



FORT LIBERTY
DEPARTMENT
OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
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CUMBERLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH FORT LIBERTY & CUMBERLAND COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 3rd, 2025, 6:00-7:30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Shannon Gettings, Healthcare Representative
Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland County Co-Chair
Beth Maynard, Cumberland County Schools
Shella Korch, Public Health Representative
Melissa Pennington, Food Insecurity Representative
Roni Winston, Food Insecurity Representative
Kenny Bailey, Local Government Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alexis McClain, Farming/Agriculture Representative
Robert Elliott, Farming/Agriculture Representative
Joyce Adams, Higher Education

STAFF PRESENT:

Amy Lo, FPC Liaison
Martina Sconiers-Talbert, AO III
Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director
Meredith Thompson, UNC Partnership Hub Intern
Tamra Morris, Deputy Health Director
Nicole Beckwith
LaToya Bell, WIC Outreach Coordinator

Item 1. Call to Order:

Dr. Clifton Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Approval of January Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: *Kenny Bailey* motioned to approve the January Regular Meeting Minutes.

SECOND: *Melissa Pennington* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Approval of February Agenda.

MOTION: *Shella Korch* motioned to approve the January Agenda.

SECOND: *Beth Maynard* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Item 2a. Action Item: Introduction of UNC Partnership Hub Intern

Meredith Thompson, UNC Partnership Hub Intern

- a. *Meredith Thompson* shared her background in public health and that she will be interning with the FPC through the UNC partnership hub until May 9th. *Tamra Morris* informed the council that *Meredith Thompson* will be taking over *Amy Lo*'s administrative role for the FPC, including creating the future agendas, meeting minutes, voting on basecamp, and council activities. *Tamra Morris* encouraged the council to reach out to *Meredith Thompson* for anything related to support of the council. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* shared that *Amy Lo* will still be involved with the council but moving forward will be working on a volunteer basis.

Item 2b. Action Item: Legislative Updates

Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* shared insights on legislative updates, particularly how council members can share actions they may want to take via legislators. *Dr. Jennifer Green* informed the council of potential impacts of the White House Office of Management and Budget issuing a memo to temporally pause federal funding. The pause of funding was directly related to executive orders and DEI efforts, and does not apply to Medicaid, SNAP, or Medicare. There was no explicit statement of how this freeze will impact WIC programs. Due to the 1st judge temporally blocking the freeze and 2nd judge issuing a temporary restraining order, *Dr. Jennifer Green* said that department can continue as "business per usual" for the foreseeable future. The department is not anticipated direct hits to SNAP or WIC related to funding.
- b. *Beth Maynard* had questions regarding what the nature of the restraining order. *Dr. Jennifer Green* said she drop the temporary restraining order in Basecamp for the members to look over. She provided an overview from the TRO stating "federal agencies cannot pause, freeze, impede, block, cancel or terminate any awards or obligations based on the memo or on the recently issued executive order which applies to all awards and obligations and future assistance. Agencies may exercise their own authority to pause awards or obligations, if done so based on their own discretion, not based off the memo or executive orders." As the changes remain ambiguous, *Dr. Jennifer Green* and the department business officer will keep the council updated on any relevant changes.
- c. *Dr. Jennifer Green* informed the council that the Long session work begins January 29th and if anyone is interested in advocacy work, the deadline to file bills is 3:00 pm April 3rd for House public bills and 4:00 pm March 25th for Senate public bills. The deadline for bills that made Crossover is May 8th.
- d. The county commissioners requested feedback for items to bring to the county commissioner association and potential lobbyists in Washington. The items put (social services) support federal legislation to provide funding for SNAP related to, monitor activity related to the Farm Bill, fully fund WIC so that it can continue to support current and future beneficiaries of WIC, support legislation to allow WIC offices to offer virtual service options, protect and continue to implement WIC's evidence based food packages from USDA, increasing investments in WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program and Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, and support ongoing USDA efforts to modernize WIC's service delivery models (online shopping). *Dr. Jennifer Green* said that North Carolina does not currently have online shopping for WIC models. If there is something that comes up in the council, or a bill comes out that the council wants to support, they could bring to the county commissioners. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* wondered if the council could work on pitches to present to in order see more changes in policies that would impact Cumberland county. *Dr. Jennifer Green* asked *Meredith Thompson* to investigate the Mecklenburg Food Policy council's work in pushing for policy changes related to soda bans in vending machines and bring that information back to the council.

- e. *Dr. Jennifer Green* shared an update on the county commissioner retreat and the seven priority areas they identified: 1) Economic prosperity, 2) Quality smart development, 3) Responsive and transparent government, 4) Supporting high performing education system, 5) Providing increased culture and recreation opportunities, 6) Enhanced health and wellness, 7) Ensuring a safe community for all persons. *Dr. Jennifer Green* pitched that the enhanced health and wellness goal could provide a collaborative agenda space for the council and commissioners.

Item 2c. Action Item: PFAS Forum

Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* shared an opportunity for council members to attend a forum regarding an article published by NC State that found PFAS in home gardens in Cumberland county. This is an opportunity for Q&A sessions with NC state scientist on how these findings might impact the Cumberland county food system.

Item 2d. Action Item: Impact of Funding on Nutrition Programs

Beth Maynard, Cumberland County Schools

- a. *Beth Maynard* gave insights to how the funding freeze may impact nutrition programs at Cumberland county schools. School nutrition programs were included in a published article as being affected by the funding freezes, however the information has not been verified and Cumberland county schools have not received any notification of funding changes. *Beth Maynard* said the program has enough funds in hand to keep running as for the foreseeable future. As of recent, there are bills in congress that would have an adverse effect on school nutrition programs if they were passed. They would affect school nutrition programs by reducing the number of children who are eligible to eat free meals and reduce the number of schools who qualify for a free-meal program. *Dr. Jennifer Green* proposed that the council utilize connections to oppose the bill in congress, framing the push back as “*children should be ready to learn*” regarding equitable access to nutritious meals. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* highlighted the low cost of school lunches, *Roni Winston* added the federal reimbursement for meals is \$4.00 and schools are reimbursed \$1.90. *Dr. Jennifer Green* asked *Meredith Thompson* to gather and send more information on these ideas into basecamp. *Meredith Thompson* agreed.

Item 2e. Action Item: Formal Letter Invitation

- a. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* proposed that a formal invite be drafted to the County Commissioners for the March meeting. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert*, *Meredith Thompson*, and *Amy Lo* will be drafting the invite to be ready by February 10th, 2025. *Dr. Jennifer Green* said new commissioners will be touring the department on Wednesday, February 12th, 2025, and this would be an opportunity to remind them of their invitation. *Dr. Jennifer Green* will forward the invite to the County Clerk who can deliver it to the Commissioners.

Item 2f. Action Item: Asks for the Board of Commissioners

- a. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* made suggestions for members voting to be in-person or virtual happening sooner in advance or determined for the year. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* said that he will send *Meredith Thompson* an email including agenda items for the presentation. *Dr. Jennifer Green* suggested the council use the Health and Wellness objective from the board of

commissioners to guide future goals included in the presentation. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* agreed. *Dr. Jennifer Green* suggested as “ask” for the commissioners be a representative for the council who supports farmers markets. She also suggested a priority of the FPC could be to inform stakeholders on current food insecurity data for better decision making. *Shannon Gettings* proposed funding for an updated food & environment assessment be added to the list of grant applications, *Meredith Thompson* will assist in looking for grant opportunities for an updated assessment. *Martina-Sconiers Talbert* advocated for conducting another food & environment assessment. *Meredith Thompson* added *Dr. Jennifer Green*’s ideas to the presentation - be included in conversations regarding farmers markets, food system & environment assessment, inform elected officials on policy recommendations.

- b. *Dr. Jennifer Green* and *Shannon Gettings* asked that the ongoing search for funding opportunities and grants be highlighted in the presentation by *Meredith Thompson*. The council reflected on the opportunity to use individual expertise to support more “asks” being included in the presentation. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* agreed to be the initial speaker for the March 3rd in-person council meeting.

Item 3. Conclusion

Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland Co-Chair

- a. Introduction of Visitors
- b. Public Comment
- c. Announcements

ADJOURN

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Monday, March 3, 2025, 6-7:30 pm

@ Cumberland County Public Health Department
(1235 Ramsey St, 3rd Floor Conference Room)