



## RICHMOND COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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North Carolina  
Public Health

Cheryl Speight, Health Director  
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director

Robby Hall, Social Services Director  
Theresa Smith, Deputy Social Services Director

### **RICHMOND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** January 18, 2022  
**TIME:** 7:00pm  
**LOCATION:** Webinar

#### **BOARD ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Smart, Chairperson  
Thad Ussery, Public Member  
Jon Marks, Pharmacist  
Ronald Tillman, NC Department of Safety  
Dr. John Stevenson, Retired Physician  
Dr. Don Covington, Optometrist  
Cassandra Byers, Daymark Center Director  
Dr. Rick Watkins, County Commissioner  
Aletha Lanier, Nurse  
Dr. Dale McInnis, President, RCC

#### **NON-BOARD ATTENDANCE:**

Robby Hall, Director of Social Services  
Cheryl Speight, Health Director  
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director  
Sheila Brosier, Administrative Assistant

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Paul Smart called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **INVOCATION:** Thad Ussery delivered the invocation for the meeting.
3. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda.
  - **Motion Offered By:** Dr. McInnis
  - **Motion Seconded By:** Dr. Covington
  - **Motion Carried:** Yes

**MEETING MINUTES:** Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the November 16, 2021, meeting minutes.

- **Motion Offered By:** Dr. Watkins
- **Motion Seconded By:** Ronald Tillman
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Cheryl Speight, Health Director, discussed the Public Health Administrative Report. The health department began its Quit Smoking campaign and offers a free four week tobacco cessation class. Free patches and gifts are available or attending the meetings. Classes are taught by Kendra Faries, Public Health Educator.

The volume of citizens seeking Covid testing has significantly increased since the holidays. Free Covid-19 testing continues to be offered behind the Health Department on Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 6:00pm. Until further notice, there are no RAPID Covid tests available at the health department and Cole Auditorium; however, the PCR tests is available at both sites. Free Covid vaccinations continue to be offered at the Health Department on Monday-Thursday from 8:00am-5:00pm, and Friday from 8:00am-11:00am. No appointment is required.

- B. Robby Hall, Social Services Director, discussed the Social Services Administrative Report. DSS has seen an increase in the number of applicants/participants with the Food & Nutrition and Medicaid programs over the past few months. Several energy assistance programs are open simultaneously and over 7,500 applications were received in the past week for processing. CIP, LIEAP, RAP and LIHWAP help residents with rent and/or utility payments that are past due.

There are 267 children on the day care waiting list; however, DSS is expecting to receive additional funds which will decrease the waiting list. There are 85 children currently in foster care and we are aggressively recruiting foster parents.

- C. Jacqueline Welch, Aging Services Director, reported on the Aging Services Administrative Report. Due to the spike in COVID-19 positive cases, the senior centers at Rockingham, East Rockingham and Ellerbe will close temporarily on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The congregate meal sites are closed to the public; however, the East Rockingham meal site has a side pick-up service for family members who wish to drive by and pick up meals for their senior family members. Home delivered meals are delivered to clients five days a week by staff and volunteers. Aging Services staff have increased wellness phone calls to seniors to check on their well-being. There are several in-home aide positions vacant and Aging Services is looking to revise the work schedule and salary pay scale to recruit and retain staff.

**6. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Recommendation for Selection of Advisory Board Member:**

Paul Smart recommended to postpone the discussion and selection of a new advisory board member until we can hold an in-person meeting. Postponement was granted by general consent of the board members present.

**B. Recommendation for Approval of Reinstatement of Advisory Board Member:**

Cassandra Byers term of service on the advisory board expires in May 2022. Paul Smart asked for a motion for reinstatement of her new term to run from June 2022 through June 2025. The recommendation for reinstatement was approved by general consent of the board members present and will be submitted for placement on the next County Commissioners meeting agenda for approval.

**C. Update on LIHWAP / RAP / P-EDT Programs**

Robby Hall provided an update on the assistance programs for rent and utilities that are available to the public.

The LIHWAP – Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program began in December 2021 to provide assistance to Richmond County residents who have fallen behind in water bill payments. LIHWAP allotted a total budget of \$151,560.00. Thus far, we have paid \$13,322.34 directly to the water companies for those whose services have been disconnected, for those who received cut off notices, and for those whose accounts are past due.

The LIEAP – Low Income Energy Assistance Program opened in December 2021 and will run through March 31, 2022. The program allotted \$300,000.00 for energy assistance to households including a person aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through Aging Services or Adult Services. Payments are made directly to the vendors.

The RAP – Richmond Assistance Program was allotted \$810,000.00 to provide financial assistance to those families of low to moderate income who are behind on rent and utility costs. The RAP began on September 1, 2021, and \$297,004.89 has been spent to date.

The P-EBT – Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program is a food assistance program that helps families with children who are unable to access free or reduced-price meals at school when they are not physically present because of COVID-19. North Carolina has received federal approval to continue Student P-EBT this school year, however the eligibility criteria has changed. This year, eligibility is based on the individual student's attendance record, not the circumstances of the school. The student must experience one or more days in quarantine or temporary virtual instruction and students will only receive benefits for days when they had these COVID-19 related absences from school. The school will determine if their absence is related to COVID-19 and will record that in their attendance record and will forward this data to the state. A call center was created by the state to allow clients to get information and questions answered.

**7. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. COVID-19 Update:**

Cheryl Speight provided an update on COVID-19 in Richmond County. Due to technical difficulties with webinar, the presentation will be sent to the board members.

The volume of COVID tests conducted daily has increased significantly. To date, there are 10,102 positive COVID cases, which equates to a county positivity rate of 34%. There have been 165 COVID-related deaths reported.

Over 22,000 Richmond County residents have been vaccinated. Approximately 54% of our population (12 years of age and older) have been fully vaccinated; and 59% have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

COVID-19 updates continue to be posted on the Richmond County Health Department webpage. A map will no longer be supplied with daily COVID reports. Daily reports will now have daily case numbers, deaths, and the daily positivity rate for Richmond County. The Wednesday reports will include vaccine numbers as well as hospitalizations.

**B. Election of Chairperson**

Mr. Smart opened the floor for nomination of the board chairperson. Motion was made to nominate Paul Smart as chairperson of the Health & Human Services Advisory Board.

- **Motion Offered By:** Thad Ussery
- **Motion Seconded By:** Aletha Lanier
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

**C. Election of Vice Chairperson**

Mr. Smart opened the floor for nomination of the board vice-chairperson. Motion was made to nominate Dr. Cleveland as vice-chairperson of the Health & Human Services Advisory Board.

- **Motion Offered By:** Aletha Lanier
- **Motion Seconded By:** Ronald Tillman
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

**8. INFORMAL DISCUSSION:** Mr. Smart asked if there were any other matters to discuss to which no one responded.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Smart asked for a motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

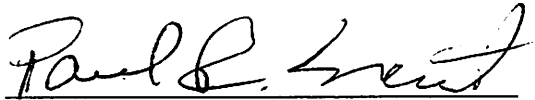
- **Motion Offered By:** Dr. Stevenson
- **Motion Seconded By:** Ronald Tillman
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held via webinar and/or in person based on the status and any restrictions imposed due to the Covid pandemic.

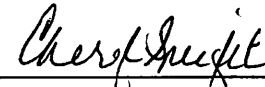
**DATE:** March 15, 2022

**TIME:** 7:00pm

**LOCATION:** Large Classroom and/or webinar



Paul Smart, Chairperson  
Health & Human Services Advisory Board



Cheryl Speight, Health Director  
Richmond County Health Department