

**BOARD OF HEALTH
Topsfield Town Hall
MINUTES
8 West Common Street, Topsfield, MA 01983
VIDEO/TELE CONFERENCE**

Date:	Wednesday, July 19, 2023
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ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS	PRESENT
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	Yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	Yes
Ellen Eaton RN	Yes
Amy Lischko MSPH, DSc	No

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT
Gerard McDonald, Health Director	Yes
Julia Lobel RN, Tri-Town Public Health Nurse	Yes
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

VISITORS PRESENT: James O'Brien, General Manager – Topsfield Fair, Renna Watkins – Soulfest!, Dan Russel – Soulfest!, Vanessa Ayersman– Soulfest!, Jon Palace – Resident, Caroline Sillari - Resident, Topsfield Cable Television

OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:35 pm on July 19, 2023 by Chair Sheryl Knutsen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting/public hearing will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so in the following manner: Zoom Meeting – see connection information below to join the meeting by Zoom videoconference or calling in by phone. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield Town Website, at www.topsfield-ma.gov. You may also reach out to the Topsfield Board of Health at health@topsfield-ma.gov or 978-887-1520 for information/assistance. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, and public participation in any public hearing conducted during this meeting shall be by remote means only.

- The Recording Secretary is taking Meeting Minutes. This meeting was also recorded by Topsfield Cable Television.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chair Knutsen led the Board and Visitors in a moment of silence.

APPOINTMENTS

Rescind Bedroom Count Reclassification Process

Health Director McDonald explained that this topic was previously discussed at the May 17, 2023 meeting. The process to request a reclassification of bedroom count was instituted by a vote of the Board of Health at the November 16, 2019 Meeting. Mr. McDonald explained that the reclassification process should be eliminated for the following reasons:

- Back when the regulations in Topsfield stipulated that systems must be built to accommodate 200 square feet per bedroom per day, some systems were built to a larger standard than the standard required under Title 5.
- Due to the age of these systems, the Board of Health cannot guarantee that they will still function properly if granted additional flow.
- The Board of Health does not have a history on the use and maintenance of individual systems, so there is no way to ensure that an older system will continue to function properly if additional flow is added.
- There is concern that if the Board of Health approves such reclassifications, it will open the Town to potential litigation if a system that has received such approval then fails.
- Systems installed prior to 1995 should not be considered for this type of reclassification and systems installed after 1995 should be considered on an individual basis.
- Some older systems were designed to accommodate garbage grinders, which requires that the system be 50% larger. Garbage grinders are no longer allowed. The septic design plan includes information on whether the system was designed for a garbage grinder or not.
- The size of the system is based on the number of bedrooms indicated on the septic design plan, or in the event there is no septic design plan, on the number of bedrooms that exist in that house.
- Mr. McDonald informed the Board that, in his experience, no other Towns offer this type of reclassification.
- Mr. McDonald suggested that the Board eliminate the reclassification process and return to the State guidance under Title 5.
- Mr. Rizza suggested that there should be a process for a review of individual situations.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to grant the request to rescind the 2019 decision to grant bedroom count reclassifications with exceptions that will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton - yes

Rizza – yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 3-0.

Mr. Hunt joined the meeting at 6:50 PM

Topsfield Board of Health Campground Permit and SoulFest! Event

Health Director McDonald reminded the Board that the Camp Ground Permit Application Form was discussed at the May and June Board of Health meetings and approved at the June Meeting. SoulFest! organizers have completed the application and site plan as required and the Board of Health has received multiple temporary food permit applications for the event on August 3-5, 2023 at the Topsfield Fair Grounds. Mr. McDonald informed the Board that SoulFest organizers have met all the criteria put forth by the Board of Health.

Chair Knutsen invited organizers of SoulFest! to speak.

Topsfield Fair General Manager James O'Brien addressed the Board to inform them that he was working closely with SoulFest! to ensure that standards and public concerns would be met, particularly regarding quiet hours and the Fair Ground's rules ensuring no camp fires.

Vanessa Ayersman from SoulFest! addressed the Board to inform them that in light of the current situation, registration for the event has been put on hold until the Town and the Fair Grounds can determine how to move forward after the issue regarding the Fair missing the deadline to obtain a Special Permit from the Town for the event. Ms. Ayersman informed the Board that, at present, 171 tent sites are available. 71 have been sold in Lot E. Some sites have room for one vehicle, which may not be moved once the event starts, and other sites will require that the attendee leave their car in the main parking lot.

Organizer Don Russell from Soulfest! informed the Board that they originally expected between 8,000 to 10,000 attendees over the course of the event, but due to the organization putting reservations on hold while the permitting issue is sorted out, they expect the numbers to drop. Mr. Russell also confirmed that the organization is making every effort to comply with rules for the event.

Mr. O'Brien added that there will be a 24 hour police presence in the camping area, an ambulance on site and SoulFest! will provide their own volunteer security as well.

Mr. Rizza asked if there is any regulation regarding water spigots on the grounds.

Mr. O'Brien responded that at the beginning of the event, back-flow preventers will be placed on all water spigots to protect the water supply from contamination. There are 8 or 9 spigots across the grounds and Porta-Potties will be equipped with hand sanitizer.

Chair Knutsen explained that this is an unusual situation in that the Topsfield Zoning Board of Appeals voted to require the Topsfield Fair (the Essex Agricultural Society) obtain a Special Permit for this event. This was not done, so the Board of Health is waiting for direction from the Town Administrator regarding a decision on whether the Town will permit this event or not.

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel asked if there was going to be a First Aid Station or if the Fair Grounds was going to open its store to event-goers. Mr. O'Brien informed the group that a staffed ambulance would be on the grounds at all times and the Fair Grounds was not going to open the store. Vanessa Ayerson informed Ms. Lobel that she is working with Topsfield Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown on obtaining local volunteers for the event.

Chair Knutsen asked if any other representatives of Soulfest! wished to speak. They did not. Chair Knutsen then asked if any residents wished to speak.

Resident Jon Palace expressed appreciation that the Fair Grounds and Soulfest! organizers considered noise and resident impact in their planning. He asked what the procedure would be if there was noise after 11 pm. Mr. O'Brien responded that the police should be called and would respond.

Resident Caroline Sillari expressed concern about people camping on the Fair Grounds property and potential noise issues. She asked that organizers send out information to residents to keep them up to date on the activities before and during Soulfest! Ms. Ayersman said that she will follow up on that request to produce a real-time document.

After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen thanked residents and representatives from the Fair Grounds and Soulfest! for attending the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2023. There were none.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2023 as written. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.

Eaton – yes

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Hunt - abstain

Rizza - yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 3-0-1.

TRI-TOWN PUBLIC NURSE REPORT

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN reported the following:

Topsfield BOH Update 7/19/23

Reviewing PHE work plan, rewriting some elements with grant coordinator. Due by 8/15

Summer camp inspections going along well, 4 of the 5 camps in Topsfield have been inspected and are in session.

GCACC has officially ended, clinics can no longer run under GCACC in Color. COVID vaccine clinics paused for summer, Topsfield has MCVP in place to allow transfer of vaccines from Hamilton if/when are needed for people. (Hamilton is vaccine depot for towns doctors' offices)
COVID vaccines for fall - no clear recommendations yet from FDA/CDC, anticipate monovalent vaccines for seniors, or certain/immunocompromised populations. Infants dosing likely to remain the same.

Spoke with the vaccine coordinator at DPH about getting a regional MIIIS pin for Tri-Town, there are other regional collaboratives that do this (Nashoba Valley). Primary reason would be to order state vaccines for kids to run more clinics at Masco for youth/uninsured. Ordering of other vaccines (high dose, adult flu, COVID, etc. where there is cost would require funding source). Meeting with health directors next week to discuss further. Would like to expand the current schedule for offering vaccines in tri towns where I have weekly office hours in each town and there is a need.

SAM boxes (Naloxone Boxes) are now available for purchase through MHOA <https://sambox.mhoa.com/>
From website: What are SAM Boxes - A Statewide Public Health initiative that serves as an opioid harm reduction program together with an Education and Awareness campaign of the Good SAMaritan Law and Overdose Medical Assistance Immunity Laws. The initiative promotes communities and businesses place rescue BOXes, called SAMBOXes, across their city or town in strategic locations across the entire Commonwealth. These opioid response rescue kits are designed to contain Naloxone (a.k.a. Narcan), CPR rescue breathing barriers and gloves, and directions for administering Narcan. (Narcan would be added by BOH)

Opioid Settlement - No additional meeting set up yet. Working on completing CNPP application to get free allocation of Narcan from DPH in the Health Dept. Middleton has ordered 15-20 boxes to distribute in public areas.

Senior at risk task force continues to meet monthly to discuss ongoing needs of residents and offer outreach and assistance.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Director McDonald reported that business remains busy at the Board of Health Office including but not limited to:

- Title 5 Inspection Report Reviews
- Soil Testing at multiple locations
- Issuing Temporary Food Permits
- Oversight at Homegrown Event on Town Green
- Inspections at Fair Grounds events including Balloon Festival and Bounce House Event.
- Before school ended, Proctor and Steward School kitchens were inspected.
- Contractors are being utilized for inspections until a Tri-Town Public Health Inspector is hired; Middleton has posted the position.
- Managing trash complaints.
- There are no current housing issues.
- The Public Health Excellence Work Plan is being updated by Barry Keppard at MAPC and will be submitted by August 14, 2023.
- There are five camps in Topsfield this summer; all but one have started and been inspected.

OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Update

Chair Knutsen reported the following:

- Julia Lobel RN is doing an excellent job as the Tri-Town Public Health Nurse
- The FY24 PHE Budget has a line item to support a Shared Services Coordinator. Because Topsfield serves as the host and employs the Public Health Nurse and Middleton will employ the Tri-Town Public Health Inspector, it is hoped that Boxford might employ the Shared Services Coordinator.
- Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian denied the \$5,000 compensation from the PHE Line item for Grant Administration voted on by the Board of Health at the June 21, 2023 meeting for Susan Winslow.

Ms. Winslow addressed the Board to express disappointment with that decision, but thanked Board of Health Members for recognizing the effort she made in managing the PHE grant for FY23, particularly during the four months when there was no Health Director. Board Members expressed concern that the Town Administrator did not respect the vote of the Board.

American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

Chair Knutsen reported that the ARPA grant consisted of \$1.9 million. Expenditures thus far are listed on the Town Website at www.topsfield-ma.gov

- The Board of Health was allocated \$100,000 in ARPA funds.
- Funds must be allocated by December 30, 2023 and spent by 2025.
- There is approximately \$69,000 left for the Board of Health to allocate.
- The Board of Health has worked with the Fire Department to use BOH allocated funds to purchase items for the Topsfield Fire Department.

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- Other uses for the Board of Health allocation may include seed money for a potential Board of Health vaccine revolving account in the amount of \$10,000 - \$15,000 and \$9,000 to purchase and install security cameras to monitor the Board of Health office vaccine refrigerator. If funds allow, the purchase of security cameras for the entire Town Hall may be considered. The emergency call buttons in Town Hall offices were removed during the Town Hall renovation and there are currently no security cameras in Town Hall.

Bill Payments and Revenue

- The Board reviewed bill payments made since the June 21, 2023 meeting.
- The Board reviewed revenue since the May 17, 2023 Meeting in the amount of \$16,088.00.

CORRESPONDENCE

- VNA Quarterly Report – Chair Knutsen informed Board Members that the report is insufficient. Chair Knutsen and Director McDonald will be sending a letter to Beverly Salate BSN, RN to request a more comprehensive report.
- Consumer Confidence Report Certification from the Topsfield Water Department for calendar year 2022.

ADJOURN

Chair Knutsen asked if there was any further business. Determining that there was none, Ms. Knutsen called for a motion to adjourn.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt - yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was accepted in a vote of 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susan Winslow.

Per the Open Meeting Law, the documents that were either distributed to the Board of Health before the meeting or introduced at the meeting were:

- July 19, 2023 Agenda
- June 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Clarification of Criteria for Reclassification of Bedroom Count (2019)
- VNA Quarterly Report
- Consumer Confidence Report Certification from Topsfield Water Department for calendar year 2022
- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the August 16, 2023 Board of Health Meeting.

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Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Committee constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Committee as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.