

**County of San Luis Obispo  
HEALTH COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, June 11, 2007 (Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Lynn Enns (Chair), Penny Chamousis, Deborah Donnelly, Ed Guarena, Pam Heatherington, Jan Hicks, Sara Horne, James Mase, MD, Robert Thielscher, Susan Warren

Members Absent: David Odell (excused)

Staff Present: Jeff Hamm (Health Agency Director); Jean White (recorder)

Speakers: Curtis Batson, Rich Lichtenfels (SLO County Environmental Health Services); Jody Smith (EOC Director of Homeless Services)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action	Who/When
<b>1. CALL TO ORDER</b>	Meeting called to order by Chair Enns at 6:02 p.m.		
<b>2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	Minutes of May 14, 2007 approved as written.	<i>Minutes approved</i>	Approved -all
<b>3. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	<p><b>Elizabeth Johnson, San Luis Obispo</b>, thanks the commission for updating their website to include all three GMO Task Force reports. She believes “the HC’s GMO Task Force Report should be deleted because of the Chair’s conflict of interest.” She states that “the Chair’s brother-in-law and father-in-law were both presidents of Farm Credit West, and on a Board of Directors that included industrial agricultural people in SLO County and that the Chair acted to protect her economic interests and the interests of Farm Credit West in her role.” She states that Chair Enns refused to disclose her conflicts of interest on GMO and formed strategies with the vice-chair to keep the public from commenting on an issue that the public cares about, and has violated the Brown Act, generally creating an aura of acceptance for unethical behavior on the Health Commission and asks that the Chair step down. A copy of Ms. Johnson’s public comment is submitted for the record.</p> <p><b>Mike Zelina, Cambria</b>, thanks the commission for posting all three GMO Task Force reports on their website and states that he agrees with Ms. Johnson’s comments. He reviews the reasons why they have a concern about the HC’s GMO report: He states that the Chair, along with two of the lead people on the committee had conflicts of interest that were not disclosed until the issue was raised by members of the public – one was the Vice President of Research and Development for Seneca Ag and the other was a researcher from Cal Poly who accepted funds from Monsanto. Because of these conflicts, he believes the report was unbalanced. He believes having a Chair with tight connections to agriculture prevents the commission from making bold moves to protect the public’s interest. He asks the Health Commission to take a close look at the health impacts from GMOs that are not properly tested and act in the public interest to protect the public. Mr. Zelina adds that since the GMO reports have been published, GMO rice has been discovered in the food supply, even that it hasn’t been approved for human consumption, and is being sold to the United States.</p>	<i>Copy of Ms. Johnson’s public comment submitted for the record.</i>	

	<p><b>Lynn Enns</b> states that her brother-in-law has a small family farm and that she has absolutely no financial interest in his farm. She states that she does not receive “one dime” from her brother-in-law’s farm and that it is unknown to her what type of crops he may have grown that someone would think are genetically modified. She has no knowledge of his business practice. She clearly states that whom she is related to would never have anything to do with how she would conduct a committee.</p>		
<p><b>4. OCEAN WATER MONITORING w/ EMPHASIS ON PISMO BEACH</b></p>	<p><b>Curtis Batson, Director of Environmental Health Services</b>, describes their Ocean Water Monitoring Program, where they monitor 20 sites along the coast. They test each site once per week for total coliform bacteria, fecal coliform bacteria and enterococcus bacteria. If state standards are exceeded, a health advisory is posted, and follow-up samples are then taken on a daily basis until samples meet standards. The cost of the program is approximately \$150,000, with \$50,000 in revenue from grants and \$100,000 in general fund money. They will be receiving 20 permanent health advisory “flip” signs in English and Spanish, in the next week or two. One permanent sign will be posted at each sampling location. Health advisories are also posted on their website, or by calling their hotline at 788-3411. One of the Pismo Beach sites has had recurring high levels of bacteria over the last year. Mr. Batson introduces Rich Lichtenfels to talk more about the Pismo site.</p> <p><b>Rich Lichtenfels, Supervising Environmental Health Specialist</b>, talks about three Pismo Beach sampling sites -- PB3 (300 yards south of the pier), PB4 (40 feet south of the pier and PB5 (Wadsworth Ave site -- 300 yards north of the pier). Last year, PB4 had a total of 16 sample failures, far higher than any other site in the County. They do not have recurring failures on PB3 or PB5, and suspect the pigeons may be the problem at PB4. The City recently passed an ordinance that will prohibit the feeding of birds on the pier. This ordinance will take effect on July 19<sup>th</sup>. The City also purchased “TV camera” equipment to ensure sewer lines are not leaking. They found a pipe under a local restaurant, adjacent to the pier that had a sagging sewer pipe and although no evidence of leakage, they are replacing the pipe at a cost of \$120,000. The City has also formed an Ocean Water Quality Group to address the beach issues, and has recently applied for a Prop 50 “Clean Beach Initiative” grant from the State Water Resource Control Board to do a source (DNA) identification study. The grant is up to \$450,000.</p> <p><b><u>Commissioner Questions / Comments:</u></b></p> <p><b>Commissioner Hicks</b> is surprised to hear about the pigeons and asks about other possible contributors. She asks if the ordinance is citywide. <i>(Mr. Batson: There is usually not a single contributor to the problem. DNA study will show them more about percentages. He believes the ordinance is citywide, not just pier.)</i></p> <p><b>Commissioner Chamousis</b> asks if pigeons are a problem at other pier locations. Also about testing of the creek waters. <i>(Mr. Lichtenfels: Piers and pigeons are a statewide problem – the City and the Health Department have been working with other California coastal areas to see what they have done. Mr. Batson: Creek is more of a variable in the winter after the first rains, when there is a flush out of the bacteria into the ocean.)</i></p>		

**Commissioner Heatherington** believes if it were the pigeons, the numbers would be more consistent. She asks about doing gradient testing from the problem site. (*Mr. Batson: PB4 has been a challenge and pigeons seem most obvious, but they are doing other testing.* Commissioner Heatherington also comments that the beach should have been posted for the Memorial Day weekend, and asks if that was in violation of the Health and Safety Code. (*Mr. Batson: The beach didn't get posted as quickly as it should have, but not a violation of the Safety Code.*) Pam: Asks about the possibility of doing a dye test, given the fact that there is a sagging sewer pipe. (*Mr. Batson believes they should identify the DNA source first. The dye test has benefits, but doesn't provide very conclusive evidence.*)

**Commissioner Donnelly** asks about the possibility of holding off on the DNA study until they see the results from the new ordinance. (*Mr. Batson: the ordinance will help reduce the pigeon population, but probably won't eliminate the problem.*)

**Commissioners Thielscher and Chamousis** ask for more info about the new permanent signs. (*Mr. Batson: there will be one sign per site, signs are metal and lockable. They are working with the cities, state parks, Surfrider Foundation to help identify best locations. There are multiple entries in many of the locations, where it would be good to have more than one sign, but only have funding for one sign.*)

**Commissioner Heatherington** asks about signs and symptoms that someone may experience when coliform levels are high. (*possible ear/eye infections, sore throat, gastroenteritis, nausea, dermatitis skin rash – depending upon organism injected.*)

#### **Public Comment**

**Jeff Pinack, Oceano, citizen and member of Surfrider Foundation** comments that the fecal and total coliform measurements referred to are only a measure of mammals and that pigeons are not mammals. He states that Surfrider has been studying this problem for a long time and refers to an article in Surfer Magazine that talks about the millions of illnesses caused by swimming in water contaminated by sewage. He comments that the sewage outfall at Oceano is approx. 1/2 mile offshore, in 40 feet of water. The World's Health Organization recommends that a sewage outfall be at least 1 mile offshore and in at least 60 feet of water. Mr. Pinack states there is a current that flows from south to north from the shoreline to 2 miles out, pulling everything towards Pismo Pier. He hands out copies of test results from 50 feet north of the pier (a new testing site, right outside of the sagging sewer pipe), and from the Pismo Creek, showing elevated levels of fecal coliform and total coliform.

**Jennifer Blonder**, teacher, member of Surfrider, and a concerned citizen of Pismo Beach talks about her concern for her health and the health of children playing in the water. On Memorial Day weekend a health advisory should have been posted at Pismo Beach. She took it upon herself to warn people about the high levels of bacteria in the water, because recently she had an ear infection after surfing in the water. She has been observing how other communities heavily post areas when there is contamination or danger in the water and notes some examples. She believes permanent signs are a great

	<p>idea, but wants to see them placed in every possible high traffic location (hotels, pier entrances), so there is no question when a health advisory has been issued.</p> <p><b>Jennifer Joslett, Shell Beach</b>, teacher and Vice-Chair of Surfrider states she receives copies of ocean monitoring test reports from Environmental Health and refers to results on 5/4, 5/5 and 5/8, where there were “alarmingly” high levels of fecal coliform and total coliform. She notes that you would expect to see high results during rainy periods, but these were during a “dry” period, when the majority of beachgoers are in the water. She surfs regularly and has been sick frequently over the past few years. She comments that testing is done once per week at Pismo (on a Tuesday) and that this does not give any warning to weekend tourists. She suggests adding additional testing dates and doing testing closer to the weekend. She encouraged participation from the Health Commission to assist them in advocating for more testing and funding.</p> <p><b><u>Further Commissioner Questions/Comments</u></b></p> <p><b>Commissioner Enns</b> asked about the possibility of a partnership between the County and Surfrider’s Blue Water Task Force to perform more testing. (<i>Ms. Joslett: other suggestions have been that the City of Pismo contribute to funding and Supervisor Gibson has suggested temporarily reallocating resources from other testing sites</i>)</p> <p><b>Commission Horne</b> asked if the County and Creek Lab use the same method of testing and what the baseline measurements are. (<i>Mr. Batson’s legal authority is with the State standards: Total coliform - 10,000 per 100 milliliters; Fecal coliform – 400 per 100 milliliters; Enterococcus – 104 per 100 milliliters. Both labs are measuring the same things, but EPA standards are different from State standards</i>)</p> <p><b>Commissioner Guarena</b> asks if the Blue Water Task Force is taking measurements from the creek (<i>Ms. Joslett: Yes, they are also advocating for Pismo’s grant to include more testing up the creek, not only in the water around the pier.</i>)</p> <p><b>Commissioner Donnelly</b> asks about the possibility of sharing test results. (<i>In order for the Health Dept. to issue a health advisory, strict testing methodology has to be followed. Mr. Batson cannot take legal action based on Surfrider’s testing results.</i>)</p> <p><b>Mr. Pinack</b> asks if the County lab can process samples that Surfrider has taken around Pismo during this time of the broken sewer line. (<i>Mr. Batson does not manage the lab’s resources, but can check with the Public Health lab about short term testing.</i>)</p> <p><b><i>Motion made by Commissioner Heatherington that a letter be sent to the Board of Supervisors, City of Pismo Beach, and all participating organizations and agencies surrounding the Pismo Beach water quality problem, supporting the wide collaborative effort towards the goal of healthy water, asking to expand the testing and asking the City of Pismo Beach to help fund the testing. Motion seconded by Commissioner Thielscher. (Discussion: Commissioner Donnelly would like more information on why they suspect the pigeons and suggests waiting to see results from the new ordinance before advocating to spend more money on further testing. Mr. Lichtenfels summarizes the corrective actions that the City of Pismo beach is taking and</i></b></p>	<p>Motion approved to send a letter supporting collaboration and to expand testing.</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup>-Heatherington 2<sup>nd</sup> – Thielscher 9 in favor 1 abstention</p>
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	<p><i>talks about the sewer outfall and why he doesn't suspect the sewer. If the failures stop with the new ordinance, there probably won't be a study.)</i></p> <p><b>Voice vote taken – 9 yes; 1 abstention (Commissioner Donnelley). Motion passes.</b></p> <p>Health advisories are posted on the EH website, or by calling their hotline at 788-3411.</p>		
<p><b>5. MEDICALLY FRAGILE HOMELESS</b></p>	<p><b>Mary Miller, Patient Advocate</b>, refers to the update she gave at last month's meeting with regard to 1) EOC's Health Care Access Ombudsman program and 2) the gap between services for the medically fragile homeless. She introduces Jody Smith who talks more about the gap in services for the medically fragile homeless.</p> <p><b>Jody Smith, EOC Director of Homeless Services</b>, talks about her concerns with the number of people coming through their services who are very medically fragile. The emergency night shelter in San Luis Obispo is not the appropriate place for someone that has just been discharged from the hospital or is chronically ill. The shelter cannot provide a sterile environment for someone who has a compromised immune system. She notes that there is no place for the medically fragile to go during the day to get bed rest. They no longer have access to the Housing Authority's Special Needs Sectioning. Transitional Food &amp; Shelter provide "motelling," but have a very finite amount of funding for their program. With funding shrinking, they are trying to guard their own resources through Homeless Services. She talks about La Posada, a respite care program for the homeless, operated by Clinica Sierra Vista, in Bakersfield. This is a program she would like to see in San Luis Obispo County. She asks the Health Commission to please advocate with the Homeless Services Coordinating Council for the medically fragile in our community.</p> <p><b><u>Commissioner Questions/Comments</u></b></p> <p><b>Chair Enns</b> asks for more detail about the program in Bakersfield (<i>La Posada receives funding through Health and Human Services. It is a house that sits on the same site as a recovery home. There are 6 beds for men and 4 for women; meals are provided. There is an LVN in charge of the patients.</i>)</p> <p><b>Commissioner Heatherington</b> asks about their vision for a like-type facility in San Luis Obispo. (<i>They would like to see 10-12 beds and find a way to wrap resources through collaborative efforts with CHC, Tenet, Catholic Healthcare West and others. They are working closely with CHC, the hospitals and discharge planners and hope when they build the new shelter to have a new "one stop center."</i>)</p> <p><b>Commissioner Chamousis</b> asks if they are tracking data/statistics on the number of medically fragile homeless, including tracking ER costs that would be saved by having such a facility. (<i>Yes, all the agencies are tracking monthly, but they have to be careful with health information. Everyone is working together, looking for cost effective ways.</i>)</p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren</b> receives the agendas and minutes from their meetings and would like to see this get more media attention. She suggests there are a lot of federal funds that could be funneled differently, and that there may be private money as well. She asks that agendas and minutes from their meetings be sent to commission members.</p>		

	<p><b>Commissioner Donnelly:</b> Asks what stage they are at and what the commission can do to help. <i>(They have most of the community partners together through the Homeless Services Coordinating Council and have a steering committee and subcommittee dealing with homeless issues and medically fragile. They will be holding community meetings asking for input and help for the design of the new shelter.)</i></p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren</b> notes the importance of community partners “leaving their agendas at the door,” and “thinking out of the box” to advocate for those less fortunate.</p>		
<p><b>6. PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT</b></p>	<p><b>Jeff Hamm, Health Agency Director,</b> reports that Dr. Thomas is absent tonight and provides an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refers to a question asked last month about suicide rates – and provides information from Dr. Thomas that 9% of the suicide rates referenced in the Community Health Status Report were associated with ASH or CMC. <i>(Commissioner Warren asks if next year’s report can “break out” the suicide rates for CMC &amp; ASH.)</i></li> <li>▪ Introduces Jeff O’Quest, new County Administrative Office Analyst, who will be the Health and Human Services liaison to the Administrative Office.</li> <li>▪ Notes that SLO County has joined 6 other counties in a National Class Action lawsuit against the federal government for our low rate of Medicare reimbursement.</li> <li>▪ Announces that budget hearings for the Health Agency will begin on Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. The amount of general fund support for the Health Agency has increased from approx. 8 million to 13 million. Jeff will be meeting with the Administrative Office next week to discuss preliminary assessment of how to address this for FY 08/09.</li> <li>▪ Talks about Health Care reform and the many health care proposals that have been brought forward – these bills are being watched very closely.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>9. HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES</b></p>	<p><b>Chair Enns:</b> Attended SART meeting last week where it was reported that SART hopes to move into their new location (the former General Hospital ER) in September. The subcommittee for Drug Endangered Children has not yet met. Notices are being sent to the ERs to be alert for drug-facilitated sexual assaults to help identify those cases. SART also continues to assemble a bi-lingual volunteer panel. Chair Enns also reports that the Tobacco Coalition did not meet this month and that the Obesity Task Force will be meeting this week.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Thielscher:</b> No report</p> <p><b>Commissioner Heatherington:</b> Attended the Domestic Violence Task Force, where an update was given on a program by the Women’s Shelter that provides education to all law enforcement officers on recognizing domestic violence. She suggests the Health Commission add this as a future agenda item.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Guereña:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Chamousis:</b> Attended the Adult Services Policy Council meeting where Greg MacIntosh, Executive Director of the local chapter of the American Red Cross, presented information regarding VOID (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). VOID produces a resource grid that identifies volunteer organization’s missions, objectives, resources, and 24-hour contact information. Commissioner Chamousis reports that CHC always presents an update at the ASPC meeting and asks</p>		

	<p>that the commission include an update from CHC in the near future.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Hicks:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Mase:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Horne:</b> Attended the Children’s Services Network (CSN) meeting and reported that CSN is in the process of redesigning itself, and will be looking at best ways to efficiently use resources to provide services to children. CNS will probably not be meeting for the next 2 months.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren:</b> Attended the Drug &amp; Alcohol Advisory meeting this month, which was a joint meeting with the Mental Health Board and the Drug &amp; Alcohol Board. Commissioner Warren was impressed with the direction that the Mental Health Board has taken, particularly with regard to trainings and their involvement in programs.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Donnelly:</b> No report.</p>		
<b>10. COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	<p><b>Legislative:</b> Commissioner Chamousis reported that the legislative committee did not have a quorum at their last meeting, but Commissioner Chamousis and Marsha Bollinger met and discussed a plan of action for providing timely input to the County lobbyist for the May legislative session next year. The legislative committee will be meeting with Jeff Hamm to further discuss process. No action taken tonight.</p> <p><b>Community Education:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Nominating:</b> Commissioner Hicks presented the FY 07-08 Nominating Committee’s recommended slate of officers for discussion and vote by the commission: <i>Chair – Lynn Enns; Vice Chair – Jan Hicks; Secretary – Penny Chamousis.</i></p> <p><b>Motion made by Commissioner Horne to accept the recommendations as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Mase. (Discussion: Commissioner Chamousis states she received an email from the nominating committee chair and asks if all commissioners have had an opportunity to provide their feedback to the nominating committee. Commissioner Hicks explains that she sent an email request to all commissioners asking for their recommendations or interest, followed up with telephone calls to everyone she could reach. Voice vote was taken to accept slate of officers as recommended – 8 in favor; one opposed (Commissioner Heatherington); one abstention (Commission Chamousis). Motion passed.</b></p>	<p><i>Handout: Health Commission Legislative Committee: California Bills of Interest</i></p> <p><i>New slate of officers approved.</i></p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> – Horne 2<sup>nd</sup> – Mase 8-in favor 1-opposed 1-abstention Motion passed</p>
<b>11. PROSPECTIVE FUTURE ITEMS</b>	<p><u>July 9, 2007</u></p> <p>Annual retreat/workshop - discussion of topics for the upcoming year. Location will be at the Cooperative Extension – Ag Auditorium.</p>		
<b>12. ADJOURNMENT</b>	<p>Motion to adjourn at 8:15 pm (<i>Horne/Heatherington</i>)</p>		<p>Approved - all</p>