

March 20, 2024

BOARD OF HEALTH

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, March 20, 2024
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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	No
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Topsfield Cable Television

**OPENING**

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 pm on March 20, 2024 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.*

- 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**

There were no appointments at this meeting.

## MEETING MINUTES

### February 21, 2024

Chair Knutsen asked if there were comments or questions on the Draft Meeting Minutes for February 21, 2024. After determining that there were no further corrections or comments on the Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2024, Chair Knutsen called for a motion.

*VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to approve the February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen then called for a roll-call vote:*

*Eaton - yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*Hunt - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

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

## HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Health Director Gerry McDonald reported the following:

- The office remains busy with plan reviews, Title 5 Inspection Report reviews, soil testing, septic repair inspections.
- Tri-Town Public Health Inspector Connor Galvin is doing a great job. He has conducted food inspections at the local schools, Masconomet Health Care, Topsfield Vocational Academy and has also started restaurant inspections. He is also working on obtaining other necessary certifications required for the position.
- VNA Contract Termination – the VNA has discontinued their Wellness division and as a result, they have terminated their contract with Topsfield effective June 30, 2024. Caitlin Pettingill from the MDPH Nursing Division has advised that, because VNA terminated the contract, it will not be considered 'supplanting' if Topsfield hires a part-time nurse through the PHE Grant to replace the role of VNA. Beverly Salate from VNA will continue to monitor MAVEN and conduct Wellness Clinics until June 30, 2024 to fulfill the remainder of the FY24 VNA contract.
- Chair Knutsen informed the Board that it is a mandate for Boards of Health to monitor MAVEN and complete follow-up on communicable diseases, and that this has been part of the VNA role that must be replaced as soon as possible.
- Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN currently works 30 hours per week for the Towns of Middleton, Topsfield and Boxford and is not interested in adding additional hours. However, she checks MAVEN daily and is willing to help to a certain extent until a part-time nurse is hired to fill the void left by the departure of VNA.
- There is a Federal Health Model that Massachusetts is moving toward through the PHE Grant. Information may be found under National Foundational Health Standards <https://www.mass.gov/resource/performance-standards-for-local-public-health>. Mr. Rizza asked if there is a date when Massachusetts will be mandated to comply with the Federal Health Model. Health Director McDonald informed the Board that this has yet to be determined, although there is a Phase 2 in the PHE program and more information/guidelines will be forthcoming.
- Chair Knutsen asked that she and Ms. Eaton be informed about the next meeting regarding the PHE.
- Topsfield Police Chief Neal Hovey informed attendees at the Public Safety Meeting that youths have been able to pull down the plywood securing 68 River Road and have been trespassing. Health Director McDonald sent a certified letter to the owner, Daniel McLaughlin, instructing him to comply with the Amended Correction Order issued on September 14, 2022 and to contact the Board of Health office.

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- Mr. Rizza informed the Board that the town of North Attleboro Board of Health recently ordered the demolition of a vacant building in that town that was deemed hazardous. Health Director McDonald will follow up with a call to the Health Department in North Attleboro to gather information on that situation.
- Board Members requested an update on the situation at 68 River Road for the next Board of Health Meeting, including checking on the status of the Historical Committee's demolition delay and next step plans for the building from Mr. McLaughlin.

### **TRI-TOWN PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE REPORT**

- The Tri-Town Public Health Nurse, Julia Lobel RN, was unable to attend the meeting so there was no report.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant

- Middleton will become grant host in July, 2024.
- Patrick Henry is the new representative from MDPH who is working with the Tri-Town on the PHE Grant. He asked if the Tri-Town is all set with the funds allocated thus far (\$218,000) or if Topsfield needs the third installment of FY24 funds to bring our total to \$336,000 for FY24. If the funds are distributed and the unspent portion is returned, those returned funds go into the State's General Fund. However, if we are all set with the funds allocated to date and do not request the full \$336,000, MDPH will be able to retain the difference to be allocated for FY25.
- It was determined that the \$218,000 allotted to the Tri-Town is sufficient to cover the rest of FY24 for the following reasons:
  1. The Topsfield Town Administrator will not allow the Board of Health to hire a Grant Coordinator or Social Worker due to his ban on new hires so these expenses will not have to be covered in this fiscal year. The Grant Administration position has been allocated 4 hours a week and has been held off until April rather than a full fiscal year position, so this expense should be covered as well.
  2. Tri-Town Health Inspector Connor Galvin was not hired until this past Fall, so his salary should be fully covered with funds received thus far.
  3. Because funds were distributed late by the State, there was caution with spending.
  4. Because Middleton was originally planning to become the grant host in FY24, they have not submitted any invoices to Topsfield for payment since July. It is assumed that the \$218,000 received should be sufficient to cover all invoices and salaries once they are delivered to Topsfield.
- Chair Knutsen suggested that the Health Director schedule a meeting of the PHE Governing Board consisting of the Health Directors from the Tri-Town as well as Chair Knutsen and Ms. Eaton.
- The Town Administrator posted the position of Grant Administrator for the remainder of FY24. Susan Winslow has applied for the position.

#### American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant

- Chair Knutsen attended the most recent ARPA meeting.
- Health Director McDonald is moving forward with obtaining costs/placement options for security cameras at Town Hall, particularly in the area surrounding the vaccine refrigerator.
- There is approximately \$12,000 left of the \$100,000 allotment of Board of Health ARPA funds left.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### Changes to the Compost Program

Health Director McDonald and Sr. Administrative Assistant Sue Winslow gave the Board a synopsis of the Compost program and informed them that the facility will be opening late this year. The Town Administrator is working on a plan to revamp the program using a technology system to track vehicles entering the facility. It is estimated that the facility will open in late April.

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### Opioid Settlement Funds

Health Director McDonald informed the Board about a presentation at the recent Opioid Settlement Committee meeting from The Community Law Enforcement and Assisted Recovery Program (CLEAR) in which the Board of Health houses a police officer and mental health professional to assist with substance abuse and mental health issues. The city of Winthrop was cited as an example. The Health Director invited Board Members to attend the next Opioid Settlement Committee meeting. There will be a vote at Town Meeting in May, 2024 to reallocate opioid funds to a special reserve fund.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Bills Paid

Board Members reviewed Bills Paid since the February 21, 2024 Meeting.

### Revenue

Board Members reviewed Revenue in the amount of \$820.00 received since the February 21, 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: Mr. Rizza 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 approved in a vote of 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:38 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:

- March 20, 2024 Meeting Agenda
- February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Letter from VNA Care dated February 16, 2024
- Bills Paid
- Revenue Sheet

*These Meeting Minutes were approved at the April 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.*