

**Foothills Health District  
 District Board of Health OPEN SESSION  
 \* REMOTE\* \*COVID\* Meeting Minutes  
 Rutherford County Senior Center Dining Room  
 September 8, 2020**

**Board of Health Members Present:**

<b>Rutherford County Representatives [9]</b>	<b>McDowell County Representatives [6]</b>
<b>Kim Warner            Dr. Jerald DeLaGarza            Gina Harrill            Greg Lovelace, County Commissioner [by remote]            Dr. David Sutton [by remote]            Amy Jenkins [by remote]            Pastor Neil Perry [by remote]            Susie Bostic</b>	<b>Dr. Ben Hall            Carol Wolfenbarger [by remote]            Dr. James M. Gaskill            Julie Harris [by remote]</b>

**Board of Health Members Absent:**

<b>Christopher Buchanan</b>	<b>Lynn Greene, County Commissioner One Vacancy</b>
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**Foothills Health District Staff/Guests/Counsel Present:**

**HD Staff:**

**Karen Powell, Health Director  
 Nancy Marshall, Finance Director  
 Jason Masters, Environmental Health Director  
 Dottie Wilson, Assist. Finance Officer  
 Renee Nolen, Administrative Assistant**

**Board of Health Legal Counsel**

**Sharon Parker, Board Attorney**

**HD Medical Director**

**Dr. Stephen W. Jones**

***\*\*Please note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Cooper's Executive Orders limiting the size of indoor gatherings, even with social distancing, this meeting was held in the Rutherford County Senior Center Dining Room so BOH members could socially distance and some could participate in the meeting by two-way video [zoom]. See the remote meeting provisions in Senate Bill 704 as codified as Session Law 2020-3.***

AGENDA ITEM	BOARD ACTION	REFERENCE DOCUMENTS
<p><b>CALL TO ORDER:</b> Chairman Dr. Ben Hall called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm. <b>A quorum is present with the in-person Board members and the members attending remotely under the COVID-19 remote procedures as the Foothills BOH currently has one vacancy.</b></p>	<p><b>Chairman Dr. Ben Hall</b></p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
<p><b>PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:</b> The Board Public Comment Policy had been circulated with all Notices for the meeting and posted. No public members were in attendance for this meeting.</p>	<p><b>No Board action required</b></p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEMS</u></b></p>		
<p><b>SWEARING IN OF FOOTHILLS BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS</b></p> <p>Susie Bostic, a Registered Nurse working in the NICU, was sworn in as a Foothills Board Member from Rutherford County. She is filling the unexpired term of Craig Sargent, whose term ends on June 30, 2022.</p> <p>BOH Gina Harrill joined the meeting.</p>	<p><b>Sharon Parker, Board Attorney</b></p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 30, 2020</b></p> <p>The June 30, 2020 minutes were emailed to the BOH prior to the BOH meeting.</p>	<p><b>Dr. James Gaskill moved to approve the June 30, 2020 minutes with a corrections of the word “goof” on Page 4 to “good”, with a second by Kim Warner. The motion was approved with remote votes from Greg Lovelace, Dr. David Sutton, Carol Wolfenbarger, Julie Harris, Amy Jenkins, Pastor Neil Perry and in person votes by Dr. DeLaGarza, Dr. Hall, Susie Bostic, Gina Harrill, Kim Warner, and Dr. James Gaskill.</b></p>	<p><b>Documents on file</b></p>

**HEALTH DIRECTORS REPORT:**

Mrs. Powel introduced Dr. Jones, Foothills Health District Medical Director, who started out as supervisor for Brittany Lail. Brittany is our Nurse Practitioner for Foothills Health District.

Dr. Jones graduated from Chapel Hill in 1982 and East Carolina Medical School in 1986, where he did his Family Practice residency. He has been in Cleveland County since 1989. He was in private practice for about 25 years and has been with Cleveland County Health Department for the last seven years. He took an early retirement in December and we welcome him as Medical Director.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:**

Today's data: In Rutherford County, 11,128 tested, 9,946 negative, 1,014 positives, and 24 deaths. In McDowell County, 11,610 tested, 10,554 negative, 806 positives, 250 pending, and 26 deaths. New data for Rutherford County will be updated tomorrow.

Testing in Rutherford County is on Monday afternoons by appointment and on Wednesday mornings by drive thru. The Health department is assisted at testing sites by Fire Departments, EOC, EMS, and Health Department staff.

In McDowell County, testing is on Monday & Friday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. We try to do one day in the mornings; one day in the afternoon.

Testing has dropped on some days from 200 at a drive thru site to 50, 60, or 100 in the past couple of weeks. The numbers are going down in both counties. We will continue to watch.

We have great teams working together with the Health Department. Health Department does much of the paperwork side; partners collect the lab samples.

**Karen Powell, Health Director**

**Dr. Jones**

There have been two outbreaks in McDowell County in long-term care facilities: Deer Park & Cedar Brook. Deer Park may be at the end of its outbreak but had 13 deaths. We worked with their staff to make sure they had everything they needed from a Public Health standpoint. The outbreak was tracked back to PPE and following other guidance. Cedar Brook started with a positive staff member and we are continuing to monitor them.

We have a potential situation at Autumn Care in Rutherford but only one right positive now. We are watching closely and working with them to get staff and residents tested.

**Cocid-19 Data Reporting:**

In Rutherford County, we work with Carrie Giles, who is over many agencies. Ms. Giles compiles data and prepares graphs. Staff brings positives from the lab, make notes, separate positives from negatives. All negatives get called and our staff handles contact tracing for the positives.

Our percentages are based on Day 1 reporting. We are trying to do a 14-day rolling average with percentage/positives to see what a two-week period looks like. This would help to identify trends.

We were counting any positives that came through. We received a call from the Communicable Disease Branch of the NC DHHS to start looking at positives differently. The State now wants us to categorize positive results based upon the form of testing. Positive results will come from a PCR test through a nasal swab. Probable test results are from rapid tests based on antigen, which takes about 15 minutes but is not as accurate. All negative rapid tests are followed-up with a PCR test, which many times come back as positive. Positives are not entered into the state system until the tracing is done.

Two issues with our numbers matching the state numbers on their website: 1) positives and

probables; 2) 60 positives are still undergoing contact tracing, which is throwing our data off from DHHS website. Staff has worked to finalize contact tracing and to separate out the probables so all the numbers match up. Mrs. Powell is doing a Press Release on the numbers so the community understands why if the numbers were off for a short period of time.

Guidance states that you cannot use a Rapid test to go back to school or work. All Rapid Tests get reported to us. We never report the same positive twice. In McDowell, once numbers are released, someone from the EOC puts the McDowell dashboard together and gets numbers out to the county. Lab releases results twice a day usually in the morning, then again in the evening.

**Reopening of Schools:**

We worked closely with Rutherford & McDowell County Schools to prepare guidance/advice to the superintendent and staff. We also worked with Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy, Masters Academy, Trinity, and Lake Lure Classical Academy.

We established a special cell phone number in both counties for school personnel to use if they have an issue or need advice. The Nursing Director in McDowell has this phone number for McDowell and Mrs. Powell has the one for Rutherford.

We released written guidance today for how schools should handle positives and contacts inside the schools with staff and children. We based much of the guidance from CDC & DHHS recommendations but included some local public health recommendations based upon agreement with school administration. For example, everybody must test negative before going back to school. We agreed upon what we will look for if a staff member or a student is positive pertaining to contact in school, bus, classes, or clusters in school. We have been discussing factors affecting

recommendations for whether the school should close or if we need to close entire district. This Guidance document is very fluid especially as DHHS making changes regularly. Different cases allow different things and will adjust as needed.

Dr. Sutton, with Rutherford County School and a BOH member, recommended a dashboard for the school systems to watch those numbers. This dashboard implemented in McDowell County as well.

State has sent money for regional Long-Term Care for us to put together teams to work intensively with our Long-Term Care facilities. Foothills will be the Fiscal Agent and we will hire three people to do the work between now and December.

**Health Department:**

We are concerned with Covid-19 hitting at the same time as the flu and other respiratory illnesses in the fall/winter. We will start partnering our Covid-19 tests with our flu shots. We are starting to schedule flu clinics in both counties. Our drive thru in McDowell will test for flu, strep, & Covid-19 at same time.

Mrs. Powell will work on calls/emails to managers of each county to update county managers and keep Commissioners up to date.

Rutherford Hospital opened their maternity program last week, so maternity clinics started on Fridays at the Rutherford Health Department. We received a grant from Dogwood Trust that allowed us to purchase an ultrasound machine to do ultrasounds inhouse instead of outsourcing.

Before July 1, 2020, we enforced our Reduction in Force Policy, affecting six employees. The savings from those employees was \$267,704.00 after completion. Two employees were close to retirement so we are working with those employees to take retirement. Two employees

<p>were nurses and two employees were administrative staff. We reduced administration staff upfront from 5 to 3 and shared the additional responsibilities with other staff.</p> <p>In McDowell County, clinic numbers are increasing. Maternity is continuing to grow as well as Family Planning. Brittany Lail has been doing great in building Family Planning and getting numbers up in both counties.</p> <p>We have eight school nurses with one on leave. When a Covid-19 exposure is identified, there is a lot of work on both sides.</p>		
<p><b>FINANCE REPORT:</b></p> <p>Review of the Profit &amp; Loss Budget vs Actual Report: Clinic revenue was around 59% compared to budget. In July 2020, we saw 90 fewer clinic patients than we did in 2019 due to social distancing restrictions &amp; patient reluctance to schedule health care visits. We saw 1,800 additional patients related to Covid-19 testing, which does not generate revenue.</p> <p>CMARC &amp; CMHRP are new acronyms because the name of the programs was changed through the state guidance. Those were on target compared to budget. Both Rutherford and McDowell allocations have been received.</p> <p>Environmental Health exceeded budget by \$26,000.00, which was more than double of 2019 revenue.</p> <p>Medicaid Cost Settlement comes once a year usually in the Spring. Rental revenue, State Aid to County funds, and State Funds have been received. We finished July with a gross excess of \$430,750.00.</p> <p>On expenses, payroll expenses exceeded budget by \$51,000.00 due to overtime, Covid-19, and payouts for reduction in force. We will be reimbursed by FEMA for the overtime portion of the Covid-19 related. We received our first</p>	<p><b>Nancy Marshall, CFO</b>  <b>Karen Powell, Health Director</b></p>	<p><b>Documents on file</b></p>

<p>payout from FEMA in August for March.</p> <p>Mrs. Powell was happy to see that the FY 2019-20 revenue compared to FY 2018-19 had increased, which is encouraging since we were shut down some of that time. Mrs. Marshall is using advertising to publicize information about services. She is writing grants for extra money.</p> <p>We have gotten two sets of funding from the State to help with Covid-19 response.</p>		
<p><b><u>INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:</u></b></p> <p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT—</b></p> <p>Previously, we discussed how the EH department is shifting to focus on repairs and complaints. We are in the process of initiating a Repair Re-visit project, which we will make visits to homes or businesses that were issued repair permits, but no additional action has been taken. With this, we can document if the permit is no longer needed. We are kept informed on issues where sewage was on the ground, which is a public health hazard so we can document the follow-up for accreditation.</p> <p>We continue to build relationships with the magistrate’s offices. In early October, we will be turning over the first of many notices of violations that have permits or violations that have not been corrected. We understand the hardship that this may put on people, but we can not allow sewage to be surfacing onto the top of the ground. During the 60 days that the notices of violations are active, we can provide some information to the parties, but after that, when we turn the violations over to the magistrate, the matter will be out of our hands.</p> <p>Environmental Health has about 75% of our accreditation documents in place, even though accreditation is not until 2022. Some of the items are year specific so are pending. Most of the paperwork for these items is complete, so when the appropriate year comes around, all we must do is plug in the information needed to</p>	<p><b>Jason Master, EH Director</b></p>	



<p>complete that portion.</p> <p>We are working on reformatting our permits/other forms to simplify them and make information clear. Many of our old permits were nearly impossible to decipher and lots of unnecessary information kept getting tagged on as things changed at the state level, so hopefully the new documents will be easy to read and understand without all the unnecessary verbiage.</p> <p>The Environmental Health department was recently awarded a \$69,000.00 grant from FDA that will allow us to purchase some updated inspection software for our inspectors, and to develop and implement a program we are calling, "The Potato Project". The Potato Project will offer customized, in-house training to at-risk food establishments that are consistently marked for violations that could potentially result in the spread of foodborne illness. There are no other programs like this in the state. No work time will be lost due to us offering this service to those establishments that are invited to participate. We have a plan in place to keep the project going well after the year timeframe associated with it. The Foothills Environmental Health Department was featured on the front page of the most recent FDA newsletter, for our development of the Potato Project.</p>		
<p><b>Other items of new business or any other action items:</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Dr. Ben Hall, Chairman</b></p>	
<p><b>NO CLOSED SESSION WAS REQUESTED.</b></p>		

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:38 pm, Kim Warner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dr. DeLaGarza. The motion was approved with remote votes from Greg Lovelace, Julie Harris, Carol Wolfenbarger, Amy Jenkins, Pastor Neil Perry, and Dr. Sutton in person votes by Dr. Hall, Kim Warner, Dr. DeLaGarza, Gina Harrill, Susie Bostic, and Dr. Gaskill. The meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

**SIGNATURES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dr. Ben Hall, Foothills BOH Chair**

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**Karen Powell, Foothills District Health Director**