

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, October 18, 2023
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**ATTENDANCE:**

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	Yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	No
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:** Topsfield Cable Television, resident Richard Gandt

**OPENING**

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 pm on October 18, 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 Topsfield Cable Television.

**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 September 20, 2023. There were none.

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of September 20, 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*

*Lischko - yes*

*Rizza - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was approved in a vote of 4-0.*

## HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Health Director Gerry McDonald reported the following:

- There were more than 116 Food Vendors at the Topsfield Fair. Food inspections went smoothly with no issues and no food-borne illness reported. Mr. McDonald thanked Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN and Susan Winslow for assistance. There were also three additional food inspectors to assist with onsite food inspections at the Fair during the 11 day run. Although the Fire Department had warned food vendors that grease hoods were required for indoor cooking, some food vendors did not have them so Mr. McDonald and other food inspectors allowed them to cook outdoors. Record attendance was recorded on the final Sunday of the Fair.
- The new Tri-Town Public Health Inspector, Connor Galvin, has been hired as an employee in Middleton. It is hoped that he will shadow more experienced Food Inspectors in preparation for handling routine food inspections including the inspections required for the Common Victualler licenses issued by the Select Board in December.
- The Castleberry Fair craft fair will be returning to the Topsfield Fairgrounds mid-November. Food inspections will be required for the 20+ food vendors at the event.
- Holiday On The Green will be held on Saturday, December 2, 2023 with mobile food vendors requiring inspections.
- Title 5 Inspections, Septic Inspections, Plan Reviews continue on a regular basis.
- The State approved the PHE Work Plan and FY24 Budget.

## TRI-TOWN PUBLIC NURSE REPORT

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

### **Topsfield BOH Meeting October 18, 2023**

#### **Topsfield Fair:**

Coordinated and oversaw 44 shifts of MRC and high school student volunteers at triage table near public safety buildings to assist EMT's, police and fire dept. Volunteers provide first line of assessment and reduce some of the need for public safety dept interacting with fairgoers for routine / trivial needs. Working with the Chief to improve the system for next year.

#### **TOTALS**

146 encounters

38 bee stings

79 referrals to self-help

23 referrals to souvenir

29 EMS evaluations

Big thank you to MRC volunteers for the continuous support of public health departments.

### **Vaccine Outreach:**

Pharmacy Group that was at Big E reached out to me last minute to try to coordinate vaccine outreach at Topsfield Fair. The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) partnered with Grange to bring local pharmacists to educate and administer vaccines. Ended up being too late in fair to coordinate space, may be able to coordinate better next year. Pharmacists at Big E event report they vaccinated over 3000 people for flu/COVID!

### **Epi-Pens:**

We received many inquiries for the location of epi-pens to triage area - prior to the fair I have had many discussions with camps during the summer months about access to epi pens as well. Discussed *Public Access to Epinephrine Bill* with Ted Kosta (Bruce Tarr's Outreach Rep) who was present at the fair (Head of Poultry Building) when I was there (and serves on the board at the Topsfield Fair).

Background on Legislation: Multiple states have passed legislation that permits, but does not require, various public venues, referred to as entities, to stock undesignated epinephrine for use in case of an emergency. "Authorized entity" (as stated in Maine bill) includes any entity, organization or place of employment, other than a school under Title 20-A, section 6305, in connection with or at which allergens capable of causing anaphylaxis may be present, including but not limited to recreation camps, colleges, universities, day care facilities, youth sports leagues, amusement parks, restaurants and sports arenas.

### **Sources:**

Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) Public Access to Epi Initiative: <https://www.foodallergy.org/our-initiatives/advocacy/know-your-rights/public-access-epinephrine>

Maine legislation that passed in 2015 that could be the framework for MA:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0776&item=3&num=127>

### **Food Allergy Stats:**

- Approximately 33 million Americans have food allergies
- 1 in 10 Adults have food allergies
- 1 in 13 children have food allergies
- Nearly 40% of children with food allergies have experienced a severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis

(Source: <https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/facts-and-statistics>)

### **Insect Sting Stats:**

- At least 60 people die each year as the result of insect stings
- Between 5-7.5% of Americans are hypersensitive to insect stings, which means they are at risk for anaphylaxis if stung.

(Source: <https://www.beeawareallergy.com/bee-stings/symptoms/>)

Presented all info to Ted Kosta to review with Senator Bruce Tarr on 10/3/23

**PHE Workplan overview for Tri-Town:**

The overall goal / big picture from DPH is to promote equity, increase services, increase efficiency, improve Tri-Town community health

New hires need to continue to gain understanding and meet statutory requirements of public health nursing and create health equity among all towns, through disease prevention, & health promotion.

As an example - Summer recreational camps - there are 10 camps between 3 towns, serving over 3500 children from all different towns across Essex County (or beyond) and have different processes to apply for permits, some towns have more strict processes, some more simple. Camps inspections are a complex process, requiring they meet statutory requirements for Community Sanitation Standards, but the inspection process varies widely town to town in the Commonwealth.

**Priority areas of focus in workplan (worked with health directors to develop):**

Vaccine equity - work with health directors & PHN to expand access

Opioid outreach assisting with Opioid settlement funds coming in to each town

Workplace safety - following Mass.gov WSHP for public sector employees - started at Boxford COA in conjunction with COA director & fire department <https://www.mass.gov/workplace-safety-and-health-program-wshp>

Recreational Camps outreach & education

Schools/Tri-Town Council & COA outreach & education

**Flu clinics:**

Topsfield 10/12 - 115 people vaccinated (VNA - Flu only 19+)

Middleton 10/14 - 55 people vaccinated (Flu only 5+)

Boxford 10/19 - 90 people signed up (Conleys Pharmacy)

Homebound residents in process of being vaccinated

TTU School staff in process of being vaccinated

Gained final approval from DPH for Topsfield Board of Health / Tri-Town MIIS account to order state vaccines. Will

Moderna account pending for adult vaccines, likely will be in in early November, will run walk in clinics through town hall with COVID and Flu vaccines,

Ordered more free COVID test kits from state, available at health departments, will distribute throughout towns & COA's

**New Mass.gov Dashboards:**

[Respiratory Illness Reporting | Mass.gov](#) Flu/COVID/RSV

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/respiratory-illness-reporting>

[Capacity Assessment Interactive Data Dashboard | Mass.gov](#)

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/capacity-assessment-interactive-data-dashboard#dashboard->

[Population Health Information Tool | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/population-health-information-tool)  
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/population-health-information-tool>

## OLD BUSINESS

### Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Update

Chair Sheryl Knutsen reported the following:

- This week, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health released the first Public Health Performance Standards. The Standards were presented at the State's Public Health Council meeting and again in a ZOOM meeting on 10/17/2023.
- There is a new Public Health Performance Standards Dashboard where people can view the information collected during the Capacity Assessment conducted in 2022. The Dashboard may be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/capacity-assessment-interactive-data-dashboard>

Chair Knutsen added the following:

- The effort put into the Capacity Assessment in 2022, including answering a document with 170+ questions and uploading supporting documents, resulted in the addition of \$126,000 added to the Tri-Town Public Health Excellence Grant this year, bringing the total for FY24 to \$336,000 for Tri-Town Public Health. Ms. Winslow gathered and uploaded the information and also processed all purchases and payments for the Grant during FY23.
- Susan Winslow has not been paid the \$5,000 voted by the Board of Health for Grant Administration on the FY23 Grant, nor have Health Directors Gerard McDonald and Wendy Hansbury been paid for FY23 PHE Grant Administration as voted at the June, 21, 2023 Board of Health Meeting. Payment for services rendered to the PHE Grant has been held up by the Town Administrator.

### American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

Chair Knutsen reported that she attended the September ARPA meeting. The ARPA grant consisted of \$1.9 million. The current information on ARPA expenditures is available on the Town website at [www.topsfield-ma.gov](http://www.topsfield-ma.gov).

## NEW BUSINESS

### September Opioid Meeting

Julia Lobel RN and Susan Winslow attended the October 10, 2023 Opioid Meeting. Ms. Lobel reported the following:

There is \$35,000 to be spent in the grant in the coming year, but the expenditures must be approved by a vote at Town Meeting in May, 2024 before funds are spent.

The Opioid Committee will be working on developing a Warrant Article to be submitted at Town Meeting in May, 2024..

Invitations to speak at upcoming Opioid Meetings will be extended to representatives from local entities offering support services to people experiencing Opioid addiction and their families and people who have life experience with Opioid addiction. Meetings at which a person with Opioid addiction experience will not be open to the public in order to create a safe space for sharing, possibly at the Library.

Ms. Lobel has submitted Opioid Grant material to the Town Administrator's office to be posted on the website.

### Revenue and Bills

The Board reviewed revenue in the amount of \$1,778.00 for the time period between September 20, 2023 and October 17, 2023.

Minutes October 18, 2023

The Board reviewed bills paid for the same time period.

#### Trash Sticker FY23 Revenue

Chair Knutsen reported that the Board of Health deposited \$57,000 in the Town's General fund for trash sticker sales to local vendors for FY23.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Board reviewed the September, 2023 Disbursement Report submitted by ForHealth (University of Massachusetts Medical School) for vaccine reimbursement.

The Board reviewed the VNA FY24 First Quarter Report. Chair Knutsen reported that Health Director McDonald sent a letter to Beverly Salate RN at VNA this past summer requesting more information in the Quarterly Reports. Mr. McDonald emailed the letter to Ms. Salate again and received a response that the FY24 First Quarter Report will be rewritten to include more comprehensive information.

#### **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*

*Lischko - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was accepted in a vote of 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 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:

- October 18, 2023 Agenda
- September 20, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes
- ForHealth September 2023 Disbursement Report
- Document, "FY23 Trash Sticker Sales"
- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet
- FY24 First Quarter VNA Care Report
- Document, "Local Public Health Performance Standards"

*These Meeting Minutes were approved at the December 20, 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.*