

Town of Topsfield Board of Health
Meeting of Thursday, July 24, 2014
Town Hall, 8 West Common Street, Topsfield, MA 01983

Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health, Thursday, July 24, 2014 at 7:30 pm in the Conference Room of Topsfield Town Hall.

With a quorum present, Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 7:39 pm.

Board of Health Members present: Chairman William Hunt ESQ; Clerk Sheryl Knutsen RN, Vincent Guerra MD, Gerald Topping PE, John Coulon RS, Health Agent; Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary. Also in attendance Topsfield resident Jeffy Demeter; Topsfield Resident Jerard Riordan; Richard Gandt, Selectman.

ABBREVIATIONS:

CDC: Center for Disease Control
DEP: Department of Environmental Protection
DPH: Department of Public Health
EDS: Emergency Dispensing Site
EP: Emergency Preparedness
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
ESQ: Esquire
MDPH: Massachusetts Department of Public Health
MPH: Master of Public Health
MRC: Medical Reserve Corps
NEMMC: Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control
PE: Professional Engineer
PHEP: Public Health Emergency Preparedness
RN: Registered Nurse
RS: Registered Sanitarian
TBOH: Topsfield Board of Health
TRMRC: Topsfield Regional Medical Reserve Corps
US: United States

Public Information
Agenda

APPOINTMENTS:

7:45 20 Andrews Road Request to Extend Percolation Test Data Validity Homeowner Jerard Riordan appeared before the Board to request an extension of Percolation Test Data Validity at this address. He informed the Board that the current extension granted by the Board in 2012 expires on 9/12/2014. Mr. Coulon informed the Board that he has observed the property, and no soil has been disturbed at this location. He recommended that the Board vote to approve this request.

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to grant an extension of percolation test data validity at 20 Andrews Road from 9/10/2014 to 9/9/2016. Ms. Knutsen seconded and the motion carried in a unanimous vote.

8:00 Jeffy Demeter, 4 Great Hill Drive, presentation to the Board regarding her opposition to the addition of Fluoride to public water in Topsfield.

Ms. Demeter appeared in front of the Board as a follow up to an hour long presentation at the June 26, 2014 TBOH meeting. She presented the Board with additional information regarding her opposition to the use of Fluoride in the public water in Topsfield. She informed the Board that she will be instituting a Citizen's Petition to place an item on the Town Meeting Warrant or a Special Town Meeting regarding her desire to keep Fluoride out of public water in Topsfield. She also informed the Board that she is part of a group that will be hosting a public speaker in Rockport, Massachusetts on this topic and she urged Board Members to attend. The Board took no action on this issue and thanked Ms. Demeter for her presentations.

8:15 Black Earth Compost

Mr. Coulon informed the Board that Black Earth Compost had contacted the TBOH office and requested to be placed on the Agenda regarding their desire to implement a curbside compost waste pick up program. Mr. Coulon reported that he spoke with Mr. Heyer of Black Earth Compost and explained that the Board does not have jurisdiction over waste pick up in Topsfield. Black Earth chose not to attend this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Updating Topsfield Board of Health Regulations

Mr. Topping informed the Board that he has been working on revising the Topsfield Septic Regulations, but that he would hold off on revising Tobacco Regulations until Ron Beauregard of Massachusetts Tobacco Control can attend a TBOH meeting. He reported that there are no current Federal or State guidelines regarding regulations for e-cigarettes, hookah bars or vaping on which Topsfield may base its regulations. The Board discussed the importance of developing regulations that focus on protecting youth from Tobacco products. Mr. Coulon was directed to invite Ron Beauregard to the next meeting. Susan Winslow was directed to place the necessary legal notices in the Tri Town Transcript in preparation for Discussion and Voting on changes to the Topsfield Septic and Tobacco Regulations at the August 28, 2014 Board Meeting.

Lisa Teichner, Director of the Tri Town Council, was asked to share her thoughts on the issue of youth and Tobacco use. She told the Board that the Tri Town Council exists to support youth and decrease at-risk behavior, including the use of Tobacco products. She informed the Board that e-cigarettes are available in stores to youngsters. She pointed out that 1 teaspoon of liquid nicotine can kill an adult, and that e-cigarettes pose a multitude of dangers including toxicity and behaviors that can lead to addiction to nicotine and smoking. She reported that Masconomet Regional Junior High and High School have banned the use of e-cigarettes.

This issue will be discussed again in depth at a future meeting when Ron Beauregard will be in attendance.

Fee Schedule

Mr. Topping suggested that the Board review the current Fee Schedule, suggesting a 20% increase in fees with a long-term goal of keeping services fee-neutral to the town. No action was taken on this item.

Bill 754

Mr. Coulon informed the Board that on the afternoon of July 24, 2014, he became aware of House Bill 754 limiting the ability of local Boards of Health to restrict activities related to agriculture. Further, he explained the Bill would allow local Agricultural Commissions to supersede Local Board of Health jurisdiction by allowing conflicts to be appealed to local Agricultural Commissions. Mr. Coulon informed the Board that he will email them with any additional information to keep them abreast of this development.

Health Agent Report

Mr. Coulon informed the Board that there will be a three day motorcycle rally at the Topsfield Fair Grounds from August 15 – 17 to support Veterans and fallen motorcyclists. He reported that he has received inquiries from a number of food vendors as well as a tattoo artist exploring the possibility of offering tattoos during the event. Topsfield has a Body Art Regulation which will be used if a permit is applied for. The BOH office also had an inquiry regarding the offering of shoulder and neck massages at the rally. Massage Permits are handled by MDPH.

9:10 PM Mr. Hunt left the meeting, leaving a quorum including Ms. Knutsen, Dr. Guerra and Mr. Topping.

Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to accept the June 26, 2014 Minutes as written. Dr. Guerra seconded and the motion was carried in a unanimous vote.

Commonwealth Medicine Contracts

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to support the memorandum to the Topsfield Board of Selectmen dated July 24, 2014 to support existing contracts with Commonwealth Medicine for the purpose of Vaccine Reimbursement from private insurance companies and Medicare. The Board also supports the Commonwealth Medicine reimbursement procedure in which 10% of recovered funds are withheld by Commonwealth Medicine as the fee for service. Dr. Guerra seconded and the motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Vaccine Availability

Ms. Knutsen informed the Board that changes at the State level include a decrease in funding for vaccines and administration. She told the Board that Local Boards of Health are being urged to use Revolving Funds to purchase vaccines for use in Vaccine Clinics. Mr. Coulon pointed out that this is yet another reason why the Town should consider allowing the Topsfield Board of Health to have a Revolving Fund or increase the BOH budget or establish a "Health Fund" similar to Middleton.

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to include this topic on the August 28, 2014 Agenda for more discussion. Dr. Guerra seconded and the motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Knutsen suggested that the Board read 'The Dead Hand' by David Hoffman, about the chilling facts behind the Cold War and the disappearance of biological weapons, the whereabouts unknown. She reported that the local MRCs continue their efforts to grow membership and prepare for the possibility of a biological event requiring the implementation of local EDS plans.

MONTHLY CASE REVIEW:

Mr. Coulon presented two unusual citizen complaints.

- Mr. Coulon informed the Board that he received a phone call from a resident who was complaining about the Building Inspector. He reported that he told the caller that the proper avenue for complaints about a Department Head was to speak with the Town Administrator, not other Department Heads. Mr. Coulon then went to speak to the Town Administrator to give her some notice that she might be getting a call about the Building Inspector. The resident was already on the phone with her. The next day, the resident called to apologize to Mr. Coulon, and admitted that he was actually reading the plan upside down the previous day.
- Mr. Coulon also recounted a complaint from a Topsfield resident who called to ask that he look into a neighbor's brush pile near her mailbox. The caller was certain that bugs and vermin from the brush pile were exacerbating her chronic illness each time she walked to her mail box. Mr. Coulon told the Board that he drove by and ascertained that the brush pile was in no way posing a public health threat. He explained this to the complainant, who then asked him to determine whether the mushrooms growing near her mailbox posed a health threat. They did not.

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to adjourn at 10:55 pm. Dr. Guerra seconded and the motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Winslow
Minutes Secretary