A meeting of the Ben Hill County Board of Health was held December 14, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. by conference call.

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| **Members Present** | **Members Absent** | **Others Present** |
| Daniel Cowan, Chairman | Thelma Graham – Secretary | William R. Grow, MD, FACP |
| Heath Parrish, Vice-Chairman | Mayor Jason Holt | Dwain Butler |
| Susan Smith |  | Patrina Bowles |
| Dawn Clements |  | Teresa Giles |
|  |  | Layne Harrell |
|  |  | Alex Collins |
|  |  | Julie Parker |
|  |  | Stacie “Nikki” Parker |
|  |  | Sandra Sheppard |

1. **Call to Order**

* Mr. Cowan called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

1. **Public Comments**

* There were no public comments.

1. **Approval of September 21, 2022 Minutes (Attachment)**

* Ms. Clements made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Smith. All were in favor and the motion passed.

1. **Business**

**Financial Information – Teresa Giles (Attachments)**

* Ms. Giles presented the Ben Hill County Health Department’s Revenue and Expense Summary for July 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022 and noted the budget is in good shape. Individual line items will be cleaned up after the first of the year.
* Ben Hill has made it through 44.33% of the budget, which is in line for this time of year.
* Dr. Grow added Ben Hill is at its highest levels ever for the last ten years and commended the staff for being community minded and a very good team.

**Public Health Updates – William R. Grow, MD, FACP**

* Dr. Grow updated the Board with the most current COVID information. Numbers have increased by approximately 50% over the past two weeks. A 40% increase has been indicated statewide as well. Hospitalizations also increased by approximately 50%.
* Ben Hill reported one COVID-related death and five district-wide.
* Vaccinations have decreased; however, flu and RSV cases are surging across the state with the highest numbers seen in a decade but cases may have peaked in the district in the last week.
* The final 2023 Board of Health Meeting Schedule was provided.

1. **Nurse Manager’s Report – Chris Naylor (Presented by Layne Harrell)**

* Ms. Harrell reported all eligible students were vaccinated during the school flu clinics and second doses were also completed as identified.
* The drive-thru flu events at the health department were successful as were the off-site flu clinics at The Jessamine Place, Southern Physical Therapy and Golden Boy.
* Rapid COVID testing is still available by appointment at-home test kits are available at no charge.
* All daycare immunization audits have been completed for the year.
* HIV testing was offered in recognition of World AIDS Day on December 1, 2022. There was no fee for this service.
* A “No-Fee” STD clinic was held December 6, 2022 with a 40% positive rate.
* Ben Hill Staff attended the South Health District’s Legislative Breakfast for the northern counties October 7, 2022 at the Tift County Board of Education.
* Health department staff participated in the sheriff’s department’s fund-raising Halloween Bash and entered a float in the Christmas parade.
* Tolisa Smith, RN, officially retired as of December 1, 2022.

1. **Environmental Health Update – Alex Collins (See Attachments)**

* Mr. Collins reviewed Ben Hill’s environmental health activities for September 22, 2022 – December 13, 2022. Mandated inspections will be completed by the end of the year.
* Activities have been steady, and fees have been collected with approximately 15 to be paid, which Mr. Collins indicated is good compared to the previous year.
* The Seven Rivers program out of Baxley was introduced to the Board. This agency provides low-income assistance for homeowners who may need assistance with repairs to their wells or septic systems. Anyone needing more information can contact Mr. Collins.

1. **The Jessamine Place**

**Financial Report Nikki Payne / Sandra Sheppard (Attachments)**

* Ms. Payne provided The Jessamine Place’s financial report for July 2022 – October 2022.
* The Jessamine Place has made it through 29.4% of the budget as of October 31, 2022 with 29.1% of the total expenses processed.

**Director’s Report – Sandra Sheppard (See Attachments)**

* Ms. Sheppard provided an advisory board update from their December 8, 2022 meeting at the educational center. The DSP Employee of the Year was nominated during this meeting and the winner will be selected by the board and announced during the Christmas breakfast on December 22, 2022.
* Host homes have remained consistent. Currently, 20 persons are supported, 17 are in host homes and three homes have two living as housemates. Approval for the addition of two more host homes in Valdosta and Ocilla is getting closer. The official home visits have already been conducted.
* Ms. Sheppard provided an overview of the impact from COVID. There were 30 persons supported, 38 employees, nine host homes and one death. The overall COVID vaccination rate for The Jessamine Place remains at 81%.
* The biggest hurdle The Jessamine Place currently faces is a shortage in workforce. New initiatives have been implemented, including increasing hourly rates. Social media is also being used as a marketing strategy.
* The Jessamine Place celebrated its 50-year anniversary October 28, 2022 at Wiregrass with a luncheon. Constance Manley’s retirement was also celebrated December 2, 2022 at Legion Park. Ms. Manley was honored for more than 30 years with The Jessamine Place.
* A Christmas party was held December 8, 2022 at the Monitor Center for persons served and staff participated in the Christmas parade.
* The Jessamine Place offices will be closed December 23-January 2, 2023 for the holiday.
* The next advisory board meeting is March 9, 2023.

1. **Announcements**

* There were no other announcements.

1. **Adjournment**

* There being no further business, Mr. Cowan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Clements. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Thelma Graham, Board Secretary

Julie Parker, Typist