

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

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

May 27, 2021 5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Linda Little, Chair
Kevin Greenfield
Jim Gresham
Kristen Larner
Jeff Entler

MEMBERS ABSENT

Helena Buckner
Jason Comer

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Karl Coleman, County Board member
Greg Collins, VA
Tracy Sumpter, Env Mgmt
Jennifer Gunter, P&Z
Jessie Smalley, HR
Brandi Binkley, Health Department
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, 4/22/2021 made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Entler, and the motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Motion to approve the claims report was made by Chairman Greenfield, seconded by Mr. Gresham, and the motion carried 5-0.

ZONING –

Macon County Board Resolution Regarding Case R-01-05-21, A Petition for Rezoning Submitted by United Contractors Midwest, Inc. Requesting Approximately 10 Acres from (A-1) Agricultural Zoning to (M-2) Heavy Industrial District Zoning

Ms. Gunter explained that the property is commonly located adjacent to 3589 N. Route 121 in Hickory Point Township. On May 5, a Public Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing was held and based on the finding of facts and staff recommended approval, the ZBA voted 5-0 for approval of the rezoning.

Motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve made by Chairman Greenfield, seconded by Ms. Larner.

Mr. Gresham asked about the location. Ms. Gunter pointed it out on the map, showing the existing concrete plant and explaining that they are wanting the 10 acres on the side rezoned. The motion carried 5-0.

Macon County Board Resolution Regarding Case S-02-05-21, A Petition Requesting a Special Use Permit for a Used Car Lot in (A-1) Agricultural Zoning Submitted by Ethan Minich & William Thurston

Ms. Gunter explained that the property is commonly located at 7192 Myers Road in Mt. Zion Township. On May 5, a Public Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing was held and based on the finding of facts and staff recommended approval, the ZBA voted 3-2 for approval of the special use permit with the stipulations as found in the resolution.

Motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Chairman Greenfield.

Chair Little asked about a reason for the two that voted against it at the ZBA hearing. Ms. Gunter said they did not give any reasons in the minutes. Ms. Little asked if there was any discussion in the hearing. Ms. Gunter said no.

The motion carried 5-0.

SUBDIVISIONS –

Summerfield Estates- 11 lot major subdivision

Ms. Gunter that this is located in Long Creek Township. The owner is Steve Lewis. The property is located off of Long Creek Road and is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential. It covers 11 acres for a total of 33.93 acres. The Village of Long Creek has approved the subdivision. Staff has reviewed all the documents and recommends approval. This will go to the County Board for a vote because it is a major subdivision.

Motion to approve forwarding on to the full board with recommendation to approve made by Chairman Greenfield, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 5-0.

Chair Little asked about a resolution to be presented to the County Board. Ms. Gunter will prepare one for the County Board meeting.

REPORTS

Animal Control

Lt Scheibly was unable to attend the meeting, but had emailed members the monthly statistical reports.

Veteran's Assistance –

Mr. Collins invited everyone to the Memorial Day presentation at Fairview Park on Monday, May 31 for a short service. He said after that everyone goes to Graceland for their service and VFW is having some food trucks come in this year as well. He asked that anyone that attends to let him know so he can introduce them.

Planning & Zoning –

Ms. Gunter had no report

Health Department –

Ms. Binkley reported that they have been having several audits and site visits and they are going well with some really great responses for the various divisions.

The number of appointments they are able to provide in dental to adults has been expanded. Adults are only served on one day. The other four days in the dental clinic are for children. Changing that day back to walk ins has enabled them to see more people. That has been a really great change.

Notification that another \$800,000 for Contact Tracing will be received has come in. That grant was going to be extended and more money could be requested if desired. She said they did request and just found out that they will be getting more. All of the same objectives, deliverables, and expectations will remain in place. This just means more funding to support the staff. Originally, that grant was to run through May 31.

Contact Tracing is still trucking along. There are several different variants in Macon County of which several are more transmissible. People are being encouraged to follow quarantine and isolation, masking, & social distancing when appropriate as well as to get vaccinated that can. Children age 12 and up are being serviced through the Pfizer vaccinations now. She said they had been able to do that very quickly after the change came through.

A lot of outreach clinics have been held with them going out all over the community bringing the vaccine to people. She said they have been really proud of the team making it as accessible and equitable as possible.

The Board has been continuing talks about things they are wanting to do such as updating the phone system, electronic medical records, digital environmental health and salary assessments. She said they are now moving on several of those. They have an invitation to bid on a phone system on the website. They worked with the State's Attorney's Office in getting that process going. She said they are very excited to move more and more focus on to other things than just COVID where those programs and services are still being provided. These are some changes that have needed to be addressed and Ms. Binkley said she is excited that they are now getting back to where they can do that.

Ms. Larner asked about contact tracing and when Phase 5 is reached, if it will go away or how that will work and will the money still be there or have to go back. Ms. Binkley explained that it is not expected to go away with Phase 5 and they have not given any information on a Contact Tracing finale. Even in Phase 5, people that are not vaccinated are still encouraged to mask, social distance, etc... The capacity limits will essentially be gone in Phase 5, but they still encourage people to not be in big crowds if they are not vaccinated just to try to limit spread. She said that as far as they know, contact tracing does not have an end date except for that December 31 date. She said that they had just found out this week that they were going to get more money, so she does not expect that they will do away with it, but the State sometimes changes course quickly and without notice. She said they could find out days or weeks before they just decide to drop it.

Ms. Larner asked about Ms. Binkley's statement that quarantine and isolation were recommended and asked if she meant that it is not required any longer. Ms. Binkley said she had misspoken, it would still be considered a Public Health Order. Quarantine and isolations are not guidance like some of the other recommendations have been. They are Public Health Orders.

Chairman Greenfield asked about the \$800,000 grant and if it could be used for things like upgrading the phone system and the electronic medical records. Ms. Binkley explained that that particular grant is the same one that was received and was over \$2 million. There was approval in that grant to do things like the phone system and electronic medical records. Those are things that had been talked about paying for out of the Health Fund originally since they had been able to save a reserve. It was a big win to be able to attain some funding that would pay for that so the reserve could still be maintained just in case it is needed for some other type of emergency.

Mr. Greenfield asked about the cost of the phone upgrade and all that and if all grant money would be used to do that and if that is the plan. Ms. Binkley said they do not have the exact cost yet but are thinking it will not go over \$35,000 and it could even be significantly less. They had gone ahead and done the invitation to bid, just in case it went over the threshold because they did not want to take that chance and wanted to make sure they were doing it the right way. She said they expect to be able to cover it with grant funding, but there is a possibility that part of it would have to come out of the Health Fund. She said she could not say 100% right now on the phone system. She said she knows, for example, the electronic medical records which is something that has been recommended by the external auditors for several years in a row and has become a priority for Ms. Binkley since she started. Those can cost upwards of \$150,000. She said she couldn't remember exactly the amount they had gotten approved for in that grant but thought it was near the full amount of \$130,000 to \$150,000. So, those have to be moved on pretty quickly because it is a long process. They had started working on some of the homework before COVID hit, but they want to be as thorough as possible to make sure they are not spending money that is not going to be beneficial. Mr. Greenfield asked if the projects have to be done by the time the grant is done or can the projects continue on and money can be kept back to cover. Ms. Binkley explained that grant money has to be spent during the time period of the grant. The phone system would need to be in house, ready and set up so there is not risk of running past deadline. It does have to be spent before the grant ends.

Ms. Larner asked if they get to keep the \$800,000 if it is decided that Contact Tracing can be ended earlier than expected. Ms. Binkley said that as far as they know, they would get to keep it. It does not only pay for Contact Tracing, but also objectives surrounding that such as ensuring that people are social distancing, ensuring that people are masking, ensuring that people are taking the safety precautions. That is why it has been able to be used for other things, not just staffing, although the staffing has been the primary expense for that grant. She said they do not expect that situation, but she also knows that things can change very quickly and they are prepared for that if that happens. That is one of the reasons they definitely want to move on these projects and not wait until the last minute and then try to squeeze it in real quick. She said they are being very mindful and making sure they are ahead of schedule with all of that.

Chairman Greenfield asked if Ms. Binkley and her staff were still working a lot of overtime or are they pretty well dialed in as to where they're at on costs. Ms. Binkley said it depends on who is being talked about. The capacity has been significantly increased since last March, April & May before they were able to hire people in August and September. You still have many people working not only their regular amounts of hours and working over. However, there are many more people now to help carry the load. Before, you had people that were essentially covering 3 or 4 jobs for several months. The same numbers of hours are definitely not being put in that were being put in during that time period. But, there is a significant group of staff that cannot get it all done just in the regular work week. To clarify, those are not all staff that would be earning overtime. There is the flex time policy. Some staff earn flex time. That flex time has been paid out with the grant funding. But, then there are a number of staff that are paid overtime because they are considered non-exempt. Any amount of overtime, paid at time and a half, is significantly less. That is a small number because, generally, the people who have had to work over are going to be at levels higher that would make them eligible for that flex time payout.

Mr. Greenfield asked for an explanation of how non-exempt / exempt pay as flex time versus overtime works. Ms. Binkley explained that non-exempt would get, based on a 35 hour work week, flex time between hours 35 and 40. If they go 40 or over, that would be overtime. Generally, the people in the non-exempt roles are not having to work some of the same amounts of hours that people that are exempt have been working. Exempt people are eligible for flex time over 35 hours, but by law, they are not required after 40 hours to get comp time or comp time payout overtime. Ms. Lerner asked if the flex time could be used to take days off or even bank it to cash it in later. Ms. Binkley explained that flex time was used even before COVID. That is something that usually, they just get time for. It is not something that is usually paid out unless someone leaves. When someone gives a two week resignation notice, they are always encouraged to get their time off the books so that the amount being paid out is less. So, there is less of a financial burden on the Health Department. Normally, it is just flex time. Then, if someone works all day on Saturday at an event, they could take off Monday or Tuesday. At the beginning of COVID, when it was seen what was going to be happening with the hours, there was a temporary policy that was voted on and approved by the Board of Health that would allow for staff that were having to work in COVID response to be able to earn over the 35 hours total. The normal flex policy says you can get 35 of those flex time hours total and not over that unless there is an extenuating circumstance. The practice is that if someone gets to 30 hours on the books, we tell them to make a plan for use of the time so it does not get over the 35 and the Health Department is not carrying a large financial responsibility. In COVID, the policy was updated and approved so that they could earn over 35 if they were having to do that because of COVID. With the grant funding that they were able to obtain, it is allowed for the staff time, the overtime, to be paid out with that funding. Normally, that is not a thing for Health department grants and normally, flex time is not paid out and it is not a choice unless you leave. With those grants, people's time has been able to be paid out to get it off the books so it is not sitting there. Generally, the people that were paid out for that time are also the people who have not gotten to take days off at all. Getting that off the books not only stopped it from racking up, but also gave the Health Department the opportunity to not have it on the books in case those people left. While there was opportunity to pay it out of the grant funds, it would come out of that rather than the health fund. Mr. Entler said that to simplify that, before

the grant money, when people had flex time, it would always be taken in time off except if a person terminated and they had that coming to them. But, since you had the grant money, you took advantage and gave that as an incentive to the people that worked so hard. Ms. Binkley clarified that it was not everybody's flex time across the board. There were plenty of staff who helped with Contact Tracing that were not in nursing at all. They were trained to help with Contact Tracing until they were allowed to hire more Contact Tracers. They may have had 5 to 10 hours of flex on the books. They were still required to take it as time off. The people who were getting paid out for it were the ones who were working 6 or 7 days a week, nights, holidays, weekends – all week for months. Their time was getting to the point that it became known that they were not going to be able to take off. She said they were not able to hire people and then some people were lost in the process too and their positions had to be covered as well. It was really an opportunity to decrease that financial liability for the Health Department and get it off the books when it was known that they couldn't take the time off anyway.

Mr. Entler asked Ms. Binkley about the number of new hires since COVID asking if it was 108. Ms. Binkley said it was probably under that. Mr. Entler asked if, after COVID, what would the extra people do; would they still be on staff or will a change be made. Ms. Binkley said they would not be on staff. Everyone was told at the time of interviewing that these were temporary positions. At that time, they were told that the grant was expected to run through 5/31/2021, but it could change and end early or go longer depending on what went on with COVID. If there are positions posted that they are interested in, they can apply for those. There have been some really great people on the team and if there are open positions the hope is that some of them can stay on. But, most of them will be let go at that time.

Mr. Greenfield asked how much money was left over from the previous \$1.8 million grant. Ms. Binkley said she did not have that figure in her head, but when the State said the expectation would still be to do all this work, but they might be able to give more money, just ask if you want it. Ms. Binkley said they did some figuring on what the estimated salary would be between the 6/1 & 12/31/2021 based on past history and the number of cases and need. That could fluctuate, but based on that, the request was for \$1.3 million additional dollars. There were no promises, so they just went with what they thought they might need and they got the \$800,000. That gives an idea of how much more is needed at this point. She said she could get the figure of how much is left and get it out to the committee members.

Ms. Lerner asked if that first grant money had to be used by 5/31. Ms. Binkley explained that it had been extended. They offered a no cost extension which means you get no more money, but have more time to do the work or they offered a no cost extension with additional funding or they just offered for you to end on May 31. She said they were not doing that because if the State is still expecting all of the work to be done, there would be no way that the team could do all of that with everything else being run at the Health Department. No Cost Extension meant they could have kept working until the 12/31 without asking for anymore money, but then not even the basic contact tracing team would have been covered. She said they went for it, asked for more, and hoped for the best.

Ms. Lerner asked about the quarantine guidelines in the County and if they are consistent with what other counties are doing. Ms. Binkley explained that the CDC recommends a quarantine time of 14 days. They offer two options for shortened quarantine. The first one is 10 days without testing. The second option is 7 days with a negative test. The test has to be done on day 5 or after because of the incubation period and the way that works. The 10 days shortened quarantine does not work in certain situations. These things cause a lot of confusion. For example, sports are extracurricular for kids. They cannot do it all the way through day 14 unless they can adequately social distance and mask. If there is a sport or choir where they are really close to one another, they cannot do that all the way through day 14. But, if they meet all the criteria, after that day 10, they can get an early release to at least get back to school. It's the same with people working. If someone is working and wanting to get back to work, if they meet all the criteria, they can be released after day 10. They still need to monitor, mask and social distance through the 14 days, but that is a shortened option. The goal from the CDC with those shortened options is basically to get people back to work and school and to encourage them to be compliant with quarantine. In some settings, it is not allowed. With variant cases, it has to be the full 14. As far as being consistent with other areas, some are doing the shortened 10 day option while some have stayed strong with the full 14 only. That is just because there are a lot of complications, frustration and confusion with it. If you do adopt the earlier release in your area, you do allow a little more risk which is 1% to 10% more risk because someone that is between days 11 and 14, but asymptomatic, could go out and infect others in the community. The 7 day shortened option has not been adopted by Macon County. That is not recommended for children and part of the goal in Macon County when the numbers went down and they chose to go with the 10 days shortened released guidance, it was to get those kids back in in-person school. That is why that direction was chosen. There are some counties that have not done it and do not plan to. If Macon County numbers get really bad again, we can switch back to the full 14 as well.

Chair Little asked about Ms. Binkley's statements about quarantine and isolation being Public Health Orders and not guidelines, but the conversation has been about guidelines – so which is it? Ms. Binkley explained that it is a Public Health Order. A guideline is what to follow. Ms. Little asked what the Public Health Order from the Governor says. Ms. Binkley said it is a Public Health Order from IDPH. The CDC is still recommending the full 14 days. So, 14 days is standard, but the CDC and the IDPH also adopted the shortened options. It is not like an order that would say, here is how you quarantine for COVID -19. All of this stuff is in guidance. It is CDC and we get guidance from IDPH that we are to follow. When CDC put out the shortened guidance, then IDPH adopted it as a state to allow the options. Then the counties can decide if they want to allow the shortened periods or not.

Ms. Binkley clarified that quarantine is if you are a close contact and isolation is if you are positive. Isolation is 10 days from the onset of symptoms or if someone is asymptomatic from the testing. The reason for that is that it is based on the infectious period or when someone is infectious and for how long and if they will be a risk to the community if they go out. Quarantine is the 14 days or the shortened time period if adopted because the incubation period is 2 to 14 days. That is why if someone is a close contact, they will be directed with the 14 or the shortened 10 day if allowed. Whereas, isolated or positive people get 10 days. There have

been a lot of confusion, especially in the schools when a positive kid got to come back before the exposed children did.

Mr. Entler said that he would like to see the figures on the remaining funding. Ms. Binkley will provide them.

Mr. Entler asked if the electronic medical system is software and hardware. Ms. Binkley said they were not sure which one they are going with yet. She thought probably just software from what she has learned so far. Before COVID, when she became Administrator and heard that this is what the outside auditor was recommending, it became a top priority for her and she began talking to other Health departments to check out what their experience was. One of the hesitations in the past about implementing this is the cost and the fact that they don't always work well for health departments because they are geared more for hospitals and FQHC's. It was really important to start asking questions and to check it out. Health departments have different services in different locations as well. She said she is not an expert and will learning through the process and being as thorough as possible. This is going to be a really big project to tackle and her goal is to make sure they do it right so it is beneficial, especially considering the large price tag.

Environmental Management

Macon County Board Resolution Approving Intergovernmental Delegation Agreement Between the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Macon County

Ms. Sumpter explained that this is pretty much the same as it has been in the past with updates only to language that did not change anything. Mr. Baggett has read it and said everything looks good with it.

Motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the finance committee with recommendation to approve made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Entler and the motion carried 5-0.

Regional Office of Education –

Chair Little said she would be emailing Mr. Snyder asking him to come to the June meeting and give an update as it has been a while since he has been to a meeting. There are things going on in the schools and she said it wouldn't hurt to have an update.

Mental Health – no report

Historical Museum – no report

U of I Extension – no report

CITIZEN'S REMARKS – None

OFFICEHOLDER'S REMARKS - None

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING Next regular meeting – 6/24/2021

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office