



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

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland County Co-Chair
Shannon Gettings, Healthcare Representative
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
Robert Elliott, Farming/Agriculture Representative
Joyce Adams, Higher Education*

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alexis McClain, Farming/Agriculture Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

*Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director
Tamra Morris, Deputy Health Director
Martina Sconiers-Talbert, AO III
LaToya Bell, WIC Outreach Coordinator
Meredith Thompson, FPC/UNC Intern*

VISITORS:

*Glenn B. Adams, Cumberland County Commissioner
Heather Skeens, Assistant County Manager
Alba Natale, Supervisor from the Department of Communicable Disease*

Item 1. Call to Order:

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

Approval of February Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: *Shannon Gettings* motioned to approve the February Regular Meeting Minutes.

SECOND: *Melissa Pennington* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Approval of March Agenda.

MOTION: *Shannon Gettings* motioned to approve the March Agenda.

SECOND: *Melissa Pennington* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Item 1d. FPC March 2025 Presentation

***Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director,
Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland County
Co-Chair***

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* welcomed *Commissioner Glenn Adams* to the Council's March meeting and presented updates on what the FPC has been working on, feedback and ideas for future work, and aligning goals with the Commissioners. *Dr. Jennifer Green* provided an overview on the history of the FPC including its inception and funding by Aetna, the APHA, and the National Association of Counties. She also covered past achievements of the FPC, such as supporting the WIC office on Fort Bragg, implemented food drop zones, supporting the transportation committee, and providing food resources to the Cumberland County and Fort Bragg community. The presentation included current statistics for food insecurity in the military and in the county.
- b. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* presented potential action areas for strengthening the local food system. The action areas included updating the food system & environment assessment, seeking out additional grant opportunities to support food access, expanding public awareness of food resources, and providing input on farmers markets. *Dr. Jennifer Green* suggested that another action area for the FPC could be to provide input to the Commissioners on bills and legislative actions that would be beneficial to support food access. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* added to the FPC advocating for certain policies may involve urban planning and food desserts, he gave an example of the surplus of new gas stations over food markets in Cumberland County. *Dr. Jennifer Green* turned the floor over to *Commissioner Glenn Adams* to provide feedback on what was presented.

Feedback from Commissioner Glenn Adams

- a. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* thanked the FPC for their work and acknowledged that Cumberland County is a tier-1 county, in need of efforts to reduce food insecurity as well as efforts to improve health outcomes. He suggested that the FPC incorporate health promotion and nutrition education as an action item. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* suggested gathering statistics on areas with the highest rates of food insecurity using zip code data and DSS. He also suggested municipality involvement (e.g., Spring Lake, Mayors Coalition). *Commissioner Glenn Adams* discussed more potential partnerships for the FPC and stated the importance of nutrition education among children and young adults (e.g., knowing where food comes from), including increasing awareness of food insecurity among elected officials.
- b. *Dr. Jennifer Green* stated interest in the Mayors Coalition and updating the food system & environment assessment to present to elected officials.
- c. *Heather Skeens* commented that the next Mayors Coalition will be happening on May 2nd, 2025, and that it might be effective to bring military representatives. *Tamra Morris* offered that the FPC look at potential areas for collaboration with the Mayors Coalition.
- d. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* referred to input on farmers markets as an action item for the FPC. He stated that the county is in the early planning stages of implementing a farmers' market in central Fayetteville, including micro-enterprise kitchens. He acknowledged food safety potentially being a rising concern. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* suggested that the FPC provide input on what vendors should be included at the farmers market. *Dr. Jennifer Green* asked for direction on how input and feedback should be presented to the Commissioners. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* responded that data to support ideas, including site visits from other farmers markets in North Carolina, would be beneficial for providing input.

Input on Farmers' Markets, Transportation, and Community Feedback

- a. *Robert Elliot* posed questions about the feasibility of a farmers' market to address food insecurity, including transportation of farmers, lack of revenue, and small-scale farmers with higher quality foods creating an affordability issue. *Robert Elliot* also gave personal testimonies of the low impact of farmers markets in addressing food insecurity. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* acknowledged the proposition of a farmers' market not being an "end-all" solution to food insecurity. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* highlighted partnerships that could aid in the success of a farmers' market in the county and selection of vendors being key for feasibility. He added that some markets accept WIC and SNAP improving accessibility, while acknowledging the challenges presented by *Robert Elliot*. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* shared insights on other efforts the county is making in city development and community-building.
- b. *Robert Elliot* offered concerns with the FPC getting involved in city-development rather than food insecurity efforts. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* clarified that the FPC could act as an informing-body for food access related to the farmers market and not involved in planning or implementation of the market itself. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* thanked *Robert Elliot* for asking the "hard questions" that ultimately lead to better informed decision making and creating more effective solutions.
- c. *Beth Maynard* commented that she agrees with the concerns regarding a farmers market offered by *Robert Elliot*. *Beth Maynard* went on to express that a farmers' market would be an effective opportunity to promote local farmers, encourage healthier eating, and solve several issues that have been facing the Cumberland County community for a few years. Through her position with Cumberland County schools, *Beth Maynard* referred to the USDA grant called the *Fresh Foods and Vegetable Program* where high-poverty elementary schools can participate in having a free vegetable or fruit snack in their classroom three times a week, with corresponding nutrition education. *Beth Maynard* stated that ultimately a farmers' market is a prime opportunity for nutrition education, although not serving as a direct solution for food insecurity, but potentially combatting several related issues.
- d. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* referred back to *Robert Elliot's* concerns as pertinent and reflected on neighboring county's farmers markets dwindling. He suggesting including those county's input for barriers and facilitators in the planning process for building a successful farmers market. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* re-emphasized the FPC's proposed role in the farmers market would be as an informing-body for food access and proposed looking into ride-share and food delivery apps. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* spoke to the importance of transportation for food access, and the need for out-of-the-box solutions.
- e. *Robert Elliot* thanked *Commissioner Glenn Adams* for attending this month's meeting and reintroduced his role with the FPC and his work with veterans and farmers. *Robert Elliot* proposed prioritizing transportation issues that create a significant barrier to food access, and demoted the idea of farmers markets as priority for the Council in the upcoming year.
- f. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* reiterated his position on farmers markets not being a "solution" for food insecurity, but rather a "link in the chain" to address a series of problems and emphasized the FPC having a minor role in planning.
- g. *Dr. Jennifer Green* confirmed the FPC's interest in being an informing-body to the Commissioners or other city projects within similar areas and noted an existing document created by the FPC in regard to feedback that the Council would like to provide as input for a farmers' market in Cumberland County. *Dr. Jennifer Green* also expressed interest in the Council providing feedback in a similar manner for issues regarding transportation and food access. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* confirmed this as an interest of the FPC.

- h. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* highlighted other existing councils in the county that actively contribute to decision-making for transportation solutions and expressed interest in the FPC focusing on food-delivery services (e.g., Instacart, Uber, DoorDash) for increased food access.
- i. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* advocated for innovative solutions that utilize existing services and technology, reinforcing the idea of food-delivery services and promotions being a priority of the FPC. *Heather Skeens* added that relevant data to support any proposed solutions to the Commissioners is essential for receiving funding. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* encouraged the Council to include demographic information when creating and presenting solutions such as age, and the need for strategic thinking in light of funding and administration shifts at the federal level. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* expressed that the FPC might be one of the most critical resources for health outcomes in Cumberland County currently.
- j. *Tamra Morris* suggested that the Council starts working on evidence-based or emerging recommendations for members to present to Commissioners in the near future, she noted multiple collaborative opportunities to work with on collecting input for the Commissioners.
- k. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* supported the idea of gathering feedback from partnerships and emphasized that these conversations for community input occur as soon as possible, regardless of priority area, and to create urgency for these conversations through creating awareness.
- l. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* and *Shannon Gettings* responded with personal testimonies related to the importance of community feedback and surveys to inform decision making.
- m. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* brought up community gardens as another potential action item for the Council to focus on in the near future. He recommended involving local agricultural/framing representatives in these initiatives. *Commissioner Glenn Adams* thanked the Council for their work and expressed appreciation to *Robert Elliot* for providing valuable insight and questions.

Item 1e. Legislative Updates

Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* informed the council that WIC, SNAP, and several other USDA programs house at CCDPH have not yet been affected by changes in federal funding.

Item 2a. Action Items: Review Bylaws & Set Meeting Schedule

Meredith Thompson, FPC/UNC Intern

- a. *Meredith Thompson* shared potential revisions of the bylaws for the Council to approve, such as *Fort Liberty* returning to the name *Fort Bragg*, and updating the verbiage for the role of the secretary of the FPC to include “*liaison*” and “*intern*”. *Tamra Morris* clarified that suggestions offered to the bylaws are items to be considered by council members and then voted on for approval.
- b. *Meredith Thompson* offered administrative suggestions to the Council regarding having a set meeting calendar, including the Council not meeting in the months of July or August (*council meetings occur on the first Monday of each month, and votes are cast to determine the meeting format prior to the meeting*). *Tamra Morris* added that other collaborative groups have switched to pre-determining meeting formats and emphasized that having a set schedule is ultimately up to the Council to decide on. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* recommended the Council discuss the meeting schedule further on Basecamp, with each member providing their input on preferred meeting formats.
- c. *Meredith Thompson* provided resources from webinars for the Council, regarding state-wide bills that support food donation & access, food recovery, and supporting microenterprise and community kitchens. *Roni Winston* mentioned the idea of “shared spaces” which could be used to promote food access and while incorporating community gardens. *Dr. Jennifer Green* asked



Tamra Morris to ask the *Director of Environmental Health* about regulations in North Carolina regarding selling and donating food grown in community gardens. *Robert Elliot* added that a “Sales and Use Number” is the general requirement for selling produce from a community garden, as sales would likely need to be reported to the *Department of Revenue* depending on what produce is being sold (e.g., produce vs. livestock). *Tamra Morris* called for incorporating nutrition education and resources when conducting community-led initiatives like community gardens. *Robert Elliot* offered the *Veterans Farm* as potential partner for providing nutrition education through the extension office (i.e., community cooking classes). The Council discussed utilizing existing resources and spaces to host food education initiatives and working to correspond themes across Cumberland County schools.

Item 3. Conclusion

Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland Co-Chair

- a. Introduction of Visitors – *Alba Natale*, Department of Communicable Disease
- b. Public Comment
- c. Announcements – *Beth Maynard* shared progress on the planning stages of meal bundles for children and asked for the Council to share ideas for supporting transportation for this program.

ADJOURN

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

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

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