

**MACON COUNTY BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELFARE
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Macon County Office Building
141 S. Main Street, County Board Room #514
Decatur, IL 62523**

August 26, 2021 5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Linda Little, Chair
Jason Comer
Jim Gresham
Helena Buckner (@5:33 p.m.)
Jeff Entler

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Greenfield
Kristen Larner

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Brandi Binkley, Health Department
Doug Harlan, U of I Extension
Tracy Sumpter, Env Mgmt
Jennifer Gunter, P&Z
Lt. Scheibly, Animal Control
Josh Tanner, County Clerk
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

The meeting was called to order by Chair Little at the Macon County Office Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting, 7/22/2021 made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Entler, and the motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Motion to approve the claims report was made by Mr. Gresham , seconded by Mr. Entler, and the motion carried 4-0.

ZONING – None

SUBDIVISIONS –

Mandernach Addition –

Ms. Gunter explained that this is a one lot minor subdivision located in South Wheatland Township. The owners are Brandon & Laura Mandernach. The property is located at 3311 Sandcreek Road and is zoned R1 Single Family residential. Lot 1 is one acre and lot 2 is 7.85 acres for a total of 9.38 acres. The City of Decatur has approved the subdivision. Staff has reviewed all of the documents and recommends approval of the subdivision.

Chair Little made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0. Chair Little verified that this committee is as far as this goes and does not go to the full board for their approval.

REPORTS

Animal Control

Lt. Scheibly distributed statistical reports for July for this current year and last year for comparison purposes. The numbers are very comparable from year to year.

There is a bit of an issue going on right now at the shelter with a disease called Parvo. It is a highly infectious disease that runs through dogs if they are not vaccinated for it. There have been at least 5 cases of Parvo come into the shelter this week that were owner surrender animals that were owned by somebody that were displaying signs and symptoms of Parvo. Being proactive at the shelter, dog adoptions and visitations with the dogs have been shut down for two weeks in an effort to curb the Parvo outbreak from spreading any further. The fear is that if a dog is adopted out right now that is vaccinated, it takes at least 10 days after vaccination for that to take full effect. They do not want somebody to adopt a dog, take it home & if their other dogs are not current on all their vaccines, it could affect that family pet as well. In light of that, the hard decision to put a stop on the dog adoptions for 2 weeks was made. The shelter is still open to the public. Cat & kitten adoptions continue because it only affects the dogs. This is not just a shelter issue, it is a community issue. Northgate Pet Clinic had 15 cases last week. It is something that just shows up and runs its course. Chair Little asked if it might have something to do with COVID and people not taking their dogs in to get the annual shots and boosters. Lt. Scheibly said it could potentially be that. Several low cost shot clinics are done throughout the community at places like Rural King and PetSmart at least one or two Saturdays a month. Whether or not the people actually took advantage of those throughout COVID is unknown.

Veteran's Assistance – No report

Planning & Zoning – Ms. Gunter had no report

Health Department –

Ms. Binkley reported that they have a new Dental Director as of next week. The one that has been with them for 10 years and has been excellent is semi-retiring. The Health Department was very fortunate because it is very difficult for Health Departments to get dentists and this is someone who has been working contractually in the clinic for quite some time.

The digital Environmental Health system they have been working on is inching a little closer. More updates will be coming in the future.

The department is working with the Building Commission on some security updates. Within the last month, the department has had to go on lockdown twice because of gunshots and heavy police presence in the immediate area. Staff were in the parking lot and heard the gunshots and had to get inside. The lockdown procedure was followed, but it was very concerning and scary to staff. They are looking into additional things that might be able to be put into place to keep staff and patients as safe as possible.

The STI clinic is still not up and running. They are looking into ways to partner with a FQHC to get a provider in because they do not have a provider and have not for a very long time. Ways to get that going again with the nursing staff they have are being looked into.

Contact tracing has gotten incredibly busy again. Staff are working a lot of hours and are very overwhelmed. The numbers right now, pretty much across the state, are worse than what they were last year when we were having some of these same conversations. There is a lot going on with that and they are working very closely with other Health Care Providers and other counties in the state in the Health Care System to do everything that can be done.

Today there was an announcement about the Mask Mandate. The CDC and IDPH recommendation, for a while, has been that anybody, regardless of vaccination status should wear a mask indoors. Just because the numbers were spiking and because of the variants, specifically the Delta Variant which is significantly more transmissible. Now there is a mask mandate starting Monday. It is also mandated for schools along with mandates for school staff and health care facility staff to be vaccinated and if they are not, there will be mandatory testing. The Health Department is working through all of that and trying to answer questions. She explained that they had found out about it the same time as everybody else when the Governor made the announcement. Non-compliance throughout the community is being dealt with including with schools. Ms. Binkley said she has voiced her concerns a few times about how quickly things might spread in schools based on what has been seen at camps throughout this summer, the number of outbreaks and the number of people that have been exposed and ended up infected. She said they are trying to work with the schools. Some of them are outright refusing to complete some of the basic things that they should be doing. The Health Department cannot control that but they can try to encourage them to work with the Health Department and support them as much as possible.

Low vaccination rates continue. We were called out during the press conference as being a region with very low vaccination rates. The Health Department and various other Health Care partners are continuing to try very hard to make those vaccinations extremely accessible. Now, in addition to everything else, booster shots are coming and they are preparing to be ready to offer them after that September 20 date.

The case rate per 100,000 as of today, was 416. Ms. Binkley said she believes that that is the highest we have been the entire time. When that was previously discussed, it was in the 200,000s.

One other thing you might hear is that the Health Department is giving inconsistent guidance. She explained that the recommendations or orders for quarantine are different right now, based on if someone is vaccinated versus unvaccinated. When it comes to the schools, there is different guidance provided based on what type of exposure and where that occurs. So, if you hear people are getting different directives on that, that is probably true because there are different rules across the board depending on what the situation is and ultimately, the local Health Department has the final say in what type of quarantine will be ordered for each particular person. Ms. Binkley explained that they follow all of that guidance and have the entire time. It comes from IDPH & the CDC.

Mr. Entler asked if the Health Department gets a special notification from the state when they make changes like they did today with the masks. Ms. Binkley said it just depends. Today, they had gotten the notification that there was going to be a press conference. Media was putting out rumors as to what they were hearing was going to be announced. She said they had heard that, but did not get any official notification or materials until after the press conference. Sometimes that has happened, but most of the time throughout the pandemic, the Health Department receives the information at the same time as everyone else during a press conference. The Executive Order was sent, but anyone can get it off of the website. When the Restore Illinois Plan with all of the phases came out, the Health Department got the information at the same time as everyone else, but they posted it as they announced it during the press conference. So, she said they had gotten the materials, but learned about it at the same time as the general public did.

Environmental Management - Ms. Sumpter had no report

Regional Office of Education – No report

Mental Health – No Report

Historical Museum – No Report

U of I Extension –

Mr. Harlan distributed copies of their 2020 annual report and explained that they had had a lot of virtual things during COVID. Face to face programs are coming back, but will probably change again. Some new guidance came from the University today about vaccinations. They are going to require vaccinations now. Staff will be required to get the vaccination now.

The 2021-22 4-H program year which starts September 1st. The enrollment numbers were down last year, but the hope is that they will go back up this year. The fairs went very well this summer. They were in person so the kids got to show their animals. They are getting ready for the Farm Progress Show where they will be having one of the four food booths featuring pork chops.

Yesterday, through a partnership with the Moultrie / Douglas unit whose SNAP Ed staff work with the Amish Produce Auction and collect all the produce that doesn't sell at the auction that day. They had 2,000 pounds of very ripe tomatoes that hadn't sold. They called and asked about Food Pantries that might want them, so they brought the 2000 pounds and they were distributed to the local food pantries in Decatur. They were very happy to get them.

CITIZEN'S REMARKS –

NEW BUSINESS –

Chair Little explained that this issue is not on the agenda and they will not be voting on it, but Mr. Tanner would be giving information.

Mr. Tanner explained that Chairman Greenfield had asked him to come and lay out the resolution that would go to Finance. It is a vaccine incentive program to get people to take the vaccine. There are funds in the ARP to support the public health response and also to assist businesses. This is a two fold program. The County would purchase \$100,000 worth of Metro Money with ARP funds. \$100 in Metro Money would be distributed to anyone receiving the vaccine. Metro Money can be spent at local, regional, Decatur businesses. The Chairman feels there will be some difficulties for the small businesses coming up with potentially new mandates coming down. So, it is a two fold approach; 1) to increase our vaccination rate & 2) to inject money into our local economy. This seems to be one of the fastest ways to do it. Other communities that have an administration staff that is already in place and ready to go may have better ways of doing this, but with the current staff that we have and the timing, this seems to be the fastest way to inject money into the local economy as well as incentivize people to get vaccinated. It would also cover boosters, although, the spacing between receipt of the initial shot and the booster seems to be quite wide and it is unsure as to how many booster shots would be administered by the end of the year.

Mr. Gresham asked if this would be made available at all of the vaccination sites. Mr. Tanner said no, not all sites. The initial 3 are the Health Department, Crossing Health Care and Dales Southlake Pharmacy. It could expand to more, but there are already relationships established with these and that seems to be the easiest, fastest way to facilitate this. They are the local providers. Nothing against CVS or Walgreens, but they have corporate headquarters and things don't move as quickly.

Mr. Comer asked if there is an expiration on the Metro Money. Mr. Tanner said no.

Mr. Entler asked if it would be a \$1 to \$1 deal. Mr. Tanner explained that the way it works is that the County would purchase \$100,000 in Metro Money from the Chamber of Commerce and it would be distributed to people getting vaccinated. The businesses that get the Metro Money take it to the Chamber of Commerce to get it converted to cash, they pay 5% to the Chamber and that reimburses the Chamber for the printing and their administrative costs. The County has no expense in it. The person who receives it pays nothing. It is the business and the Chamber that have the arrangement.

Mr. Comer asked if it might be better to have an expiration date on it. Mr. Tanner explained that they are trying to work with something that already exists rather than reinventing something. Metro Money's program is that it does not expire. We are piggybacking on the program so we have to abide by their rules that are already established. There are definitely better programs but nothing that we have the staff or capability to do quickly. There is \$1 million allotted to supporting public health response. \$300,000 would be the maximum amount being set aside via this resolution and it would be distributed by the end of the year. The initial purchase is \$100,000 and if that is spent prior to the end of the year, another \$100,000 would be purchased and if that is spent before the end of the year, another \$100,000 would be bought. It is not known whether this will actually incentivize people.

Ms. Binkley asked if SIU could possibly be added to the 3 original but Mr. Tanner said he could see no reason why they couldn't be added. No one was excluded for any particular

reason. The goal is to get people vaccinated while injecting some money into these small businesses. It would be really great if this takes off and the City follows the County's lead with their ARP funds.

Mr. Tanner explained that there are going to be repercussions to more mandates and Macon County really does not want to be called out every time someone at the state speaks about low vaccination rates. We would like to get off that list. It is unfortunate that you have to incentivize people to get them to take a vaccine, but it is also a way to get money to small businesses as well.

Mr. Entler asked about plans for an advertising campaign. Mr. Tanner said there is not a plan designated for that. Each agency that does the vaccine has some advertising money. The chamber might be able to do some advertising. Ms. Little added that morning talk shows and social media will help spread the word.

OFFICEHOLDER'S REMARKS - None

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING Next regular meeting – 9/23/2021

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Executive Secretary, Macon County Board Office