

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Summary of Meeting
October 19, 2021

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was held by Zoom conference call (Dial in Phone Number 1 (312) 626-6799, Access Code: 821 6424 1987#, Password: 405507#) and was called to order by Dr. Michael W. Meshad, Chairman, at 7:02 a.m. Roll was called and the following attended:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doctors Michael W. Meshad, Chairman, Michael C. Chang, Joseph Ewing Bornstein, Desiree A. Soter-Pearsall, Stacey W. Wing and Commissioner Merceria L. Ludgood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. C.M.A. (Max) Rogers IV

GUEST PRESENT: Brandi L. Lowe, Esq., Compliance/Privacy Officer, Mobile County Health Department

STAFF PRESENT: Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr.P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer; Paul M. Betros, Jr., M.B.A, Director, Administrative Services; Kelly Warren, M.S.W., M.P.H., Director, Family Health Clinical Services; Stephanie Crawford, M.P.H., D.H.Sc., Director, Prevention & Wellness; and Ruth Guess, Transcriber

II. **GUEST:** Brandi L. Lowe, Esq., Compliance/Privacy Officer, Mobile County Health Department

a. ***Corporate Compliance Plan 2021/2022** (Attachment A): Ms. Lowe presented to the Board for their approval the Corporate Compliance Plan 2021/2022.

MOTION was made by Dr. Pearsall and seconded by Commissioner Ludgood that the Corporate Compliance Plan 2021/2022 be approved as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Lowe left the meeting at 7:09 a.m.

III. ***APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 21, 2021** (Attachment B): The minutes for the meeting held on September 21, 2021, were briefly reviewed since the minutes had been distributed to the Board members prior to the meeting.

MOTION was made by Dr. Pearsall and seconded by Commissioner Ludgood that the minutes of the meeting held on September 21, 2021, be approved as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. **HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT:**

a. **Report from State Health Officer – September 2021** (Attachment C): Dr. Eichold presented to the Board for their information, a summary report for the month of September 2021 from the State Health Officer sent monthly to county Boards of Health describing actions taken by the State Committee of Public Health.

b. **Informational Items**

- **Governor's Proclamation** (Attachment D): Dr. Eichold presented to Board the Governor's current COVID-19 State of Emergency Proclamation which expires October 31, 2021.

c. **COVID-19 Hospital Update:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that 486 persons were hospitalized in Mobile County on one day with COVID-19 in the past three months. As of today, there are 46 COVID-19 hospitalizations with seven admitted in the last 48 hours. There were zero COVID-19 deaths reported in Mobile County yesterday. According to a national study, for every case diagnosed there are four cases of undiagnosed COVID-19.

d. **COVID-19 Vaccine Update:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that our community transmission rate right now is probably going down because there were more undiagnosed, undocumented community transmission resulting in primary immunity from people recovering from COVID-19. It is not known how long primary immunity lasts. We have had

roughly 10,000 people get COVID-19 twice in Alabama. Those who are declining to get vaccinated could be a significant problem for us as that immunity wanes. This has occurred with other diseases. There was a brief discussion.

- e. **Health Officer Search:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that there appear to be two persons who are qualified and have shown an interest in applying to be the Health Officer of Mobile County. The Mobile County Personnel Board has been asked to open the position and it is anticipated to be open for two weeks beginning today. Applications will be reviewed by the Personnel Board. The agency has advertised. Dr. Eichold has talked to the Dean at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, Jefferson County Health Officer Mark Wilson, State Health Officer Scott Harris, and communicated with Tulane Public Health to encourage people to apply. He referred the Board to yesterday's New York Times article describing what is going in the public health profession. Dr Eichold asked if the previous search committee would be willing to interview the applicants to possibly bring forth a candidate at the November Board meeting. The committee agreed to continue to serve.

V. **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

- a. ***General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report – September 2021** (Attachment E): Mr. Betros presented to the Board a preliminary General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report for the month of September 2021. September 30 is the end of the fiscal year and has not been closed out at this time. There will be an audit at the end of the year which will be presented to the Board in January. The month of September there was revenue of roughly \$1.2 million and expenses of \$773,000.00, with a favorable month of \$437,000.00. Food permits are due by September 30 and \$234,000.00 was received during September for those. It was a favorable year of \$2.6 million. The agency was unable to do capital improvements which were budgeted at \$1.6 million. Of that, \$127,000.00 was spent on capital improvements. There were increased costs in labor, materials, delays, and contractors are scarce which put large projects on hold. The agency hopes to complete those in the upcoming fiscal year. There were fewer birth certificates and an increase in death certificates for the year which is reflected in the budget. Food Handler's fees collected were less than budgeted which shows a reduced number of workers in the food establishment workforce. Since the inception of COVID-19 funds roughly \$9.3 million has been spent on COVID-19.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ludgood and seconded by Dr. Wing that the General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report for the month of September 2021 be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. **Property:** Mr. Betros informed the Board that the agency would like to pursue the purchase of a piece of property at 1635 Cheeseman Avenue next to our Eight Mile site. It is a house for sale behind the clinic which is in bad shape. The agency would like to have approval to negotiate the price up to the appraised value of the property. The goal has been to obtain the houses along Cheeseman and if we build in the back there would be the additional space needed. A brief discussion was held.

MOTION was made by Dr. Wing and seconded by Dr. Pearsall that the acquisition of the property at or below the appraised price be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Betros informed the Board that the agency has negotiated a lease with the Festival Centre on Montlimar for 7,180 square feet for a period of one year with a one-year renewal. The agency plans to do vaccinations and COVID-19 testing at the site. The lease has begun, and we are working toward moving in.

VI. **FAMILY HEALTH CLINICAL SERVICES**

- a. **FOPHCC Governing Council Minutes – September 2021** (Attachment F): Ms. Warren presented to the Board, for their information, a copy of the minutes for the FOPHCC Governing Council Meeting held in September 2021.
- b. **Primary Care Clinic Productivity Report – September 2021:** Ms. Warren stated that during September primary care saw 5,307 patients over 6,940 visits. They continue to work to get patients in the clinics for routine care. A lot of catch up on vaccinations is happening at Family Health sites.

- c. **Joint Commission Survey:** The Joint Commission visit occurred at the end of September. There were two surveyors for two full days. They traveled to nearly all of the clinic sites. The surveyors complimented the staff and team on the cleanliness, how well-kept the facilities were, and how knowledgeable the staff was. They said they would feel comfortable receiving care at our sites. Joint Commission typically scores on over 1,000 standards during the survey. There were 12 findings none of which were life threatening and will all be corrected by the December 10, 2021, deadline.
- d. **DIP Health Center Site Update:** Ms. Warren stated that the Board was informed last month that the Dauphin Island Parkway Health Center had suspended its primary care functions and had turned into a monoclonal antibody administration site. There was not high utilization at the site with about eight patients in a week. Primary care operations will resume at that site starting this week. There will be a Nurse Practitioner and a pediatric Nurse Practitioner there and we hope to focus on peds there as well as urgent care where there is a prime utilization of the emergency departments from that zip code. Dr. Eichold informed the Board that if we get back to monoclonal antibodies, that will happen at the Festival Centre.

VII. PREVENTION & WELLNESS

- a. ***Appointment of Mobile County Rabies Officer for 2022:** Dr. Crawford requested the Board's approval to re-appoint Ann Branch, D.V.M., as the Mobile County Rabies Officer for 2022. She has requested to continue to serve in that capacity.

MOTION was made by Dr. Wing and seconded by Dr. Pearsall to re-appoint Ann Branch, D.V.M., as the Mobile County Rabies Officer for 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. **Influenza and Hepatitis A Update:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that we are currently at 1.60% of influenza like illnesses reported. That continues to remain below the base line of 3.39%. None of the Districts have reported any lab confirmed influenza in the past three weeks. The CDC is recommending a yearly flu vaccine for everyone. A push for the agency to get everyone in the community vaccinated for flu continues. There are now 202 Hepatitis A cases reported since 2020. Seventeen cases were reported this year, two of which were added during the month of September. There has been a decrease from 2020 to 2021 and it is going in the right direction.
- c. **CDC Associate:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that the Mobile County Health Department was approved to have its first ever CDC Public Health Associate. Reginald Simpson reported to us last week. He is a federal, CDC employee embedded in the Inspection Services Department. He will receive hands on training in Public Health competencies over the next two years. He will be supervised by Environmental Health Specialist III, Adrienne Tricksey, who is very knowledgeable and has been with the agency many years. She will be able to sign off on his competencies with CDC.
- d. **Employee Appreciation Week:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that the Mobile County Health Department Employee Appreciation Week will be the last week of this month. This year's theme will be Spirit Week. There will be a 1980's Day, Tacky Tourist Day, and Crazy Sock and Jeans Day. We will also spread awareness on Substance Abuse and Prevention Day by wearing overdose prevention tee shirts. There will be a Think Pink Thursday celebration and walk and a Halloween Dress Down Day on Friday. There will be items and appreciations provided to agency employees.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Next meeting November 16, 2021.
Dr. Meshad stated that Dr. Eichold will provide the committee with information on potential replacements for the Health Officer position for interviews by the committee which hopes to report back at the November meeting. The November 16 meeting will likely be an in-person meeting at 7:00 am the Medical Society of Mobile County building on Airport Boulevard. Dr. Eichold asked the Board to contact Dr. Crawford if they hear about outside events and activities that would like to start their events with the firing of the agency's Lyle Cannon.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION was made by Dr. Pearsall and seconded by Dr. Wing to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 a.m.

Michael W. Meshad, M.D.
Chairman

Michael C. Chang, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Secretary

Approved: November 16, 2021