

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

Classroom of the Henderson County Department of Public Health
1200 Spartanburg Highway Hendersonville, NC 28792

I. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Health meeting was called to order by Dr. Maggie Hayes, Chairperson, at 6:02 p.m.

Members Present	Kathleen Baluha, Registered Nurse John Bryant, General Public Member Maggie Hayes, Physician – Chairperson Jennifer Hensley, General Public Member Bill Lapsley, County Commissioner Haley Perry, Optometrist Scott Prechter, General Public Member Alison Reid, Dentist Kenesha Smith, Pharmacist – Vice Chairperson Jeffrey Young, Professional Engineer
Members Not Present	Leslie Leidecker, Veterinarian
Staff Leadership Present	Steve Smith, Health Director Camden Stewart, Administrative Officer Stacy Nash, Community Health Director Crystal O'Dell, Director of Nursing
Others Present	Karen Ensley, Human Resources Director

Quorum Present

II. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Dr. Maggie Hayes asked if there were any requested changes for the proposed agenda.

Motion: Dr. Jennifer Hensley made a motion for the agenda to be approved and it was seconded by Dr. Kenesha Smith **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

III. Approval of the January 23, 2024 Minutes

Dr. Hayes indicated the January 23, 2024 minutes needed to be approved.

Motion: Dr. John Bryant made a motion for the minutes to be approved and it was seconded by Dr. Smith. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of Search Committee Minutes

December 6, 2023; January 2, 2024; and January 4, 2024

Dr. Hayes stated that the minutes for 3 Search Committee meetings also needed to be approved. Dr. Bryant represented to the board that the minutes were an accurate representation of those meetings. **Motion:** Mr. Jeff Young made a motion for all 3 sets of minutes to be approved as presented. Ms. Kathy Baluha seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of the February 7, 2024 and February 12, 2024 Minutes

Dr. Hayes asked the board to proceed with approval of the minutes for the 2 board meetings in February. **Motion:** Dr. Scott Prechter made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as presented. Dr. Bryant seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of Closed Session Minutes

October 10, 2023; November 14, 2023; December 6, 2023; January 2, 2024; January 4, 2024; January 23, 2024; February 7, 2024 and February 12, 2024

Dr. Hayes asked Mrs. Camden Stewart to distribute the closed session minutes to be approved. Dr. Hayes requested that board members take a few minutes to review the documents. Dr. Bryant represented that the minutes associated with the Search Committee meetings were appropriate. **Motion:** Dr. Bryant made a motion for the minutes of all 8 closed sessions to be approved. Ms. Baluha seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Lapsley inquired about the confidentiality of the closed session minutes. Mr. Smith replied that he had consulted with the County Attorney as directed by the board and relayed that these particular minutes dealt exclusively with personnel matters and would remain sealed. Mrs. Stewart then collected the closed session minutes from board members.

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

IV. Public Comments

Dr. Hayes asked if there was anyone present that wished to make comments. Mrs. Renee Kumor introduced herself as a representative of the League of Women Voters of Henderson County. She shared that the local league is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization committed to empowering voters and defending democracy through several objectives including advocacy for informed and active participation in government.

V. Presentations

2023 State of the County Health Report

Ms. Stacy Nash thanked the board for their time and explained that public health was responsible for generating the State of the County Health report in years between community health assessments. She noted that the positive work of the board and others including the Partnership for Health had placed Henderson County in the favorable position of being ranked 12th in health outcomes in the State. She then introduced her newest staff member, Ms. Juliana Whitaker, to provide updates on the current community health priorities.

Ms. Whitaker reminded the board of the current priorities which include mental health, substance misuse, interpersonal violence and abuse, safe/affordable housing and physical activity and nutrition. Highlights of efforts for each category include:

Safe and Affordable Housing

- Supporting home ownership and home repair programs
- Providing housing case management including counseling and education
- Financial assistance with rent, utilities, and heating fuel

Mental Health

- Hope Rising curriculum, youth diversion program and education course
- Architects of Hope program, empowering students to become civic leaders
- Youth Mental Health First Aid course teaches adults how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and youth
- Trauma Resilient Communities organizational training
- Community Paramedic Model – in progress with Henderson County EMS, funding requested for FY 25
- Law Enforcement Pre-Crisis Intervention Training

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

Physical Activity and Nutrition

- Double SNAP dollars for healthy local foods at Farmers Market
- Healthy Food Prescriptions being utilized through Medicaid Managed Care and Healthy Opportunities pilot
- \$1,616 in fresh fruits and vegetables given out at Mills River Farmer's Market
- Nutrition & Cooking Education classes provided free through Cooperative Extension
- Community Dinners being held to build social connections, healthy eating opportunities, and information sharing
- Completion of Phase 1 of Ecusta Trail

Interpersonal Violence and Abuse

- Project underway to increase the number of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE)
- Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) training for local law enforcement officers
- prevention trainings for school aged children and/or caregivers

Substance Misuse

- Ongoing coordination for recovery support services, evidence-based addiction treatment and early intervention programs
- Implementation of Criminal Justice Diversion program using Opioid Settlement funds

Ms. Whitaker added that emerging issues included the ongoing threat of wildfires with 3 in the region accounting for over 8,000 acres. It was also noted that there were increasing concerns about youth mental health with 177 youth ages 11-17 presenting at local emergency departments, 110 of those referencing suicidal ideation.

Mr. Smith voiced his appreciation to the many community organizations that were leading or supporting these critical strategies for the selected community health priorities. Ms. Nash stipulated that the State of the County Health report would be shared broadly and would also be posted on the website.

VI. Reports

Health Director's Monthly Report

Mr. Smith referenced the recent security incident on the Human Services campus and shared that an initial debriefing had occurred with several areas of improvement identified including communication and the need for a more detailed security assessment for the department.

Mr. Smith also shared that some of the favorable budget information being shared that evening was attributable to a positive relationship with the Community Care Physician Network (CCPN) which served as a Clinically Integrated Network (CIN) partner for the

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

department in Medicaid managed care. That partnership continues to ensure achievement of positive clinical quality measurements and robust revenue generation. Mr. Smith then provided the summary for staffing capacity with 12 positions being vacant and 21 positions having less than 1 year of experience among the 113 positions in the department. Mr. Smith indicated that he would take a deeper dive into staffing capacity as part of the budget discussion.

VII. Old Business

None.

VIII. New Business

NC Department of Health & Human Services FY 2025 Consolidated Agreement

Mr. Smith reminded the board that they reviewed this agreement on an annual basis as the umbrella agreement for related federal and state funding provided through NC DHHS. Mr. Smith shared a summary of the changes from last year which were minor revisions. He also stated the agreement had been reviewed by the County Attorney with no concerns noted.

Motion: Dr. Bryant made a motion for the board of health to approve the agreement and that it should be forwarded to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners for consideration and final approval. Dr. Smith seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of the FY 25 Budget Proposal

Mr. Smith informed the board that very few changes had occurred with the core budget proposal since their review in January. He indicated that the budgets for Health and Environmental Health had been submitted in February as required subject to the board's final approval at this meeting.

The Environmental Health budget had no notable differences from the FY 24 budget and required \$14,035 less in local appropriations. Mr. Smith mentioned that the increased staffing and stability had allowed the Division to return to all typical customer service expectations, particularly with food and lodging inspections and turnaround time for well and septic system permits.

The Health budget focused on capacity issues including sustaining 5 school nurse positions with local appropriations and several reclassifications linked with enhanced revenue generation linked to Medicaid managed care. It was also noted that there were no capital requests for FY 25. With those requests included, the proposed budget required \$452,805

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

less in appropriations if no other changes were made. Mr. Smith clarified that last year's request for a position to oversee records retention and disposal had not been included and that a need to purchase a cargo van to facilitate community outreach could be handled outside of the budget process since the department had reserve funds to purchase the vehicle.

Given the favorable position of the budget proposal, Mr. Smith asked the board to consider several pressing matters related to public health workforce capacity including recruitment and retention. A particular effort had been made to analyze current staff and the salary structure with the intent of assuring additional years of experience consistently correlated with higher salary amounts within each class specification. The department through an analysis had identified some minor adjustments that should be made to maintain internal equity and standardize an objective process for new hire salary offers. For all 113 positions, needed adjustments to standardize the salary structure amounted to \$36,399.

Dr. Hensley asked for a practical example of these salary adjustment proposals. Mr. Smith said a scenario would be 4 or 5 staff members in the same classification, but the individual with the most years of experience was making less than someone with fewer years of experience. These minor offsets resulted from past policies when some staff received step increases and the manner in which experience had been weighted or considered has also changed over time. Dr. Hensley agreed with the importance of the proposed changes to ensure a fair and equitable salary structure for all staff.

Additionally, Mr. Smith stated that there were increasing concerns about public health nurse positions with chronic recruitment and retention challenges. He indicated that of the current 39 nurse positions that were filled, 29 (53%) had less than 5 years of experience, 5 had experience levels between 6 to 10 years, 1 had experience between 11-15 years and 4 had experience of 16 years or higher. Retirements, private sector competition and nurses pursuing higher education to become nurse practitioners had all contributed to steady turnover. Mr. Smith stipulated with the level of complexity for public health programs and healthcare service delivery, it was important to improve retention to elevate the average years of experience among nursing staff and that successful recruitment likely relied on being more competitive with salary offers. Mr. Smith stated his belief that a salary study was warranted and that a market rate adjustment was likely needed to improve public health nurse capacity. Dr. Bryant echoed that all healthcare institutions were facing similar challenges and that it necessitated proactive strategies. Mr. Smith also noted that the UNC School of Government salary data from 2022-2023 ranked Henderson County 29th out of 57 counties reporting data for public health nurse positions.

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

Mr. Smith inquired if the board wanted to include the salary structure adjustments and the salary study specific to public health nurses with the related action of earmarking monies for a potential market rate adjustment. He shared that the timing and favorable position with the budget proposals were important since the cost for both items could be covered without requiring more local appropriations for the FY 25 budget than FY 24. **Motion:** Dr. Hensley made a motion for the salary structure adjustment and salary study for public health nurses to be included within the FY 25 Health budget proposal. She also motioned for the FY 25 Health budget proposal as revised and the Environmental Health budget proposal to be approved by the board and forwarded to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners for their consideration. Ms. Baluha seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Closed Session – Personnel

Motion: Mr. Lapsley made a motion to enter into closed session for personnel matters pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) to "...consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee...". Dr. Hensley seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Dr. Hayes indicated the board would be returning to open session for an action item immediately after concluding the closed session. Dr. Hayes asked Mrs. Karen Ensley, Human Resources Director, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Camden Stewart to remain with the board during closed session. All other staff and public members were excused.

Motion: Dr. Hensley made a motion to exit the closed session and it was seconded by Mr. Lapsley. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Staff and the general public were invited to rejoin the meeting.

Offer of Employment for Health Director Candidate

My thanks to all board of health members for completing a comprehensive search and evaluation process for the candidates that applied to serve as the next Health Director in Henderson County. I am particularly appreciative for the additional work provided by the Search Committee members (Dr. John Bryant, Ms. Kathy Baluha and Dr. Alison Reid) and the support from Mrs. Karen Ensley, Human Resources Director.

After examining the records and background of each candidate including information obtained through interviews, discussing those findings with all board of health members, and

Henderson County Board of Health

Minutes

Regular Meeting – March 12, 2024

then consulting with the Henderson County Board of Commissioners about our choice and the terms of the offer, I'd like to make the following motion.

Motion: Dr. Hayes made a motion for the Henderson County Board of Health to request that Henderson County Human Resources proceed with a predetermined offer of employment to our preferred candidate to serve as the next Health Director for Henderson County. Mr. Lapsley seconded the motion. **Vote:** The motion passed by unanimous vote.

I did not name the candidate in the prior motion for a specific reason. It is our understanding that it will be later this week or the 1st of next week before that individual has the opportunity to inform their current board of health and county of their decision to accept the offer with Henderson County.

The public has a right to know the name of the hire and this board intends to provide a public notice with that information as soon as the candidate signals that the appropriate notifications have been made. I appreciate your patience with that matter.

IX. Discussion

No further discussion.

X. Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Baluha made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Dr. Bryant.

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted: David Jenkins
Secretary to the Board/Health Director

06/12/24
Date

Approved by the Henderson County Board of Health at the April 9, 2024 meeting.