

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 13, 2002 MINUTES**

Mental Health Workshop

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Wednesday, February 13, 2002, at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners' Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W. 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

Commissioners present:

Tom Coulson, Commissioner
Terry Shank, Commissioner
Tom Johnson, Commissioner
Beth Ward, Vice Chairwoman
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
Eugene James, Commissioner
Mark Owens, Jr., Chairman (arrived later)

Commissioners Absent:

David Hammond, Commissioner
Randy Royal, Commissioner

Staff present:

Deby Dihoff, Mental Health Area Director
Phil Dickerson, Interim County Manager
Melonie Bryan, Director of Financial Services
Susan Banks, Clerk to the Board
Arlen Holt, Public Information Officer
John Bulow, Assistant County Manager

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice Chairwoman Ward.

Invocation and Pledge

Summary of Information

The invocation was offered by Commissioner James.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Johnson.

Items for Report

Mental Health Reform - Deby Dihoff

Summary of Information

Ms. Dihoff introduced the Area Board members and Allan Spadar.

Ms. Dihoff stated there are some changes coming down from the State. There have been problems in the delivery of services, funding, and accountability in the mental health programs. The biggest changes will mean the mental health programs will become managers of

assigning services and a change in their role and mission. They will do screening, referrals, emergency care, outreach, prevention and education. They need to be good at managing the whole system. They are not saying there would not be jobs because the needs still exist. The State is looking to reduce the number of programs by combining programs. The State suggests usage of a statewide 1-800-referral network phone number. The State is expecting tighter eligibility criteria and clearer target population.

The Board of Commissioners must file a letter of intent declaring the preference of governance structure for the area mental health program by October 2002. A business plan for mental health must be written and then approved by the Board of Commissioners and submitted to the State by January 2003. She said this is the opportunity to redesign the system. There is a target population of 200,000 for each center and Pitt is under this target population so additional population is needed.

The options for governance are:

- single county program (department of the county)
- single county area authority
- multi-county area authority
- multi-county program with interlocal agreement

She spoke of advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Multi-county program would require each county to appoint a member to the board or a proportional amount of the members. It would have central administration with satellite clinics and possibly a county coordinator. The multi-county program is where the planning and administration is done but the clients would not have to drive to the main agency. It has worked successfully in some areas. The same services would be provided. How the services are met is what would have to be considered. The legislators want more uniform services provided for all citizens. The target for the whole state is twenty programs. There are currently 38 mental health programs in North Carolina.

Commissioners were concerned about the amount of money each county would contribute in a multi-county plan. Ms. Dihoff said this is a challenge for each county. Privatization of services were discussed. Ms. Dihoff gave examples such as the Genesis program where continuity of care would be provided during their recommendation of these services to be provided by contract. This is a five-bed facility where a group of employees will incorporate to provide the services. She said they are trying to be creative and letting staff make suggestions. She said there are choices to be made here in Pitt County. There are services that may be hard to contract out. She said these things should come out in the business plan. She said they are trying to protect some jobs, which will not stay Pitt County jobs. They are encouraging them to do contract work for the center. Ms. Dihoff said she is concerned about some of their providers continuing to serve their clients.

Duplin-Sampson-Lenoir-Pitt could be a combined service provider. The counties do not have to be contiguous. Ms. Dihoff stated that the county could get out of the multi-county program if it was found to be unsatisfactory but there are certain legal requirements that have to be addressed. A business plan must be done and a structure must be decided.

The Executive Committee of the Mental Health Area Board has instructed Ms. Dihoff to do a survey of the eastern counties. Ms. Dihoff reported that the Neuse program had some interest in talking with Pitt County and there are some similarities in the programs. Duplin-Sampson-Lenoir also said they would be open to discussion. The Tideland Program said they were not interested in partnering with Pitt County. She said she thinks the multi-county program is a feasible option.

Ms. Dihoff said they have done a number of public forums in the community. They recommend the Board pass a resolution to appoint three commissioners on the committee to

work on the business plan. Duane Holder is the in-house project leader. Mental Health staff has been in touch with agencies for support. They recommend that the first meeting be no later than February. She asked that the Board authorize her to explore the possibilities and report back in May in order to meet the October deadline. She said a report to the Board of Commissioners will be made in September. She asked for support for setting up a good business plan committee. It may take two fulltime staff to get this business plan written by the deadline. This is an opportunity for change. She said they have already done a lot on this project. She said their changes are based on the laws. She said she anticipates better delivery of services.

Vice Chairwoman Ward thanked Ms. Dihoff for her attitude about this change. She reiterated that they are recommending appointing three commissioners to the committee to work on the timeline and business plan.

Ms. Dihoff provided the Board with position statements about the law that explain the intent of House Bill 381 including the extent of privatization. In Raleigh, they are talking about slowing down the implementation plan according to Ms. Dihoff.

Commissioner Bowen suggested that the ECU School of Medicine would have people from the School of Psychiatry that could serve on this committee. Ms. Dihoff said they have provided a suggested grouping of people from agencies. She said they need to get a core work group and break up into committees. Chairman Owens suggested that consumers or people who have been touched by these problems be included on the committee.

Commissioners asked if the Mental Health Center in Pitt County was not already multi-county with some of their programs. Ms. Dihoff stated that they already provide several regional programs such as Port, Detox, and the Methodone Clinic. It could be considered interlocal agreements but they do serve the eastern part of the State and receive State funds for providing these programs. Ms. Dihoff stated that the intent of the State is not to change things that are already working well. This could be considered as part of the business plan. A big part of their business is regional. If PCMH does not provide emergency care, it will have to be provided by some agency. The Hospital is a major player in this plan. The Mental Health program currently contracts with PCMH. They are providing some programs and the Mental Health staff is having good discussions with the Hospital about possible programs.

Charles Mayo said the State is cost shifting and the counties are all facing that issue. He said the State does not identify what their funding levels are or the service levels required. Mr. Mayo said Mental Health Board needs the Board of Commissioners opinion through this process. This study group is going to try to find the answer of the best services for the money for Pitt County's citizens.

Motion:

Motion to adopt resolution for Chairman to appoint three commissioners to the Mental Health business plan.

Motion made by Commissioner Terry Shank.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Eugene James.

Vote Record:

Beth Ward	Yes
Terry Shank	Yes
Tom Johnson	Yes
Tom Coulson	Yes
Glenn Bowen	Yes
Eugene James	Yes
Mark Owens, Jr.	Yes

Total Yes Votes: 7
Total No Votes: 0
Motion Passed.

Adjourn

Motion:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.
Motion made by Commissioner Eugene James.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Tom Coulson.

Vote Record:

Tom Coulson	Yes
Glenn Bowen	Yes
Eugene James	Yes
Mark Owens, Jr.	Yes
Beth Ward	Yes
Terry Shank	Yes
Tom Johnson	Yes

Total Yes Votes: 7
Total No Votes: 0
Motion Passed

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board