzalez added that the marketing committee also assists in maintaining the website and looks for other educational opportunities available within the Health Department.

She mentioned that the Health Department often receives questions regarding stray dogs and the Animal Control Program, so this topic was highlighted in the Annual Report. Ms. Gonzalez explained that the county's Information Management Office has assisted in improving the animal control database and that the Health Department maintains information on animal bite investigations and corrective actions. She mentioned that in 2017, the Health Department registered over 6,300 dogs for one-year tags and another 3,600 dogs for three-year tags.

Chairman Little asked Ms. Gonzalez what action is taken when a stray dog is picked up. Ms. Gonzalez explained that the animal's medical condition and vaccination history is verified, the animal is scanned for a microchip and an investigation is conducted in an attempt to locate the owner. She stated that if the owner is not available, the dog is transported to Malta Veterinary Hospital and that generally after seven days, the adoptable dogs are placed in shelters or rescue organizations.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that the Health Department responds to other animal concerns as well. She mentioned that there was one case of rabies recorded this year for a bat and reminded the committee that the public should contact the Health Department if a bat is sighted, as the animal should be tested for rabies.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed the Food Scrap Pilot Program that was coordinated by the county's Solid Waste Specialist. She outlined that residents were asked to assist in reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill by adding food waste to yard waste bags. Ms. Gonzalez reported that over 500 pounds of food waste were diverted from the land fill as a result of this program.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that a significant accomplishment for 2017 occurred in August, when the DeKalb County Drug Overdose Prevention Program was re-implemented. She reviewed that the DeKalb County Health Department will serve as the facilitator to provide oversight to the program and has secured grant funding to re-supply opioid crisis first-responders with Narcan. Ms. Gonzalez stated that a tracking form is now used more consistently to ensure community data is captured as the Narcan supply is replenished. She mentioned that the state of Illinois has released an "opioid dashboard" that provides view to real-time data concerning the state's opioid crisis.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that the Department continues its collaboration with On-Site Dental as part of the Community Health and Prevention initiative to provide dental care to those with limited resources. She mentioned that the program has been expanded to serve more residents and that care continues to be available through On-Site Dental's mobile unit.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program is one in which the public has a great deal of familiarity. She said that the program continues to provide food packages and coupons that in turn, contribute to the local economy in a significant way.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that the Healthcare Enrollment Assistance Program provides enrollment assistance for Medicaid and private insurance and that anyone at any income level can use this program, e.g. individuals who have lost their job or can no longer work, etc. She also mentioned that vision and hearing screenings continue in the schools and that over 3,000 vision screenings and 5,000 hearing screenings have been completed, with children being referred for additional care, as needed.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that the Annual Healthy Start to School Event was held in which children could obtain school and sports physicals and receive immunizations and dental services. She mentioned that the Solid Waste Program is also part of this event and recycles gently used shoes to provide to families in need. Ms. Gonzalez stated that the Northern Illinois Food Bank Mobile Pantry was also present during the event. She encouraged committee members to attend this annual event, as it continues to grow each year.

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Ms. Gonzalez stated that the immunization program is another important element of the public health programming and that there continues to be quite a bit of activity in this area. She mentioned that the county nurses have been involved with this program for quite some time and that the program continues to be an important part of what they do.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that in the area of communicable disease prevention, there were 687 cases involving reportable diseases in 2017 which required 866 case investigations. She mentioned that the department has recently started to provide drug testing services in partnership with Kishwaukee College and other organizations in the community. Ms. Gonzalez also reviewed that there were almost 2,000 visits as part of the Family Planning Program that provided service to residents, including STI and HIV testing. Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that the Health Promotion Program involves grant coordination and that the Emergency Preparedness Grant and the Illinois Tobacco-Free Community Grant provided funds for education and to purchase advertising in support of these health promotion programs. Ms. Gonzalez discussed that last fall, four separate needs assessments were initiated and completed at the end of February and that the assessments were completed as part of a partnership with the local hospital system that involved more subjects than ever before.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that the results of the financial audit reveal that grants make up approximately 40% of the revenue, with fees consisting of 38-40% and taxes the remaining 20%. She mentioned that grant funding continues to decrease. Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that personnel costs in 2017 represented 80% of the budgeted expenses, which is pretty typical for an agency of this size. Chairman Little asked if there will be any increase in fees. Ms. Gonzalez responded that two items will see an increase and that one of the increases will occur with the animal control fees, as this program needs to remain self-sustaining and that a funding shortage in this area was identified. She stated that the other fee that will be increased is on the food service side.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that a staff recognition program was started in 2017 and that the program acknowledges the tremendous dedication and experience of the staff. Ms. Gonzalez encouraged committee members to follow the department on social media, where staff accomplishments are highlighted.

Chairman Little inquired about the latest information available regarding the events at the Barn on Baseline. Ms. Gonzalez reviewed that the Health Department has an enforcement function under the animal control program and that when the department receives a complaint, they first determine if the department is able to respond based on their legal authority. Ms. Gonzalez stated that if the department does not have the legal authority to respond, they will refer the case. She reviewed that the Department of Agriculture is the enforcing agency for animal shelters and that the Department of Agriculture has a current open investigation with the Barn on Baseline as a result of the recent complaint involving a sick animal that was adopted from the Barn. Ms. Gonzalez explained that the County Animal Control program partners with Barn on Baseline, as the Barn takes in stray dogs. Ms. Gonzalez provided an overview of the steps taken when a stray dog is reported and mentioned that Dr. Augustine of Malta Veterinary Hospital is the county Animal Control Administrator and that the hospital provides short term boarding and treatment. Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that the Barn on Baseline will take dogs that may not be easy to adopt. She added that spay and neutering fees are paid in part through the Health Department and that funds are provided to both the Barn and to Tails which is the only revenue that the Barn receives from Public Health. Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that the Health Department has no authority

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over shelters or boarding and that oversight of shelters and boarding is through the Department of Agriculture.

Chairman Little asked Ms. Gonzalez what the Health Department's position is on the wind farm concern, as outlined in the Brown County, WI literature that was previously distributed to committee members. Chairman Little noted that the health department in Brown County did take a position on the matter. Ms. Gonzalez responded that she performed her own research and contacted her state counterparts in an attempt to obtain information. She stated that there is no information available within state of Illinois in the way of government-provided information so she went outside the state for resources. Ms. Gonzales stated that she spoke to the new Brown County Health Director, Anna Destree and that Ms. Destree has been on the job since October 2016. Ms. Gonzalez said that Ms. Destree mentioned that there has been quite a bit of controversy since their board declared the wind farm to be harmful, as the board didn't have the legal basis to take a position on the matter but did so anyway. Ms. Gonzalez said that Ms. Destree stated that the Brown County Health Board President that was in place at the time of the declaration was also a local physician that has strong negative opinions about wind farms. Ms. Gonzalez explained that in December 2015, the Brown County Health Director at that time announced that after a thorough review, they were unable to link wind farms to health programs. Ms. Gonzalez said that within a couple of months, the director had resigned due to public pressure. Ms. Gonzalez said that Ms. Destree states that the public opposition to wind farms has since diminished and that although Brown County maintains a complaint line, they receive very little calls but they continue to monitor and study issue. Ms. Gonzalez explained that there is not current evidence to prove one position over another and that Brown County is reviewing the way their code defines a health hazard. Ms. Gonzalez states that the National Institute of Health is currently neutral on the matter and has called for more research in this area.

Lisa Burgeron, a member of the public, requested to speak regarding the ten months of research she conducted in connection with wind farms. She explained that four acousticians were used in evaluating the effects of the wind farm in Wisconsin and that all four acousticians concluded that there was sufficient negative impact that resulted in the residents abandoning their homes. Ms. Burgeron added that there are leaseholder agreements in place that basically result in the homeowners signing away their freedom of speech. She said that there were 22 homes impacted that generated complaints nine years ago and that the homeowners have since given up. Ms. Burgeron states that infrasound factors can be experienced 4 to 6 miles from the wind turbines and that the height and the strength of the turbines are factors. She said that the units emit a pulsating tone that will wake people at night and that she has heard from DeKalb County residents that have less powerful units in their vicinity that they have experienced sleep disruption. Ms. Burgeron said that of the 100 turbines that were planned to be constructed in Brown County, the project was scrapped after only 8 were installed. She said that the turbines that have been proposed for installation in Dekalb County are much larger so the impact will be that much greater. Ms. Burgeron explained that the lobbying group for the wind farms is very powerful and that communities need to be aware of the potential negative results as wind farms get closer to human habitation. Ms. Burgeron added that she would be happy to share additional research information with the committee.

Mr. Porterfield expressed frustration that there isn't enough scientific evidence to assist in evaluating how significant the problem is and that eventually, the DeKalb County Board will have to decide how to move forward without the benefit of adequate information.

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Chairman Little asked Ms. Gonzalez how many medical conditions would have to be reported before the situation would become actionable by the Health Department. Ms. Gonzalez stated that it would depend on the symptoms reported. She went on to explain that if, for example, residents in the same general location were complaining of headaches, that, in itself, is not a reportable disease and the Health Department would likely go to the state for guidance and explore the situation with environmental counterparts.

Connie Peterson, a member of the public requested to speak and said that individuals living in the area of wind farms have reported cardiac and inner ear issues, as well as sleep deprivation, which is a pathway to disease. She referenced a conversation she had with a local resident who stated that he has not been able to sleep with his windows open. Ms. Peterson added that there is evidence out there showing that infrasound is detrimental and that this information should be explored before the county gets to a point in which the wind farm is operational, when it will be difficult to take any action.

Mr. Reid commented that there are people who are responsible and qualified to evaluate the impact of wind farms at the state and national level and that if these individuals were doing their job, the question of whether or not turbines are a health concern shouldn't be that tough of a question. He added that the real experts aren't available to provide advice and that the only individuals providing advice have a vested interest in the outcome.

Ms. Gonzalez thanked the committee for the opportunity to take part in the discussion and mentioned that the one thing that stuck with her after speaking with individuals at Brown County was that they regretted never completing a health impact assessment in advance. Ms. Gonzalez emphasized that in order to incorporate health into all policies, adequate research and discussion must take place before policies and ordinances are developed. She added that she will add wind farms as an agenda item for the next Board of Health meeting scheduled in September.

OLD BUSINESS

No items

NEW BUSINESS

No items

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Reid moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Porterfield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Maureen Little, Chairman

Chris Klein, Recording Secretary

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