

McHENRY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Minutes of March 22, 2010

President Andy Andresky called the McHenry County Board of Health meeting to order at the McHenry County Department of Health, Crystal Lake office, at approximately 7:00 p.m. Board members present: Mr. Andy Andresky, Dr. Richard Gorski (by telephone), Mr. Dallas Larson, Ms. Eleanor Jackson, Dr. Thomas Skiba, and Mr. Edward Varga. Board members absent: Ms. Linda Brogan, and Ms. Lyn Orphal, Staff members present: Mr. Patrick McNulty, Mr. Joe Gogle, Ms. Patricia Nomm, Mr. Jerry Rivard, Ms. Kara Plonczynski, Ms. Fran Stanwood, and Ms. Karen Mueller. Dr. S. L. Ruggero, the Health Department's Medical Advisor, was also present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

MINUTES

Dr. Skiba **moved** to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2010 meeting, **second** by Mr. Varga. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Varga **moved** to approve the Consent Agenda, **second** by Dr. Gorski. Following a brief discussion the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS-New

Mr. Varga **moved** to approve the Crystal Lake Holiday Inn agreement, **second** by Dr. Skiba. Following a discussion, the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

McHenry County Department of Health
Division of Veterinary Public Health
(Animal Control)

Presented By

Kara Plonczynski, Health Educator/Volunteer Coordinator

Kara described the Crystal Lake facility and its welcoming, inviting design. Children can go into the viewing rooms and interact with the animals while still being visible to the parents. The volunteers enjoy the outside fenced exercise areas which are used to introduce dogs to one another. It offers protection to the volunteers in situations where animals may act in an aggressive manner.

The Animal Control Advisory Committee consists of ten members appointed by the Board of Health. Its mission is to provide a state-of-the-art facility and services that will address needs of an expanding community and in a collaborative manner to promote animal welfare and adoption, provide public education and safety and prevent disease transmission from animals to humans.

Kara presented the organizational chart for Animal Control. The organizational chart that was presented by Kara for animal Control is different from the Board of Health's organizational chart. The County Board hires the Animal Control Administrator while operations at the Animal Control facility are the responsibility of the Department of Health. Kara discussed rabies investigations in McHenry County and why there has been a higher number of positive specimens than the rest of the state. It is believed that this is because McHenry County has a more aggressive surveillance and response program than other areas of the state. In 2009, 464 specimens were submitted for rabies testing, with 17 testing positive.

In 2009, 413 dog bites were reported in McHenry County, a decrease from 550 dog bites reported in 2002. There were 132 cat bites which are down from 149 in 2002. There were no dangerous dog

declarations in 2009, as compared to 2007 when there were 31. In 2009, 803 dogs were admitted and 776 cats, a 50/50 split. In 2008, there were more cats admitted to the shelter than dogs.

There is a higher percent of dogs reclaimed by their owners than cats. In 2009, 52% of dogs were reclaimed compared to 6% of cats. One reason for the higher return to owners of dogs is that more dogs are micro chipped and registered than cats. This makes it much easier to locate the owners and return the animals.

In 2009, 250 dogs and 255 cats were adopted from the Animal Control facility. There were 23 dogs and 111 cats transferred to other programs and/or facilities. For euthanasia rates, McHenry County is well below the national average. In 2009 the national rate for cats being euthanized was 70% and McHenry County was approximately 43%. The national average euthanasia rate for dogs in 2009 was approximately 65% with McHenry County at approximately 13%.

Since 2005 Animal Control has almost doubled the number of visitors to the facility, in large part to the new Crystal Lake location. The facility is more visible on a busy highway. In 2009 there were 46 volunteers, with 20 having 5 years of service, totaling 4552 hours. This has saved the department from having to add additional staff to cover those hours.

In 2009, Friends of McHenry County Animal Control and Adoption Center was formed as a 501c3 organization and one that the volunteers feel is very important to Animal Control. Its mission is to raise funds and provide resources for the animals at the adoption center, increase awareness of MCAC services and adoptable animals, and educate the community about responsible pet ownership and prevention of animal cruelty. Social media sites have been created (Facebook, Twitter and www.McHenryCountyPets.org).

The Animal Control Division initiated the formal organization of animal welfare groups in the county into the Animal Welfare Coalition. The McHenry County Animal Welfare Coalition's mission is to find homes for every adoptable pet in McHenry County. It focuses its efforts on adoption and public education, providing support services to animal rescue groups, independent rescuers and shelters through networking, joint fundraising, coordination of adoption events, obtaining grants and expanding media coverage of animal issues.

Future objectives for Animal Control are to increase the number of low cost rabies vaccination/micro-chip events, provide public education/training seminars and to collaborate on bite programs, offer low cost spay/neuter clinics, refine the emergency disaster plan for domestic animals, increase volunteer participation, cat rabies vaccination/registration and support of animal welfare coalition.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. McNulty gave a brief update regarding H1N1. H1N1 continues to slow down but there has been a slight increase in the County. The flu that is circulating is the H1N1 variety. There is a bit of the seasonal variety circulating throughout the World but it does continue to be primarily H1N1 in the U.S. It is not known if there will be an increase in H1N1 after the school spring breaks. Last year the H1N1 cases started at the end of April into early May.

The Department is still offering the H1N1 vaccine at its Crystal Lake location although on a smaller scale. The vaccine storage area in front of the Annex A building is being dismantled and will be removed by the end of March. Ms Stanwood said the Department is moving into the next phase by doing focus groups with Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) volunteers to gather feedback on what was good or bad and to work on improvements for the next outbreak.

There are many people within the County that have helped out and the Department extends its appreciation for their efforts. Residents are still bringing their children in to receive the H1N1 vaccination. Mr. Andresky asked if the Crystal Lake Food Bank had set up a date for a clinic. Ms Stanwood indicated there will be a clinic on March 31st (10am-2pm). Mr. Andresky asked if the virus has mutated; Ms Stanwood stated there has not been a shift in the virus since its inception. When a shift does happen, the potency of the vaccine is not affected. If a mutation should occur, it would affect how the vaccine works.

Mr. Andresky asked if the 6-week cold that many people had gotten over the winter was at all related to the H1N1 virus. Ms Stanwood said people throughout the winter season will have colds and viruses and it is very typical for a virus to last six weeks. Most people do become concerned that they are ill for a long period of time but again it is typical of a virus. With a cold, one typically will see throat and sinus involvement. The only way to know truly if it is anything more than a cold is to have the H1N1 test. However, fever with increased fatigue was the main symptom of H1N1 and was seen in almost 99% of the cases. Most people who were tested and confirmed with H1N1 stated they would never go through it again but instead would get the vaccine, no matter what. Many of those people just did not have the opportunity to be vaccinated because they did not fall into the priority one category for vaccination.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Andresky **moved** to approve the FY10 Health Department Budget Amendments for IDPH IBCCP \$28,000, IDHS WIC \$26,164 and \$5,000, and IDPH Immunization \$34,000, **second** by Dr. Gorski. Following a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

BOARD ISSUES

Mr. Andresky mentioned that Mr. McNulty, Ms. Tina Hill, Ms. Lyn Orphal and Mr. Ken Koehler traveled to the University of Illinois Circle campus to meet Dr. Leslie Strainer, Chair of Epidemiology and Biostatistics School of Public Health, to discuss McCullom Lake. Information was presented to Dr. Strainer on what had been done in the past, what agencies were involved and to get input on what he felt could be done in terms of Epidemiological studies. Dr. Strainer was very straight forward and stated he has done some previous work in this area. He worked for the CDC and has a background regarding this issue. He was very knowledgeable and up to date with the subject.

Dr. Strainer felt that there was nothing really to be accomplished by doing any further Epidemiological studies. He said we have actually done a very good job at the County level and have covered a lot of ground. He did say we could do some additional work but the cost would be approximately \$500,000-\$1,000,000 just to get started; he would not recommend his graduate students for this type of work because of their limited availability during a semester. A project of this type would need to occur over a long period of time and would necessitate greater involvement than a graduate student could provide. Dr. Strainer indicated that this would require hiring the appropriate staff but he did not feel that the County would get any additional information regarding the Epidemiological work.

There was further discussion regarding the environmental aspects and what might be done. Dr. Strainer had a few suggestions regarding the MPH program which has an Environmental and Occupational component and provided the names of the people who work in those areas. There might be some availability in that area if the County was interested in doing environmental sampling. Chairman Koehler felt that may be something that he would be interested in pursuing. We have used the School of Public Health Environmental section in the past regarding the Myers gravel pit and Valley View School in McHenry. It still continues to be explored if the County would like to do anything further.

Dr. Gorski asked under whose responsibility this will fall. Mr. McNulty said that the information was presented to the County Board last week. He feels that as far as the Epidemiological work, there is

nothing further the County wants to pursue at this point. The Department has done as much as it can do and it is not worth any further investment to do anything else. There did seem to be an interest in looking further into additional Environmental issues. The Department will continue to do what it routinely does to monitor the situation to offer the residence an assurance of safety.

Dr. Skiba thought it was ultimately the Illinois EPA that was responsible for this. Mr. McNulty agreed and said if the County decides that they want to do something and pay for it, it has that option. Mr. McNulty said the Illinois EPA sees no reason to do any further work in the area because it sees no major environmental consequences from the operation in Ringwood to the people that live in McCullom Lake. Dr. Gorski asked if this was in writing. Ms. Nomm and Mr. McNulty said yes; it is posted on the Department's website.

Mr. Varga said that the Department of Health is supposed to handle communicable disease; environmental groundwater contamination is an IEPA or Federal EPA issue. He said the Department has gone above and beyond to assist or back up the information for the IEPA. Mr. Andresky asked that Mr. McNulty keep the Board updated as to what is decided.

Dr. Gorski asked Mr. McNulty if he knows how the healthcare reform is going to affect the Department. Mr. McNulty said that there are sections in the bill that discuss novel federal funding of a Prevention and Public Health Fund that would provide programming for several initiatives including chronic disease prevention and workforce development. More details are expected over the next several months.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Andresky reviewed the information in this section.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McNulty reminded everyone of the importance of filing their Statement of Economic Interest form. The deadline for filing is May 1st.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

APPENDIX

None

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Gorski **moved** to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:15.p.m. **second** by Dr. Skiba. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dr. Thomas Skiba
McHenry County Board of Health Secretary