

December 20, 2023

BOARD OF HEALTH

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

Date:	Wednesday, December 20, 2023
--------------	------------------------------

ATTENDANCE:

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

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT
Gerard McDonald, Health Director	Yes
Julia Lobel RN, Tri-Town Public Health Nurse	Yes
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	No

VISITORS PRESENT: Topsfield Cable Television, Derek Fullerton RS from Mayflower Recovery

OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:34 pm on December 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. 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.

- This meeting was recorded by Topsfield Cable Television. Recording Secretary Susan Winslow took Minutes.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

APPOINTMENTS

Derek Fullerton RS, Mayflower Recovery

December 20, 2023

Derek Fullerton RS, the former Middleton Health Director and past-president of the Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA), is now the Director of Government & Business Relations for Mayflower Recovery of Wilmington, MA. Mr. Fullerton addressed the Board to inform them about the Opioid Tool Kit he helped to develop. Mr. Fullerton presented the following information:

- Mr. Fullerton meets with Boards of Health pro-bono to spread the word about harm reduction related to Opioid abuse.
- SAMBox is a trademarked name for an Opioid Tool kit based on the Good Samaritan Law. These boxes are also known as Opioid Rescue Boxes or Nalox Boxes.
- The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is serving as a volunteer partner to monitor SAMBoxes and ensure that they are refilled when necessary.
- The effort to put SAMBoxes into the community is starting with Town Halls and Schools and it is hoped that they will become as ubiquitous as AED and First Aid Boxes hanging on walls throughout the community in locations where people gather.
- Naloxone, the overdose reversal agent in SAMBoxes, will not harm someone who is not experiencing an overdose, but it can save the life of someone who is experiencing an Opioid Overdose.
- Naloxone is simple to administer – simply place the nasal syringe in the nostrils of the person and push the lever. The Naloxone is sprayed into the nostrils. Once administered, the delivery device is discarded and will be replaced, free of charge, into the SAMBox. Local Health officials and/or MRC volunteers will be responsible for checking SAMBoxes on a routine basis and managing the replacement of any used items.
- This program is funded by the national Opioid Settlement funds.

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN held up a SAM Box to show Board Members. She described the contents: a dose of Naloxone, directions on the administration of Naloxone, gloves and a face shield. Ms. Lobel added that there are MOUs drafted for the schools, and the School Superintendent is supportive of this program. The request to the Board is to support the effort to place SAMBoxes in the Steward and Proctor Schools.

Board Members thanked Mr. Fullerton for his presentation.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to approve of the installation of SAMBoxes at the Steward and Proctor Schools in Topsfield. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Hunt – yes

Knutsen – yes

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

MEETING MINUTES

October 18, 2023

After determining that there were no corrections or comments on the Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2023, Chair Knutsen called for a motion.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to approve the October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. Chair Knutsen then called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton - yes

Lischko – yes

Hunt – yes

December 20, 2023

Knutsen – yes

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

November 15, 2023

After determining that there were no corrections or comments on the Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023, Chair Knutsen called for a motion.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023 as written. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen then called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Hunt – yes

Knutsen – yes

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

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Health Director Gerry McDonald reported the following:

- Mr. McDonald thanked Mr. Fullerton and Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN for the presentation on SAM Boxes, and thanked the Board for supporting the program.
- Septic installations, repairs and inspections continue to remain steady.
- Soil Testing for new construction and septic repairs continue.
- Food Inspections were completed for the Common Victualler Licenses issued by the Select Board.
- The new Tri-Town Public Health Inspector, Connor Galvin, will be shadowing Middleton Health Inspector Frank Giacalone.
- There have been a few minor housing issues but nothing major.
- Trash issues continue to be handled by Susan Winslow.
- Mr. McDonald thanked the office staff.

TRI-TOWN PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE REPORT

Topsfield BOH Meeting December 20, 2023

Vaccine clinics:

Over 590 vaccines administered at Masco/Boxford COA vaccination clinics through Conleys (Sept-Dec) - Primarily Flu/COVID/RSV (some Shingrix, Prevnar, & TDAP)

Over 250 Flu/COVID vaccines were administered through the Topsfield & Middleton Health Dept. Topsfield Town Hall continues to offer appts & walk-in Flu & COVID for pediatrics (state supplied) on Mondays & Wednesdays, as well as Moderna COVID vaccines for seniors 65+ (limited supply purchased through ARPA funds).

Resp Illnesses:

December 20, 2023

Respiratory illnesses continue to rise according to MDPH data
Hospitalization rates remain low

MA Vaccination Rates 23-23 Season

FLU 35%

COVID 17%

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

Test Kits:

Free COVID test kits available in the Health Dept. Have ordered max amount for all 3 towns and distribute where needed at health dept, COA's, Police dept, etc.

Language Equity:

Services/Contract in discussion for Lionbridge translation services.

Lionbridge provides telephone translation of 380 languages typically within 10-15 seconds.

In-person translations are via speaker phone.

Phone calls are via a call into Lionbridge, then selecting language, then interpreter calls party.

Town is an eligible buyer under OSC, PHE has a line item grant for "communications" provided by the health director with cost estimates.

Primary need is for inspectional service in health dept but other needs exist for health-related translation with each town to meet residents needs and access to health services.

NaloxoSAM Boxes in TTU/Masco:

Thank you again to Dererk Fullerton. Great partnership and very proud of the work being done in the Tri-Town to get these life-saving boxes out in the communities. Just to clarify, there are multiple names for these kits discussed - "Opioid rescue kits" or "Naloxboxes", or "SAM Boxes" which references the Good Samaritan law.

<https://sambox.mhoa.com/>

<https://naloxbox.org/>

Topsfield Health Dept Narcan PSA [Narcan](#)

Middleton Health Dept currently has SAMBoxes available to immediately supply Boxford/Topsfield public schools with these boxes if BOH votes to approve boxes in public schools. The next step after Opioid funds are allocated through town meeting would be to expand the program to other public places in town. Right now urgency exists in schools due to the fentanyl epidemic (in addition to substance use disorder) and potential for overdose for any person or child and the need for readily accessible narcan (see excerpt below) [Narcan](#)

[October 30, 2023](#)

Last meeting we discussed:

School nurses received a letter during an MSNO meeting from the Secretary of Education and Office of National Drug Control Policy regarding the fentanyl epidemic & having Narcan readily accessible in schools. President Biden recently addressed this during the SOTU address at the end of October. Topsfield (and Boxford) opioid funds have not been allocated yet (will be at the spring town meeting), but Middletons funds have been allocated. Middleton has offered to purchase additional SAM Boxes for Topsfield & Boxford if BOH/schools agree. I met with Masco & TTU Supts on 11/15/23 via zoom and they support the public health initiative of boxes being installed if BOH would like to put up near AEDs. They can send communications to families/staff on Narcan PSA from health depts when available. Supt's questions involved procedural on who will check the box, maintain etc similar to AED, fire extinguishers so it is clear.

Currently, all 3 towns are enrolled in CNP (community naloxone program) and can distribute Narcan for free as long as towns are enrolled.

Excerpt from Memo:

"Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is so potent even a tiny amount can be fatal. As you have seen in your schools and communities, the rise of illicit fentanyl and its trafficking via social media is having a disproportionate impact on our children. Overdose deaths among adolescents doubled from 2019 to 2020 and continue to rise, even though youth rates of drug use have remained stagnant. That's because a teenager today can log onto social media with a smartphone and buy what they think is an opioid pain medicine or a prescription stimulant to help them study—and instead die from one pill that actually has fentanyl in it. Just one pill. And data show that two-thirds of adolescent drug poisoning deaths occurred with a potential bystander nearby, but naloxone was often not administered."

To date, Topsfield health dept have distributed over 100 doses of Narcan to community members. Very proud of this outreach Topsfield is involved in.

Opioid Fund/Meetings:

Next Opioid Meeting: January 2024 TBD

Schools will be asked to discuss current challenges/concerns

Working on an Opioid landing page for the town website for information with Stephanie Bilotti that will include a link for survey for people to take online or pick up paper copy of survey.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZHkn72J8vErASTJsJCABt4QmrE0fyb63jKSjbhs1nokUnhw/viewform>

Also working on Tri-Town Community Resources Brochure/Booklet with available resources in one place.

[Learn about the AG's Statewide Opioid Settlements with Opioid Industry Defendants | Mass.gov](#)

Senior Task Force:

Very busy in all 3 towns right now with senior outreach.

Some complex cases, making referrals to agencies to secure assistance/resources.

Resources are limited throughout all agencies making wait times long.

This year is particularly challenging for a lot of people, check on your family, friends and neighbors.

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>

OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant

- Health Director McDonald informed the Board that Middleton will become the grant host, as that Town is willing to hire people as employees, paid for by the Grant and Topsfield will not add any employees even if fully funded by the Grant.
- The FY24 funds have not yet been received for the Tri-Towns, but the amount currently approved by MDPH is \$336,000 for public health staff and projects.
- It is hoped that a Social Worker and a Shared Services Coordinator will be hired.
- Topsfield returned \$76,220.81 to the State in unused FY23 funds. Because Middleton posted the Tri-Town Health Inspector as a 19 hour a week job with no benefits, no-one applied for the position in FY23 and the funds were returned to State. Middleton has since hired Connor Galvin as a fully benefitted employee serving the Tri-Town as Public Health Inspector funded by the Grant in FY24.
- Susan Winslow asked the Board if Middleton would be hiring someone as the Grant Administrator because those duties continue to fall to her even though the Topsfield Town Administrator denied the Board's vote to compensate her for the job in FY23, and the FY24 bills still come to her for processing. It is believed that this responsibility will be handled by the Shared Services Coordinator once that person is hired.
- Health Director McDonald informed the Board that DPH is now requiring a PHE Shared Governance Board which will help with communication among Topsfield, Boxford and Middleton. Mr. McDonald has already hosted a meeting of the Town Administrators and Health Directors in an attempt to chart the path going forward.
- Middleton has given the Tri-Town Public Health Nurse's office to the new Tri-Town Health Inspector so Ms. Lobel will be using her office space in Topsfield more frequently.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant

- ARPA funds have been used to purchase COVID Vaccine and it is hoped that we may purchase more.
- We purchased a smaller batch of vaccine because the Town Hall elevator was broken for almost a month, with no certain date set for a repair. Because of this, we could not schedule a larger COVID vaccine clinic. At present, COVID and Flu vaccines are available Mondays and Wednesdays at the Board of Health Office, and Conley's Pharmacy from Ipswich coordinated a larger vaccine clinic at Masconomet Regional High School.
- It is hoped that ARPA funds will still be available for a security camera in the Board of Health office to monitor the vaccine refrigerator.
- Ms. Knutsen and the Board thanked Ms. Lobel and Mr. McDonald for their work on the ARPA grant.

CORRESPONDENCE

Board Members reviewed correspondence received at the Board of Health Office from Sharon Kishida requesting local towns to support Bills H823, S551 and S542. These bills support a movement to hold manufacturers responsible for end-of-use recycling programs for Paint, Mattresses and Packing Paper/Materials. Because Ms. Lischko had left the meeting, the Board determined that this issue will be revisited at the January 17, 2024 meeting.

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. Hunt. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

December 20, 2023

Eaton – yes

Hunt - yes

Lischko – had left the meeting

Knutsen – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 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:

- December 20, 2023 Meeting Agenda
- October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Information on SAM Boxes
- Revenue Sheet for December 20, 2023 Meeting
- Bills Paid
- Email from Sharon Kishida dated December 14, 2023.

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the January 17, 2024 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.