

Minutes of the Island County Board of Health
Monday, December 15, 2003

Members Present: Commissioners: Mac McDowell, Mike Shelton and William J. Byrd; Barbara Saugen, WGH Commissioner; Roger S. Case, M.D., Executive Secretary to the Board

Absent: Mayor Patty Cohen, Oak Harbor; Captain Susan B. Herrold, NC USN (Naval Hospital Oak Harbor), Roger S. Case, M.D., Executive Secretary to the Board

Call to Order: Commissioner Mac McDowell called this regular scheduled meeting of the Island County Board of Health to order at 1:15 p.m.

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

Minutes: Commissioner Mike Shelton moved that the minutes for the November 17, 2003 meeting be approved as written. Commissioner William Byrd seconded. The motion passed and the Chair will sign on behalf of the Board.

Public Input/Comment: None

Appeal: Environmental Health Director Keith Higman presented a brief summation of the Hart's Appeal and the continuance that the Board approved at the November 17, 2003 meeting. On the behalf of the appellant he requested another continuance because of the less than average rainfall required for proper testing. Commissioner Mike Shelton moved that the appeal be continued on March 15, 2004. Commissioner Byrd seconded. The motion passed.

There were no contracts.

Report from the Health Department:

Health Services Director Tim McDonald gave a brief report on the following:

1. **Flu** - Having encouraged everyone at last month's meeting to get vaccinated against the flu, Mr. McDonald reported that the season started earlier than normal, demand had been heavier than last year, and the county was now out of vaccine, except for a small number of doses for high risk children. Last year the county had about 3,000 doses of vaccine but wound up having to discard about 300. Since there had been a several-year decline in vaccine demand, corresponding to relatively "light" flu seasons, the decision was to order only 2,000 doses for this season. While the order for next year's vaccine will not be placed until Spring 2004, and will be based on the data from this season, it is anticipated that about 4,000 doses will be ordered to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand as a result of the experience of the public during this flu season. A major portion of the health department's supply this year went to 14 Adult Family Homes and 13 Nursing Homes. Mr McDonald then provided advice on what to do if you were not able to get vaccinated, and how to minimize the transmission of the virus. He went on to report that there have been no influenza fatalities in Island County this season, and that although the schools have experienced absenteeism of 10-15% at times, the actual rate of influenza-like illnesses is down from a peak of about 10 days ago.
2. Rufus Rose wanted to know what gauge was used to determine the type of flu that was predicted to occur this year, and "is there a better way to ascertain the prevalence of flu than school absenteeism?" Mr. McDonald said that the CDC and vaccine manufacturers do a lot of surveillance, basing their decision for the appropriate strains to be included in the next year's vaccine on that surveillance. This year's vaccine formulation was the same as that approved for last year's vaccine supply; however, a new strain of virus appeared this year, a minor variation from that for which this year's vaccine was made. Consequently, the protection of this year's vaccine, while not excellent, is at least good. Next year's vaccine may well include this newly emerging strain of virus since the vaccine is formulated to avoid the major strains of virus anticipated for the coming flu season.

Mr McDonald explained that vaccinations are encouraged in order to avoid a pandemic flu occurrence — “that is the major goal of the flu vaccine program.” As for using the school absentee rate as an indicator for the prevalence of flu, experience has shown that this indicator parallels the incidence of flu in the community, and that in the absence of more personnel and laboratory resources, this the best that we can do.

3. **Letter from inmate-** (attachment) – An inmate in the county jail has written a letter complaining about the food and sanitary conditions. Mr. McDonald has followed-up with the jail staff, and has reviewed the conditions and the inspections his staff have performed. He stated there appeared to be no merit to the complaints, and noted that the food and portion sizes were determined by a nutritionist to ensure the health of the inmates. One of the Board members asked whether jail inspections are by a third party, or are we inspecting ourselves? Mr. McDonald indicated that the Health Department is charged with that responsibility, and that the inspections his staff performs for the jail are probably more rigorous than for any other facility in the county. Another of the Board members noted that the County Commissioners also inspect the jail, as does the County Sheriff (who is also an elected county official).
4. **Opportunity Council** – As a board member Mr. McDonald encouraged the BOH to consider donating to the agency. He stipulated that the funds would stay in the county and be spent on services and goods in Island County.

Adjourn: There being no further business, Commissioner McDowell adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m. The next meeting will be a Special Session January 12, 2004 at the same time in the Commissioner’s Hearing room. This meeting will be set and there will be no changes or additions to the agenda, once set.

Submitted:

Roger S. Case, MD, Executive Secretary to the Board

Minutes approved this 12th day of January 2004.

ISLAND COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

William J. Byrd, Chairman