

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, September 20, 2023
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**ATTENDANCE:**

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	Yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	Yes
Ellen Eaton RN	Yes
Amy Lischko MSPH, DSc	Yes

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

**VISITORS PRESENT:** There were no visitors present at this meeting.

**OPENING**

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 pm on September 20, 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](http://www.topsfield-ma.gov). You may also reach out to the Topsfield Board of Health at [health@topsfield-ma.gov](mailto: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 ZOOM.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

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

**APPOINTMENTS**

There were no appointments at this meeting.

## MEETING MINUTES

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of August 16, 2023. There were none.

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of August 16, 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*

*Hunt - yes*

*Lischko - yes*

*Rizza - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was approved in a vote of 5-0.*

## HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Health Agent McDonald reported the following:

- The Health Director joined the meeting via ZOOM from the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association (MEHA) Conference in Northampton, MA.
- Preparations for the Topsfield Fair are underway.
- It is hoped that the paperwork for the new Tri-Town Public Health Inspector will be completed soon by the Health Director in Middleton, and the new employee will be able to shadow Food Inspectors at the Topsfield Fair.
- Title 5 Inspections, Septic Installation and Repair Inspections, Plan Reviews continue on a regular basis.
- Sue Winslow has been handling trash complaints.
- Ms. Lischko informed the Board that she heard there is a Bill coming in the State Legislature that will require private wells to meet certain standards.
- Mr. Hunt expressed concern about potential government intervention regarding private wells.
- Health Director McDonald explained that Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) is considering promulgating regulations in the future regarding PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) in drinking water. Chair Knutsen informed the Board that the prior Health Director planned to review the Topsfield Well Regulations to update them, but this will not be done until there is more information on the direction MDEP will take regarding PFAS.

## TRI-TOWN PUBLIC NURSE REPORT

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

### **Topsfield BOH Meeting September 20, 2023**

#### **Topsfield Fair:**

Working with public safety to coordinate volunteers from MRC, Masco HS EMT, Essex Tech HS health assisting seniors to support triage area at Topsfield Fair again this year. Have 44 shifts total shifts to fill over

the 11 days, most of which are filled at this time. Will have same system in place as last year, Chief Collins-Brown previously stated she was satisfied with the assistance and process last year.

**COVID Update:**

Still all around, wastewater data trending upward, and hospitalizations, death levels trending upwards, but at lower levels than same time periods in previous years per MDPH data. EG.5, variant / offshoot of XBB strain currently circulating. No evidence EG.5 causes more severe illness. COVID is still a threat for vulnerable populations, long COVID is a risk with every COVID infection someone gets. CDC has no plans to change any recommendations or precautions. Some area hospitals and LTC facilities are back to masking based on transmission levels. Need to keep watch on severity of illness.

**Vaccinations:**

Regional MHS Pin Approved by DPH Topsfield Board of Health (TriTown) to order COVID vaccine & children's flu vaccines. Waiting on final approval from state, we have completed all necessary steps at this time.

**COVID:** CDC, FDA & ACIP recently approved & recommended use of an updated 2023-2024 (monovalent, XBB-containing) COVID-19 vaccines for all ages 6 months and older.

Topsfield will likely be using ARPA funds to purchase adult vaccines (approx 100 doses, likely Moderna due to storage capacity requirements) once new MHS pin is approved and will make doses available on to home-bound residents, seniors / immune compromised first then other residents if additional doses are available. Once those doses are gone no additional doses will be purchased.

Pediatric vaccines (likely Moderna only) will be available as well for limited clinics.

**FAQ'S**

- Individuals 5 years of age and older regardless of previous vaccination are eligible to receive a single dose of an updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months since the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals 6 months through 4 years of age who have previously been vaccinated against COVID-19 are eligible to receive one or two doses of an updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (timing and number of doses to administer depends on the previous COVID-19 vaccine received).
- Unvaccinated individuals 6 months through 4 years of age are eligible to receive three doses of the updated authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine or two doses of the updated authorized Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.
- Individuals who recently had COVID-19 – can wait 90 days for immunization
- Individuals who recently had a bivalent booster– wait two months

**Influenza:** Annual vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and up preferably in the fall. IE September/October before the U.S. flu season begins. Early data in the southern hemisphere indicates an early flu season and a good match for vaccine/circulating virus.

**RSV:** New vaccine out for common respiratory virus to reduce severe disease in seniors **at risk** age 60 and older.

*Clarify:* Clinical Guidance for Recommendations for Use of RSV Vaccines in Older Adults

On June 21, 2023, ACIP recommended that adults aged  $\geq 60$  years may receive a single dose of RSV vaccine, using **shared clinical decision-making**\*.

\*IE SCDM factors include lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma; cardiovascular diseases such as congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease; moderate or severe immune compromise (either attributable to a medical condition or receipt of immunosuppressive medications or treatment); diabetes mellitus; neurologic or neuromuscular conditions; kidney disorders, liver disorders, and hematologic disorders; persons who are frail; persons of advanced age; and persons with other underlying conditions or factors that the provider determines might increase the risk for severe RSV-associated respiratory disease. Not a blanket recommendation for all seniors over age 60.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7229a4.htm>

**Tripledemic:** Flu/COVID/RSV - expected to occur again, but possibly not as bad, as some built back immunity.

### **Fall Vaccination Clinics:**

#### **Topsfield**

VNA booked flu clinic at Town Hall - October 12th, 12-4pm

<https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/topsfield?site=topsfield-town-hall>

Boxford COA Flu/COVID/RSV all available

Thursday - October 19th, 2pm-4pm (open to all)

Thursday - November 16th, 2pm-4pm (open to all)

**Masco HS** (kids) - Possibility to coordinate flu clinic(s) there this fall - if need arises? Pending

#### **Mosquito-borne illness:**

Tri-towns all in Low Risk level for both West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Positive mosq samples found on area surveillance in Essex County

WNV + mosquito sample in Haverhill 7/24, 9/6, & 9/11

WNV + mosquito sample in Middleton 8/21

WNV + mosquito sample in Lawrence 8/30

3 Human WNV cases (Middlesex, Worcester, & Hampton County)

12 EEE mosq samples (all in Worcester County)

WNV & EEE are usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito, start with flu-like symptoms.

(For reference)

WNV - There were 10 human cases in 2022.

EEE - There were 0 human or mosq cases in 2022.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update>

**Opioid Update:**

Opioid overdoses continue to be a major public health issue - according to the CDC, there were more than 105,000 fatal overdoses in the US in 2022.

There were 2,357 confirmed and estimated opioid-related overdose deaths in MA 2022, surpassing the previous peak in 2021 by an estimated 57 deaths according to MDPH.

**Opioid Abatement Funds Technical Assistance**

The Bureau of Substance Addiction Services is contracting with JSI who will be sharing resources available to support municipalities in effectively using the Opioid Settlement Funds. Learn more at [www.caremass.org](http://www.caremass.org) or by emailing [abate@jsi.com](mailto:abate@jsi.com). Register to attend informational webinars by clicking on the links below:

- September 19 - [Metrowest](#)
- September 21 - [Western](#)
- September 28 - [Northeast](#)

**Narcan/Naloxone:**

Topsfield health dept completed CNP application and is now an approved program from DPH to distribute Narcan to community members. 3 ways to distribute in the community (2 ways now) .

PSA, policy & procedures & trainings occurring in health department now.

- Leave behind kits - bags with narcan box and educational materials, gloves, barrier mask, fentanyl test strip - provided to fire and police dept for responding to known overdoses or known substances
- Community distribution kits - narcan box with education material
- SAM Box - (purchased with opioid funds after being certified
- through town meeting in spring) fill these public access boxes in community (purchased from MHOA? Or other sources available as well)

Link to PSA now live on Topsfield Website (thank you for posting Sue!)

[https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli5086f/uploads/narcan\\_information\\_updated.pdf](https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli5086f/uploads/narcan_information_updated.pdf)

Next Opioid meeting 10/10/23 at 11:30-1pm Topsfield Town Hall, Public Hall



**SAM Box for Public Places      Leave Behind Kit /  
Community Distribution**

**Senior at Risk Meetings:**

Ongoing no significant updates.

**References:**

Combined sources, MDPH, CDC, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Update

Health Director McDonald reported the following:

- The FY24 Work Plan and Budget have been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).
- The amount for the Tri-Town in FY24 is \$336,000.
- Health Director McDonald will be scheduling a meeting of the Tri-Town Health Directors and Town Administrators to discuss the mandated Shared Services Coordinator Position.
- Unspent FY23 Funds will be returned to MDPH this month. The amount to be returned to the State for FY23 is \$62,720.81 confirmed by Jessica Ferland of MDPH.
- Per Jessica Ferland, the Town will be able to keep 15% of the FY23 Grant in the amount of \$30,000. From that amount, it is planned that the payments approved by the Board in June, 2023 for FY23 Grant Administration for Susan Winslow and Gerard McDonald will be honored and the remainder will go into the Town's General Fund. At present, the Town Administrator has not authorized these payments.
- Chair Knutsen informed the Board that that it was written in a Boston Globe editorial <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/09/17/opinion/public-health-saphe-act/> that The [State] Legislature passed the [State Action for Public Health Excellence Act, or SAPHE 2.0] unanimously in July 2022, but then-governor Charlie Baker returned it with an amendment and the bill died. It was reintroduced this session.

### American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

Chair Knutsen reported that the ARPA grant consisted of \$1.9 million. The Town Website at [www.topsfield-ma.gov](http://www.topsfield-ma.gov) with ARPA information has been updated.

- The Board of Health was allocated \$100,000 in ARPA funds.
- The Board of Health has spent \$60,000 from ARPA funds, most of which has been used to support the Topsfield Fire Department through purchases requested by them.
- This leaves \$40,000 still earmarked for the Board of Health.
- At the September ARPA meeting, it was announced that there is currently a pause on all spending of ARPA Funds.
- Chair Knutsen reported that the proposed Board of Health Revolving Fund for vaccine purchase will no longer be considered because the Board will lose the line item for Vaccine Purchase if a Revolving Fund is established.
- It is still hoped that a portion of the \$40,000 for the Board of Health will be available for a security camera system for the ground floor entrance and vaccine refrigerator area. Currently, there are no security cameras or panic buttons in Town Hall.
- There will be an update from the Finance Committee at the October ARPA meeting.

### FY24 North Coastal Environmental, Inc. Agreement

Board Members reviewed the proposed FY24 North Coastal Environmental Inc. Agreement, received at the Board of Health on August 3, 2023, with corrections and a new Table 7 sent to the Board of Health Office September 19, 2023.

Mr. Hunt expressed concern about the terms of the Agreement, specifically the 2% finance charge for unpaid invoices and language stating that the Town would be responsible for North Coastal Environmental's collection fees including attorney's fees and court costs if litigation should occur regarding amounts not paid.

After discussion in which the Board expressed support for the technical aspects of the Agreement, Mr. Hunt offered to draft a letter to the Select Board supporting the technical aspects of the contract and suggesting that Town Counsel conduct a review regarding the terms included in the contract.

### Topsfield Fair Preparation

Health Director McDonald informed Board Members that he will be working with John Coulon RS and a group of additional inspectors to assist with food inspections. Mr. Coulon will be handling the pre-opening mandatory meeting for all food vendors that includes the food safety PowerPoint presentation developed by the Topsfield Health Department.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### White Goods/Metals Collection

Board Members reviewed the poster advertising the Fall White Goods/Metals curbside collection scheduled for September 20, 21, 22, 2023.

### Revenue and Bills

The Board reviewed revenue in the amount of \$1,624.92 for the time period between August 17, 2023 and September 19, 2023.

The Board reviewed bills paid for the same time period.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

## **ADJOURN**

## Minutes September 20, 2023

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

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

*Eaton – yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*Lischko - yes*

*Hunt - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was accepted in a vote of 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 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:

- September 20, 2023 Agenda
- August 16, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes
- FY24 North Coastal Environmental Contract
- Poster for Fall White Goods/Metals Collection
- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet

*These Meeting Minutes were approved at the October 18, 2023 Board of Health Meeting.*

*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.*