

EEHW COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, December 17, 2015
5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dudley
Matt Brown
Kevin Bird
Gary Minich
Jerry Potts
Grant Noland
Linda Little

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Dianna Heyer, Health Dept

Kathy Powless, VA
Sgt Lou Ann Hollon, Animal Control

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

MEMBERS ABSENT

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dudley at the Macon County Office Building.

MINUTES

Mr. Potts made a motion to approve the November 19, 2015 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Minich and the motion carried 7-0.

CLAIMS

Ms. Little made a motion to accept the report of the claims as presented, seconded by Mr. Potts and the motion carried 7-0.

ZONING – None (excused)

SUBDIVISIONS – None (excused)

REPORTS

Mental Health-no report

Veterans Assistance –

Ms. Powless reported that they had gone to Sangamon County to see how they run their Veteran’s Emergency Assistance Program. They’ve got the paperwork and expect to be up and running in January.

Historical Museum – no report

U of I Extension – no report

Planning & Zoning – No report (excused)

Regional Office of Education - no report

Environmental Management - no report (excused)

Health Department-

Ms. Heyer updated the members on the status of the negotiations with the DPBC. That has taken place and as of December 1st they entered into a contract with them. She said that they could not be more pleased. They have been fantastic to work with. They have responded to all of the needs as quickly as they can. She said she and her staff are so pleased with the things they've fixed related to safety and expressed her appreciation and said they are just a nice group to work with.

Flu shots are still available and if anyone has questions, the Health Department can help. So far, there have not been any outbreaks yet.

Ms. Heyer took a moment to update the members about the Teen Pregnancy Grant. There was a public comment about that at the board meeting and there have been some other questions about it. The grant was for \$50,000 and was for teen pregnancy prevention through education. Two staff members will use approved curriculum to go into 7th & 8th grade classes at two of the junior highs. The parent has the option to opt out for their child. It provides healthy choice materials regarding sexual education, abstinence is promoted. Abortion is not promoted. The Health Department is a part of the Teen Health Coalition in Macon County. There are a number of partners within the community that are working together monthly to address teen pregnancy. We have one of the highest rates in Illinois. The good news is that this past year, the numbers went from about 13% down to 9% looking at girls ages 14 – 19. There are some positive things to report. There are some people that are working very hard to make a difference. One organization cannot totally solve this problem. A collaborative approach involving the school district, faith based communities, doctors, counselors, etc... must all work together. Mr. Minich asked about the promotion of abstinence and if that was the only choice. Ms. Heyer said it is not the only choice, but it is promoted as the safest choice. She said they want them to have the education so that if they decide to make the choice, they know how to keep themselves as safe as they possibly can. Mr. Minich said this is good and thanked Ms. Heyer. Mr. Noland asked which two junior highs. Ms. Heyer said it starts at the spring semester and is currently being worked out. She said she would update again when all the pieces are pulled together.

Months ago, there was a TB outbreak they were dealing with. There is good news to report. Public Health is doing their job and all of the cases that were considered active cases have been completely treated. They have all completely finished their medication. Individuals that were exposed and needed to take preventative medication have received that. There have been no new reports of cases for quite some time. She thanked Carol Carlton & her team for their very hard work and many hours. That is an example of why Public Health is so important. The spread of a major outbreak was prevented through what was done.

Chair Dudley thanked Ms. Heyer and said he was aware of the issues the Health Department is having with the State not paying. It has been a rough go and things are tough. He thanked her for her leadership on behalf of the EEHW Committee. She responded saying she appreciates the guidance and expressed her belief in what they do and in Public Health and its importance and the challenge to keep going.

Animal Control

Sgt. Hollon distributed monthly reports and reported that the Home for the Holidays program is currently in progress and runs until January 8. She explained that this is like a tester program for anyone that would like to take a dog or cat home to see if they work with their family, lifestyle, and other pets. There are 92 in the program right now. 10 were returned. 64 are out in homes. 18 have been adopted. There is potential for 82 adoptions. There are 173 in the shelter consisting of 57 dogs and 116 cats. These are very good numbers.

The Angel Tree Program is also underway at the shelter. All the adoptable cats and dogs have an ornament on the tree for anyone wanting to give a gift. There has been huge support throughout the community with people coming in with blankets, dog treats, etc... On Christmas Eve, since the animals are there and have to be taken care of, the animals are given their gifts.

Chair Dudley thanked Sgt Hollon saying he has noticed on social media that the animal shelter has been working hard to get the animals adopted.

Citizen's Remarks -

Patrick Stout, Macon County, west end on Summit Avenue, addressed the members saying that he had recently been contacted by the Health Department saying that he could not make baked goods out of his house and deliver them to weddings and special events without having a commercial kitchen put in. Right now, putting one in would run around \$35,000. He said he felt that there is an opportunity to help small businesses and Macon County that is being overlooked. The first problem seen is, under the Cottage Law, which is current for home bakers, I can make 200 cupcakes, take them to an outdoor, open air farmers market and sell them outright to the public, but I am not allowed to make 200 cupcakes or a wedding cake and deliver them to a facility such as a church or reception hall. Macon County is losing tax revenue and home bakers are going out of business. He offered some solutions. All that is needed is for Macon County to adopt an ordinance to allow home bakers to deliver baked goods to events such as weddings, special occasions and parties. The Cupcake Law is a law that Governor Ryan passed for a little girl in Madison County. Joliet has a Cupcake Law as well. All that is needed is the adoption of an ordinance that will allow baked goods be made and be taken to events such as weddings and parties. This law has already been established in other counties. There is a loophole in the Cupcake Law. That is that the individual county must adopt it in order for it to take effect. Macon County does not have that right now. Another thing that can be done is require all home bakers to have a food handlers license. He said he used to work for Target in the food avenue department and had to have a Food Safety Certification. He said since he does not work there any longer, he has let it lapse, but the ruling could say that a Food Handler's License is required. Also, the products should be required to be labeled that they are made in a home kitchen. Another requirement should be that the product would need to be delivered to the venue so no clients or customers would be coming to the baker's home which will eliminate the need for a storefront or for zoning purposes. He said he felt that this solution is much stricter than the Cottage Food Law. He thanked the members for listening and urged them to consider making the change.

Sue Clark, owner of Cake Lady Supply located at 328 W. Eldorado. She explained that they sell cake and candy supplies so she knows all of the women that are affected by the law. Even though it is called the Cupcake Law, specialty cakes, wedding cakes, anniversary cakes, even birthday parties have tiered cakes, baby shower cakes, etc... the ones all the ladies look up on Pinterest and bring to their cake decorator are what is really being talked about. She said she previously had a health department kitchen in her home from 2000 to 2010 and operated a Class C bakery which required a \$100 license. She said she did not know what it would be today. Some of the requirements have changed. The difference is commercial equipment, not just a simple home kitchen. She said her entire retro-fit at the time was \$10,000. It was very easily done via a separate entrance into her basement. She said she had worked with the health department and they were very helpful giving direction in putting that kitchen in. These ladies are not able to go into business. Most of them are just making ends meet by trying to supplement incomes. Some husbands have lost jobs. The purpose is to make a little extra money. They have all been disenfranchised. This City has been disenfranchised from all those cakes. It is feared that next year, if you go to a wedding, you will not see a wedding cake unless it comes from Springfield or Champaign. A lot of them had to go to Springfield or Champaign last year because they started being called last year. 27 on one day she thought. She said she didn't know how the members felt, but cake decorating has always been a home business for decades. These are not ordered from Kroger, County Market, Wal Mart or Sams. These cakes have to be delivered and set up. They can't be picked up in a store in a box. The law actually provides for any governing body, so the Health Department, the EEHW board, the City can do it. The City of Joliet did it. The Madison County Board did it. You have to enact an ordinance for the Cupcake Law to run under. She said her customers have told her that they would be more than willing to tack on a Food Handler's License, a registration fee and be on the registration list so that they would be readily available to the Health Department should a report of a food borne illness have to be followed up on. For the ones that are being shut down right now, there is nothing wrong with their product. There have been no complaints of food borne illness. There have just been complaints that they are baking in their home. It's a few people that want the main share of the business and they are calling them in and having them shut down. There is enough business in town for everyone. She said she had personally done about 75 wedding cakes a year and she wasn't the only wedding cake decorator. These people are just shutting people down because they want more business themselves. She asked for questions and if everyone understood the Cupcake Law. There were no questions. She added that it did go back into committee. It passed June 10, 2014, went back into committee. They wanted to add a Food Handler's License, Health Department License, Sales Tax, etc.... They wanted to make it a full blown kitchen. That is not the purpose of this bill at all. You have to keep your income to \$1,000 a month. You are not required to have a sales tax and the State of Illinois licensed her (Ms. Clark) and anybody else as retail, not as food by the State of Illinois. She said she had to collect and pay in what would be 9% now. They do not license you as any type of food license. You are retail. She said she is hoping the members will think about this and see how the City of Joliet and Madison County handled it. It was a very simple ordinance for them. She said if there is anything she can do, she is available at her store every day. She would be willing to act as a liaison between these people, collect money and turn it in, or whatever is needed. She said, "please let this city get back to having cake".

Ms. Heyer responded by saying that the Board of Health has asked them to prepare a response for them at the next Board of Health meeting explaining the Health Department's position on this and said they would be happy to do that for this committee as well. This is not as simple as it sounds. It is quite complicated. She said she has already started doing a survey of local health departments and out of the 12 responses received back so far, and 10 have chosen not to develop an ordinance for the Cupcake Law. Two have. She said she would report back at the next meeting how many in the state. It is quite complicated. There is really no regulation over the people who choose to do this in their home. She relayed an experience she had personally had with a home baker when she had purchased a birthday cake for her daughter and upon getting it home and opening the box, it was completely covered in cat hair. She said she was sure everyone is not like that, but there is no regulation over a home kitchen. There are some individuals that are going the extra mile and developing a kitchen within their home. They are following the recommendations. More details will be available at the next meeting. Kathy Wade is the expert as Environmental Health Director and we want to be able to give you a complete report on this. Chair Dudley thanked Ms. Heyer and said they'd look forward to getting the report so they could see what they can do on this.

Mr. Stout addressed the committee again, saying that he knew Ms. Heyer had said it is not as easy as it sounds, but it is. It is easy. If you want, you can require the Health Department to come in and do inspections once a month or every 2 or 6 months. It is really simple. He said he could go to a farmer's market, take an order for a wedding cake, have that client pick it up at the farmer's market and I'm perfectly within legal rights because it falls under the Cottage Law. He said he just could not bake it out of his house and take it to a wedding venue such as a church or reception hall, but it can be taken to a farmer's market and sell it there. He asked where the difference is. He said he did not understand it. There is no difference except it is coming from the home kitchen and going to a church or reception hall instead of an outside market. In January, 2016, people are going to be allowed to go to farms and buy products, so eggs, dairy products, etc.. You will be dealing with horses and everything that horses and goats do. How is that going to be much more sanitary than a home baker taking a sanitary perfect wedding cake to a perfect clean facility. It is easy. All you have to do is enact the ordinance. Chair Dudley said they would take a look at it. They would listen to what the health department has to say about it and the committee would give it a good look.

Mr. Potts reminded the committee that the Ordinance Committee would need to review it if the committee decided they would like to do anything.

Mr. Noland said he would like to put on record, as a farmer, that broad strokes should not be used for the lack of sanitation. Farmers take their jobs very seriously. Not all farmers have disregard for sanitation. There were comments from the audience that could not be heard.

OLD BUSINESS – none

NEW BUSINESS – none

Closed Session – none needed

NEXT MEETING Next regular meeting - Thursday, January 21, 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Potts made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Bird, the motion carried 7-0. Chair Dudley wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham