

**Wilkes County Board of Health Meeting Minutes  
August 14, 2023**

The Wilkes County Board of Health held a regular business meeting Monday, August 14th, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Wilkes County Health Department in the Ann Absher Conference Room. Board of Health members in attendance were:

Ms. Susan Bachmeier  
Ms. Teana Compeau  
Dr. Laura Hubbard  
Dr. Sarah Miller-Wyatt  
Ms. Adina Watkins  
Dr. Gary Nash  
Mr. Casey Johnson  
Mr. Chris Anderson  
Ms. Deborah Britton

Ms. Rachel Willard, Ms. Andrea Underwood, Ms. Nancy Moretz, Mr. Jared Belk and Mr. Mike Ezelle were also in attendance. Prior to the August meeting, packets containing the materials to be discussed were mailed and sent via email to each Wilkes County Board member for review.

**Meeting Called to Order:** Ms. Susan Bachmeier called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Ms. Rachel Willard introduced Andrea Underwood our new Director of Nursing and Mike Ezelle from Environmental Health. Each Board member present introduced themselves.
2. **Adoption of Agenda\*:** Ms. Susan Bachmeier stated she would like to make a change to the agenda. We would like to move the Environmental Health Pit Policy under Environmental Health Food and Lodging Presentation so Mr. Ezelle can get both of his pieces done in case anyone has questions.

Ms. Deborah Britton made the motion to adopt the updated agenda for the Board of Health meeting for August 14th, 2023; the motion was seconded by Mr. Chris Anderson, and unanimously approved.

**3. New Business:**

- Board of Health Training
  - i. Environmental Health Food and Lodging Presentation

Presentation Below.

# Wilkes County Environmental Health

Food and Lodging Program

## Rules



- North Carolina adopted the 2017 code on October 1, 2021
- 15A NCAC 18A .2900 Rules Governing Food Protection and Sanitation of Food Establishments
- 15A NCAC 18A .1800 Rules Governing Sanitation of Lodging Establishments
- 15A NCAC 18A .1300 Rules Governing Sanitation of Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Adult Care Homes and Other Institutions
- 15A NCAC 18A .1500 Rules Governing Sanitation of Local Confinement Facilities
- 15A NCAC 18A .1600 Rules Governing Sanitation of Residential Care Facilities
- 15A NCAC 18A .2500 Rules Governing Public Swimming Pools
- 15A NCAC 18A .3200 Rules Governing Tattooing
- 15A NCAC 18A .2400 Rules Governing Sanitation of Public, Private and Religious Schools
- 15A NCAC 18A .2800 Rules Governing Sanitation of Child Care Centers
- 15A NCAC 18A .3100 Rules Governing Lead Poisoning Prevention in Children Program

## Rules Continued

- 15A NCAC 18A .3600 Rules Governing the Sanitation of Resident Camps
- 15A NCAC 18A .3500 Rules Governing the Sanitation of Primitive Camps
- 15A NCAC 18A .2100 Rules Governing the Sanitation and Safety of Migrant Housing
- 15A NCAC 18A .1700 Rules Governing Protection of Water Supplies
- 15A NCAC 18A .1400 Rules Governing Mass Gatherings

## Wilkes County numbers

- Food Service: 194
- Lodging: 11
- Institutions: 35
- Schools: 23

## Plan Review

- All newly established facilities or facilities that have a transfer of ownership must undergo this process.

## Grades

- Three Letter Grades:
  - A
    - 90-100
  - B
    - 80-89.5
  - C
    - 70-79.5
- Anything below 70 permit is revoked.

## Inspection Frequency

- 1 time a year
  - 48 Facilities
  - July-June
  - Lodging Facilities
  - Limited Food Service (Concession stands)
  - Local Confinement Facility
- 2 Times a year
  - 79 Facilities
  - July-December, January-June
  - Institution Facilities
  - Restaurants that cool 2 or less items
    - Fast food restaurants
    - Gas stations that have food service
    - Subways

## Inspection Frequency Continued

- 3 Times a year
  - 36 Facilities
  - July-October, November-February, March-June
  - Restaurants that cool 3 items or that do any manipulation of raw meats
    - Bojangles, Zaxby's, Chick-fil-A
    - Meat markets.
    - Anywhere that patties out hamburgers

## Inspection Frequency Continued

- 4 times a year
  - 100 Facilities
  - July-September, October-December, January-March, April-June
  - Restaurants that cool 4 or more items or that serve Highly susceptible populations
    - Restaurants with larger menus and complex food items
    - Mexican
    - Chinese
    - School Lunch
    - Nursing Homes

## Types of Violations

- There is three types of violations:
- Priority
  - "Priority item" means a provision in this Code whose application contributes directly to the elimination, prevention or reduction to an acceptable level, hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury and there is no other provision that more directly controls the hazard.
- Priority Foundation
  - "Priority foundation item" includes an item that requires the purposeful incorporation of specific actions, equipment or procedures by industry management to attain control of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness or injury such as personnel training, infrastructure or necessary equipment, HACCP plans, documentation or record keeping, and labeling.
- Core
  - "Core item" includes an item that usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOPs), facilities or structures, equipment design, or general maintenance.

## Verification

- If corrective action can not be made during the inspection there is two possible outcomes, one of which that must be done.
  - 72 hours after the inspection, for the PERMIT HOLDER to correct violations of a PRIORITY ITEM
  - 10 calendar days after the inspection, for the PERMIT HOLDER to correct violations of a PRIORITY FOUNDATION ITEM or HACCP PLAN deviations.

## FDA Program Standards

- National qualification
- 9 standards
- Currently meet 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7
- Mentoring Randolph County in program standards



Dr. Nash asked how many people are doing all of the inspections. Mr. Ezelle said we currently have 3 full time and 1 part time. Ms. Bachmeier asked if a restaurant has their license revoked is that the only time they cannot serve food. Mr. Ezelle explained that if they do not have power or water they cannot serve, it really comes into play if they cannot wash dishes or their hands.

## ii. Environmental Health Pit Policy

Ms. Willard stated that she did want to bring the board up to speed, we did implement the pit policy last Monday. From what I am hearing so far everything is going smoothly, we did have some questions from the Home Owners Association; Angie has been able to work with them to get those solved. Overall from what I heard it has been positively received. Mr. Ezelle said the only thing he has heard was someone asked if they could dig the pit themselves; they were told we don't recommend it but you can. Ms. Susan Bachmeier thanked Mr. Ezzelle for his time to come and present to the board tonight.

### • Six-month Bad Debt Write Off\*

Ms. Rachel Willard presented bad debt write off for the last six months to the board, as you know we do this twice a year. We send out monthly statements to the patients who owe balances; we send the patient into bad dept when there has been no patient activity on their account for six months. We looked at January through June and the total was \$6,053.06. I do want to brag on AR team, they have worked really hard to get money in; we are down \$3,000 this 6 months. The second page that you have breaks the amount down by program, you can see that almost all of our write off is going to Adult Health. The only other two are for Family Planning, this is a huge curve because we normally have Child Health, Diabetes, Immunizations and we don't have any of those this time around which is a great improvement. Ms. Britton asked if this information was recorded somewhere. Ms. Willard said no, and we don't send them to collections either because we don't get anything; so it's not worth our time.

Ms. Teana Compeau made the motion to approve the **Six- month Bad Debt Write Off**; the motion was seconded by Dr. Gary Nash, and unanimously approved.

### • Ending Financial Report FY2023\*

Ms. Nancy Moretz presented the financials to the board, starting with the Total Revenue ending June 30<sup>th</sup> which includes State and local funding was \$6,104,471. If you move on to General Expenses, they were

\$1,935,939 and that includes some capital improvements we weren't anticipating. We had some plumbing repairs, we had to replace an employee entrance door and an emergency door and that capital was \$132,630.47. Our Total Program Expenses were \$5,202,615 for a grant total of \$7,138,554 for the year. Ms. Moretz did explain to the board that if you look at our budgeted salaries, our salaries were a little below budget which is great; that was offset by covid funds. Of course our Total Expenses includes about \$2,028.05 in encumbered expenses. Dr. Sarah Miller-Wyatt asked if improvements included plumbing and a door. Ms. Willard explained that yes that includes all of our septic issues, the parking lot being dug up, and the floor. We also had to get a new door for down here because during all of those renovations they messed up our door. Ms. Willard added that she did want point out that we did revise our covid expenses, we did not draw all of those down so they are carried into this current fiscal year.

Ms. Deborah Britton made the motion to approve the **Ending Financial Report FY2023**; the motion was seconded by Dr. Gary Nash, and unanimously approved.

- **Delegation of Authority\***

Ms. Willard explained to the board that she has updated the Delegation of Authority since Lindsey Roberts has left. Basically what this document outlines is if I am out for an extended amount of time or unable to make decisions, it outlines who's next in line. Chad will still stay as my first backup, and then it would fall to Andrea, and then Nancy; this is the order of progression that we would follow.

Ms. Adina Watkins made the motion to approve the **Delegation of Authority**; the motion was seconded by Ms. Teana Compeau, and unanimously approved.

#### **4. Administrative Report:**

- Annual Report

Mr. Jared Belk presented the Annual Report to the board.  
Report below.

# ANNUAL REPORT

Wilkes County Health Department

FY 2022-2023

## From the Public Health Director, Rachel Willard...

Another eventful year at the Wilkes County Health Department and I want to highlight a few of the many accomplishments we were proud to achieve this year.

As of May 11, 2023 the U.S. public health emergency that was declared to respond to COVID-19 ended, and is no longer considered a reportable event. Disease reporting pertaining to long term care facilities and congregate living facilities is still ongoing, and the North Carolina has shifted its focus on data that gives the most accurate picture of COVID in our state.

Wilkes Health received \$225,000 in grant funding for 3 years from the Women, Infant, and Community Wellness Section to reduce infant mortalities in our community. Wilkes Health was one of six counties to receive funding. Funding will continue to provide infant safe sleep classes at the Wilkes County Library, North Wilkesboro Comprehensive Treatment Center, and new location at North Wilkesboro Housing Authority. The grant also focuses on Preconception and Interconception Health Services to anyone of reproductive age.

Wilkes Health also received \$22,000 in funding from the Opioid Settlement to establish a media campaign for safe and proper medication storage at home as well as safe and proper medication disposal. With funding Wilkes Health will be compiling the amount, measured by weight, of medications disposed through community dropboxes.

The staff of the Wilkes County Health Department appreciates the opportunity to serve our community in efforts to promote health and prevent disease. This annual report is our opportunity to remind you of the types of services that we provide, but also to make you aware of the fact that public health impacts everybody, every day and everywhere.

**"Promoting Health and Preventing Disease in Our Community"**



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
Local Health Department  
Accreditation



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Wilkesboro, NC  
28697  
Phone: 336-661-7450  
Fax: 336-631-7813  
Visit us on Facebook  
or the web:  
wilkeshealth.com

### Mental Health Update

COPE (Community, Coped Prevention and Education) Team consists of a variety of community leaders (law enforcement, mental health, department, recovery community, and community members). COPE is committed to addressing the opioid crisis in Wilkes County. COPE members serve as subgroups focused on prevention, stigma, harm reduction, treatment and recovery. These subgroups are developing strategies to assess the needs of those at the community suffering from substance use disorder.

The Harm Reduction work group working with other subgroups, as the process of implementing a PORT (Peer Outreach, Response, Team) and a community harm reduction team within Wilkes County. PORT aims to reduce the number of people suffering from the effects of addiction and overdose. The process can look different depending on the circumstances, however, a PORT peer support specialist housed by Wilkes Recovery Revolution, received a referral on an individual who could benefit from PORT services. The peer support specialist works to provide support and education and then connects the individual to community resources. The goal is for PORT and a community harm reduction team to identify an overdose, the peer support specialist, and the community peer educators team would then follow up with the client for the next three days during support and recovery.

### Dental Health Update

The Wilkes Public Dental Clinic is pleased to serve the community and continues to expand its services. The clinic has the following services: General Dentistry, Endodontics, Periodontics, Oral Surgery, Pediatric Dentistry, and Restorative Services. The clinic is currently accepting new patients and is open to the public. The clinic is located at 1000 North Wilkesboro Highway, Wilkesboro, NC 28697. For more information, please call 336-661-7450.

### Prevention

As of May 11, 2023 the U.S. public health emergency that was declared to respond to COVID-19 ended and, Covid-19 cases have been on a downward trend for the past year. The state emergency stipulations cleared out all of the Covid-19 at-home tests by sending out 3 pallets of tests to local health departments to distribute within their communities. Wilkes Health received a total of 32,000 tests and has distributed many of the At-Home tests to local agencies such as Wilkes County Schools, Wilkes County Public Library, Wilkes Public Health Clinic, Wilkes Community College, Wilkes Senior Center, Foothills Free Aid Clinic, Wilkes Recovery Revolution, and North Wilkesboro Comprehensive Treatment Center. The Epidemiological Team will make monthly to discuss mitigation strategies to prevent outbreaks of multiple diseases and observe potential trends. Furthermore, Wilkes Health will be partnering with Appalachian State University to provide COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to citizens in historically underserved communities such as African Americans, Hispanics and adults 60+. The partnership will also address common barriers such as transportation to camps making them accessible for anyone wishing to receive their vaccines.

### Environmental Health

Water Protection: Residents and businesses receive permits and evaluations for septic, cessing, or repaired wastewater systems.

Septic Permits: 647  
Well Permits: 168  
Complaints: 33  
Water Sampling: 177  
Microphthalimum Lab Notifications: 0

Food & Lodging: Unannounced inspections are conducted on facilities at a risk base frequency. Complaints are investigated to ensure compliance and promote public health. Foodservice employees are educated in safe food handling practices.

Restaurants: 186  
Temporary Food Establishments: 52  
Food Markets: 9  
School Lunchrooms: 23  
Lodging Facilities: 11  
Public Pool Facilities: 20  
Child & Adult Care Centers: 26  
Nursing/Long-Term Home: 31  
Tattoo Parlors: 14

...You can now search online for Well and Septic Permits?  
**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Visit [www.wilkeshealth.com](http://www.wilkeshealth.com) and click the Environmental Health tab.

Want to View Residential Permit Check Lists? Visit [www.wilkeshealth.com](http://www.wilkeshealth.com) and click the Residential Health Info tab.

### Board of Health

Robert Beckwith, MD, MA, Chair  
Vance Reynolds, PhD, MA, Chair  
Jesse Lee Johnson, County Commissioner  
Cathy Hester, MD  
Dawn Meyer, 2006  
John Anderson, DVM  
Sarah Goodwyn, DVM  
Cassandra Wilson, Public Health  
Tanya Coleman, Public Health  
Laurie Ann Burt, Public Health

### Baby's Easy Safe Sleep Training Classes

As of May 11, 2023 the U.S. public health emergency that was declared to respond to COVID-19 ended and, Covid-19 cases have been on a downward trend for the past year. The state emergency stipulations cleared out all of the Covid-19 at-home tests by sending out 3 pallets of tests to local health departments to distribute within their communities. Wilkes Health received a total of 32,000 tests and has distributed many of the At-Home tests to local agencies such as Wilkes County Schools, Wilkes County Public Library, Wilkes Public Health Clinic, Wilkes Community College, Wilkes Senior Center, Foothills Free Aid Clinic, Wilkes Recovery Revolution, and North Wilkesboro Comprehensive Treatment Center. The Epidemiological Team will make monthly to discuss mitigation strategies to prevent outbreaks of multiple diseases and observe potential trends. Furthermore, Wilkes Health will be partnering with Appalachian State University to provide COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to citizens in historically underserved communities such as African Americans, Hispanics and adults 60+. The partnership will also address common barriers such as transportation to camps making them accessible for anyone wishing to receive their vaccines.

### Newborn Postpartum Services

A registered nurse will provide postpartum care to new mothers and their babies. Services include: Breastfeeding guidance, Baby's Easy Safe Sleep training, and Newborn care. For more information, please call 336-661-7450.

### How We Served the Community

**Breast & Cervical Cancer Screenings**- Women are checked for breast and cervical cancers and further medical care is available for abnormal results.  
Cancer Screenings: 66  
Abnormal Results: 26  
Cancer Identified: 1

Additional \$15,000 in funding awarded allowed us to serve an additional 40 women.

**Adult Health**- Adults age 21 and older receive well and sick care.  
Patients: 1,778  
Patient Visits: 4,499

**Child Health**- Children age 20 years and below receive well and sick care.  
Patients: 872  
Patient Visits: 1,323  
Physician: 513  
Lab Screening: 104  
Dental Screenings: 74

**Diabetes and Diabetes Control**- Registered Dietitians offer individual and group classes for Diabetes education. Medical Nutrition Therapy assists patients with Weight Management, Eating Disorders, Hypertension, Hypoglycemia, Renal Disease, Celiac Disease, Food Allergies, Sports Nutrition and Other Diets/Plans.

**Diabetes Prevention Program**- Average weight loss: 10lbs and all participants have averaged over 160 minutes of exercise weekly.  
Diabetes patients: 100  
Diabetes visits: 119  
Lab patients: 71  
Visits: 86  
Total invoice orders: 171  
Total visits: 204

**Laboratory**- Wilkes Health patients receive lab work to assist with prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.  
Lab Tests Performed: 8,412

**Family Planning**- Teens and adults receive complete medical care and are provided with information and options about birth control choices including abstinence.  
Patients Served: 348  
Patient Visits: 639  
Visits/encounters: 2

**Pharmacy**- Wilkes Health patients may receive medications at reduced cost, or arrangements may be made through an agreement with Case Connection Pharmacy.  
Total Medications Filled: 1,314  
Prescription Medications Filled: 781  
Over the Counter Medications Filled: 563

**Vital Records**- Birth and death records are registered and analyzed to discover local health issues, and possible prevention activities.  
Live Births Recorded: 238  
Deaths Recorded: 726

**Women, Infant & Children (WIC)**- Eligible women and children are provided nutrition education and coupons for supplemental foods. (January select average 12,000 from May 2022 - June 2022)  
Clients: 1,600

**COVID-19 Vaccines**- Wilkes Health continues to offer COVID-19 vaccines on a walk-in or appointment basis. The federal public health emergency ending on May 11, 2023, Wilkes Health will continue to offer free COVID-19 vaccines while supplies last. You can get a free vaccine regardless of your immigration status. You can also get a free vaccine when you don't have insurance. Once emergency supplies run out, COVID-19 vaccines will be available like other vaccines. Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance will cover the cost if you don't have insurance, you'll have to pay out of pocket. You are due for another dose if your last COVID vaccine was: Two months ago (people with compromised immune systems), four months ago (people 65 years or older), or before September 2022 (everyone).

### Mobile Expanded School Health (MESH)

High school students receive immunizations, sports physicals, sick and injury care, counseling and support. Teen parents also receive pre- and post-natal health information, support and referrals for other services.

Total Student Visits: 1,128  
Behavioral Health Visits: 1,612 (includes middle school and high school students)  
Medical Visits: 250  
Sports Physicals: 208

### Communicable & Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Screening, monitoring, and treatment for certain communicable diseases is available. Coordination with health care providers and public education is provided.


HIV Tests: 906  
TB Patients: 0  
Rabies Investigations: 36  
Reportable Diseases: 321

### Immunizations (Shots/Vaccines)

Children receive vaccine management, monitoring, and administration. Boosters for employment, vaccines for international travelers, and flu and pneumococcal vaccines are also available.

Total vaccines administered: 1,645  
Total Hepatitis A vaccines: 130  
Total T-Dep vaccines: 239  
Tul vaccines administered: 321

### Health Department Revenue



- County Funds: 73%
- Fees: 17%
- Grants: 8%
- State & Federal: 2%



Ms. Deborah Britton asked about the RN visit after the mother has delivered her baby, how is that serviced offered to people. Ms. Willard explained that this was a program we used to do a while back probably at least 6 years ago. We stopped doing it, and then we have just brought it back in March of 2023, we rely a lot on Hospital referrals for Medicaid parents and mothers. We also get a lot of referrals from the OB office when the patients come in for their 6 week postpartum visit. Since it is still new we are trying to get the word out, we are struggling to get mothers to do it. Ms. Britton asked if when we were offering this 6 or so years ago was it successful. Ms. Willard said not really, we never really completed visits many to be honest. However, if we can make it successful it will generate revenue. Our BCCCP Nurse is the one who is doing the postpartum visits and she is working really close with the hospital for those referrals.

- Departmental Update:

Ms. Willard gave the departmental update starting with Andrea, she is up and running; she is seeing patients and serving as our Director of Nursing. We have 6 full time providers in clinic right now and 1 enhanced nurse doing Child Health Well visits. Our New Adult Enrollment wait time is coming down, right now I think we are at one to two weeks out. However we are able to do a one-time sick visit for those patients if they wish before they establish. MESH is wrapping up sport physicals for the season, the unit is going out to all of the Middle Schools and High Schools Orientations. We talked last time about the utilization rates being lower with MESH, so hopefully them being at the schools and educating parents on the MESH unit will help. Community Health is still moving, we do not have a date but it will most likely be in October. I think the Health Foundation date has been pushed back a little bit and no one else can start moving until they move. Lots of IT meetings, it will be a huge hit to the budget. Just a quick update on Environmental Health, the Dwight Baldwin is still ongoing. We did issue the letter of abatement, it was officially delivered on Saturday; now we start the 10 day waiting period for him to fix his site. Environmental Health can legally go on his property on the 24<sup>th</sup> to fix it. We already have two contractors that want to look at the property, we will choose the lowest bidder and then the repairs will start. Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson asked if Mr. Baldwin was still living on the property. Ms. Willard said she has no idea, but we are looking at about \$6,000 to fix the property.

5. Committee Reports:

- Annual performance evaluation of Health Director

Ms. Susan Bachmeier stated that Rachel's performance review is not available to the public, so what we do is provide letters of support from the Chairman of Board of Health, Chairman of FQHC and the County Manager. I will say that Rachel had a great review, 20 out of 22 request for survey from her staff were completed and returned. That's a response rate of 90% which anyone would be happy with. We do thank you for what you do and congratulations on another successful year.  
Letters Below.

August 9, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am submitting this letter in support of Rachel Willard, the Health Director for Wilkes County, and to acknowledge and summarize her annual performance review. I am the Chief Nursing Officer at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center. I also serve as the Chairperson of the Wilkes County Board of Health, and in that capacity, respectfully submit this letter.

Each year, Rachel undergoes a 360 evaluation in which she is evaluated by not only the people to whom she reports, she is evaluated by the employees reporting to her. The performance review for FY2023 was conducted in July 2023. The evaluation survey was distributed to 22 employees, and 20 surveys were returned (90% return rate). Performance was scored on the following scale: Exceptional (E), Successful (S), Needs Improvement (NI) and Not Applicable (NA), in the following performance domains: Performance, Cooperation, Initiative, Communication, Teamwork, Character, Responsiveness, Appearance, and Work Habits.

In each domain, performance was rated as E or S with one exception: one participant rated Work Habits as NA. The evaluation factors in the Work Habits domain are, "maintains a neat and orderly work station," and "Uses vacation/sick leave in accordance with County Policy. All comments provided within the survey were positive.

Healthcare is a challenging environment in which to lead, and public health is no exception. Rachel has managed Wilkes Health through labor shortages, staff and leadership turnover, and numerous operational changes. She has led her teams with professionalism and engaged her teams in finding solutions that work for all. Additionally, she continues to be engaged in the community on numerous fronts, and continues to professionally and competently inform County public health policy and practices. I am particularly appreciative of the self-motivation she has demonstrated in her own leadership development journey. Rachel, thank you for your work and your tireless dedication to the health and wellness of Wilkes County residents.

Sincerely,



Susan T. Bachmeier, DNP, RN, NEA-BC  
Chair, Wilkes County Board of Health



## COUNTY OF WILKES

DIRECTOR

John L. Blavins, MPA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

304 COLLEGE STREET  
WILKESBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 28697-2684  
(336) 851-7400

ADMINISTRATIVE FAX (336) 853-7613  
CHILD SUPPORT FAX (336) 850-0409  
ELIGIBILITY FAX (336) 851-7568  
SOC. WK. SERVICES FAX (336) 851-7699

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Kevin L. Brown

June 21, 2023

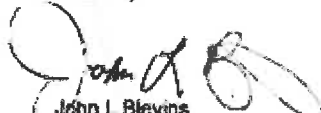
To Whom It May Concern:

As the Director of Social Services, my position involves working closely with other county departments in particular the Wilkes County Health Department. The working relationship between the two departments is very strong and that is due to Ms. Rachel Willard's leadership and professionalism. In addition, I am the Board Chair for the Wilkes Community Health Center. In this position I work closely with Ms. Willard and under her direction the Health Center is functioning at a high level to provide care to our most vulnerable citizens.

I have known Ms. Willard for over eight years and I am impressed with her leadership and dedication to her job in serving the citizens of Wilkes County.

In evaluating Ms. Willard's performance, I would rate her at the highest level without reservation.

Sincerely,



John L. Blavins  
Director

JOHN C. YATES  
County Manager

ANTHONY R. TRIPLETT  
County Attorney  
BROOKE FELTS  
Assistant County Attorney

SARAH D. CALL  
County Clerk

## COUNTY OF WILKES

WILKES COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
WILKESBORO,  
NORTH CAROLINA 28687-2427  
(336) 851-7346  
FAX (336) 851-7546

G. KEITH ELMORE  
Chairman

STONEY GREENE  
Vice Chairman

CASEY JOE JOHNSON  
BILL SEXTON  
GREGORY A. MINTON

July 25, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as appreciation for the efforts of Mrs. Rachel Willard, Wilkes County Health Director. Through Mrs. Willard's leadership, the Wilkes County Health Department and the Wilkes Community Health Center continues to provide a high level of health services to our community. Mrs. Willard brings capability and a sense of responsibility to her position and always conducts herself in a professional manner. She and her staff work hard to keep costs at a reasonable level focusing as a unified team working towards a common goal.

I look forward to continuing to work with Mrs. Willard in the future.

Sincerely,



John C. Yates  
County Manager

JCY/sdc

- Board Members Terms
  - i. Reappointment
    - Sarah Miller-Wyatt

Ms. Willard informed the board that Dr. Sarah Miller-Wyatt is up for reappointment, and I hope in October you come back and want to continue to be on the board.

- ii. Rotating Off
  - Teana Compeau

Ms. Willard informed the board Teana is rotating off, so we will have a public spot that will be open. After today I will have Greg post it on the county website as a board vacancy and see if we can anyone interested. Normally how it works is Teana or the board tries to find a replacement and we bring it to the board meeting in October so we can take action. If anyone knows a great public member now would be the time to talk about it. We try to have someone that is representative of the community because this board is very critical to the health and wellbeing of our community. Ms. Compeau stated that she thought of someone to take her place and she wanted to bring it before the board and see what they thought. Ms. Compeau said she thought about Martha Brame, she worked a lot with the health department at the vaccine clinics. Ms. Willard said she has ran into her several times and every single time Ms. Brame has said anytime we need her to give her a call. Ms. Willard said there is a link on the county website, new board member application.

#### 6. Public Concerns: None

Ms. Bachmeier stated she did want to briefly discuss covid before we adjourn. We are seeing new cases at the Hospital and I'm sure you are here at the Health Department as well. We aren't doing much active surveillance or monitoring in the county at the moment. My primary reason for wanting to understand covid activity in the county is to inform the masking policy. If our cases start to rise and we are seeing more and more we want to be able to do some public appeal for masking in public. I know that we have some information about what is happening in the county that we can use to make informed decisions. I just wanted to throw that out for discussion, and see if anyone had any thoughts about this. Dr. Hubbard said she thought people would be very resistant to the masking recommendations. Ms. Bachmeier said she's sure, but we will still recommend. Dr. Hubbard said she still wears her mask and she explains to her patients that we are still diagnosing it every week. I am still hammering; I try to do a lot of vaccine counseling especially with fall around the corner. I am curious about the details of the updated covid vaccine and when they will be available. Ms. Willard said oddly enough we did just have a lunch and learn with Pfizer, we know that in June the CDC did approve the monovalent vaccine. We are awaiting to hear on FDA approval in September for both Pfizer and Moderna. What they said is it will move to a yearly recommendation with an updated strand every June, just like the annual flu vaccine. The ages 0-2 will still have a 3 dose primary series. If you start the pediatric patient on the new series you will have to stick with either Pfizer and Moderna, you will not be able to switch unless there is a shortage of the vaccine. Ms. Britton asked if there is any mechanism in place in the community for monitoring cases. Ms. Willard said legally the only thing we have to track now is if it's an outbreak in a long-term care facility or if the school were to get a cluster. We also have waste water monitoring throughout the state. However, Wilkes is not yet participating in that system. COVID is no longer a reportable condition so our data is construed and hard to really nail down. However, we know that with only two labs still reporting to the state, we are seeing cases at the same rate that we were when all the labs were required to report both positive and negative cases. Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson asked if they were making any predictions on how the season was going to be after school starts back up. Ms. Willard said the numbers will definitely go up, just like it always does, there will be a surge of cases after Labor Day. We will not close classrooms that is no longer a thing, even if a child is exposed they can still go to school.

- 7. Adjournment\*:** Ms. Adina Watkins made a motion to **adjourn**; Dr. Laura Hubbard seconded, unanimously approved.

**Next Meeting date:** The next Board of Health Meeting will be on October 9th, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Ann Absher Conference Room at Wilkes County Health Department.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Jenna Daye, Administrative Assistant

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Bachmeier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms. Susan Bachmeier