



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

September 16, 2020

6:30 PM

Board Members present: Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen RN and Board Members, Larry Fixler RPh, Mark Rizza and William Hunt Esq. Health Agent Wendy Hansbury and Senior Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow were in attendance. Also in attendance were Selectman A. Richard Gandt, Brad Sweet from Boxford/Topsfield Cable Television, residents Carol and Matthew Kaminski, John Morin PE from The Morin-Cameron Group, Inc. and Gerard McDonald PE from HL Graham Associates. Board Member Anthony Alley RN was not in attendance.

COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

BOH: Board of Health

BOS: Board of Selectmen

MAVEN: Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network

MDEP: Massachusetts Department of Environmental
Protection

CDC: Center for Disease Control

CEU: Continuing Education Unit

CEMP: Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

COIN: Community Outreach Information Network

DPH: Department of Public Health

EEE: Eastern Equine Encephalitis

EDS: Emergency Dispensing Site

ESHW: Estimated Seasonal High Water Table

EP: Emergency Preparedness

FDA: Food & Drug Administration

HHS: Health and Human Services

HMCC: Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

LSAC: Local State Advisory Committee

MDPH Mass. Dept. of Public Health

MEMA: Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

MRC: Medical Reserve Corps

NEMMC: Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control

PHEP: Public Health Emergency Preparedness

POD: Point Of Dispensing

RN: Registered Nurse

RS: Registered Sanitarian

SAS: Soil Absorption System

TBOH: Topsfield Board of Health

TRMRC: Topsfield Regional Medical Reserve Corps

VNA: Visiting Nurse Association

WNV: West Nile Virus

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

The Recording Secretary is taking notes for Minutes of this Meeting.

This Meeting is being recorded by Boxford Cable Television for later broadcast on Topsfield Cable Television. Is there anyone else here who wishes to record this meeting?

(There were no other attendees recording this meeting.)

PUBLIC HEARING TO BE CONTINUED The Public Hearing on R: 1-2 Supplemental Regulations to 310 CMR 15.00 The State Environmental Code duly advertised in the January 16, 2020 and January 23, 2020 and opened at the February 19, 2020 Board of Health Meeting will be continued per Section 17 of Ch.53 of the Acts of 2020 to the first hearing date following the termination of the state of emergency or to a date otherwise prescribed by law.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. 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 <https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/>. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting, may do so in the following manner: join the ZOOM audio-video conference call (see information below). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield Board of Health website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

The Town of Topsfield is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Board of Health

Time: Sep 16, 2020 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83162506184?pwd=N0puUWRQUU9UV1hjQk9UUWduNzNmQT09>

Meeting ID: 831 6250 6184

Passcode: 865501

Dial by your location

1-929-205-6099 US (New York)

APPOINTMENTS

28 Ipswich Road – Kaminski request to reclassify bedroom count.

John Morin PE from The Morin-Cameron Group, Inc. explained the following criteria this property has met in order to be considered for reclassification of bedroom count from three (3) bedrooms to four (4) bedrooms.

- 2006 Morin-Cameron Group, Inc. septic designed for 3 bedrooms under the regulation at that time requiring a design flow of 200 gallons per bedroom per day.
- There were no variance requests or local upgrade approvals requested or required for this system.
- System was designed for 606 gallons per day with a 2-compartment 1500 gallon tank.
- The system complies to code and there is no garbage grinder.
- The system has a passing Title 5 Inspection.
- Under R:1-2 The Topsfield Supplemental Regulations to 310 CMR 15.00 The State Environmental Code, Title 5 revised in 2014, this property complies with the required 110 gallons per bedroom per day and could be considered compliant for 5 bedrooms if the tank was modified, but the Kaminskis are asking for a reclassification to 4 bedrooms which does not require any modification of the tank.

Questions from Board Members:

Mr. Rizza asked for the tank capacity required for 4 bedrooms.

Mr. Morin responded that a 4 bedroom system would require a tank size of 1320 gallons and the existing tank holds 1500 gallons.

Mr. Fixler asked for the distance from the tank to the distribution box.

Mr. Morin replied that the distance is 73 feet which also allows for plenty of room should the homeowner wish to make further changes in the future.

Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board Members that the document, "Clarification of Criteria for Residential Bedroom Count Reclassification" is posted on the Board of Health web page.

After a brief discussion, Chair Knutsen asked if there were further comments or questions. Mr. Hunt asked if there have been many of these types of requests since the Board revised the Regulations in 2014. Ms. Hansbury and Chair Knutsen explained that there have been a few, perhaps one or two a year, but there has not been a significant increase in requests of this nature. Chair Knutsen asked again if there were any comments or question and when there were none, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to approve the reclassification of the existing leaching facility at 28 Ipswich Road from 3 bedrooms to accommodate 4 bedrooms in compliance with R:1-2 The Topsfield Supplemental Regulations to 310 CMR 15.00 The State Environmental Code, Title 5. Seconded by Mr. Fixler. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0.

32 Fox Run Road Variance Requests

Gerard McDonald PE explained that the restrictions on this property due to wetlands make it necessary to obtain DEP Remedial Use approval for a Geomat 3900 Leaching System. Mr. McDonald also explained that this system would require a 2 foot reduction in the required separation between the Geomat and Seasonal High Groundwater.

Mr. McDonald pointed out the following:

- Soils are good, perc testing indicated less than 2 minutes per inch
- Mr. McDonald has taken training and is certified in the use of the Geomat 3900 Leaching System
- The State has allowed for 40% reduction in the size of the leach field with this type of system.
- The system consists of a filter matrix.
- The request for the 2 foot reduction between the Geomat and Seasonal High Groundwater is to reduce the size of the mound in front of the house. This is allowed by the State.
- The Pro-Step Filtered pump is a timed pump

Questions from Board Members:

Mr. Fixler asked if there is solid science behind this type of system.

Mr. McDonald explained that this system has been part of a MDEP pilot program and was tested before it was allowed on the market. The Geomat system treats effluent to a higher level, thus requiring less of a footprint in environmentally sensitive areas such as this property.

Board Members conducted a brief discussion on the merits of this system and the environmental challenges presented by this property.

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the variance request for 32 Fox Run Road for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – 310 CMR 15.000 Title 5 Remedial Use of the Geomat 3900 Leaching System including a 2 foot reduction in the required separation between the Geomat and Seasonal High Groundwater [Sec. 15.212 (1) (b)]. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

MEETING MINUTES

August 19, 2020

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to approve the August 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Fixler – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19

Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen gave the Board an update on multiple COVID Command Center Conference Calls she has participated in since the August 19, 2020 Board of Health Meeting. Chair Knutsen read the following information into the record:

For 9/16/20 TBOH meeting **Weekly COVID Conference calls between MDPH and LPH:**

There have been 8 conference calls between MDPH and LPH since our last Topsfield BOH meeting. Approximately 600 people join these calls every Tuesday and Thursday. The following is a summary of my notes from these calls.

8/21 Flu vaccination is now required for all Massachusetts Students enrolled in child care, pre-school , K-12, and secondary institutions. This is an important step to reduce flu-related illness and the overall impact of respiratory illness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flu symptoms are similar to those of COVID-19 and preventing the flu will save lives and preserve healthcare resources. MDPH is making plans to provide **rapid response testing in schools**. Discussions are taking place with higher education and MAVEN to assure that **contact tracing** is coordinated. **Case numbers in MAVEN** (the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network) are constantly fluctuating and reflect only that moment in time. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (**DESE**) is working with **MDPH** and **MIAA** (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) to align guidance. **Election officials** are asking questions about mask-wearing and signage at the polls.

8/25 MDPH releases **local case rate metrics** weekly, calculated on a rolling two-week basis, via a color coded map. **DESE urges towns and schools to work together** to use the metrics as a guide to determine whether schools should be open using full-time in-person, hybrid, or remote models. DESE has assigned all **regional school districts a 'key municipality'** that should be used to determine alignment with MDPH public health metrics. For the Masconomet Regional Middle/High School, the Key Municipality is listed as Boxford. In response to a question about CDC COVID transmission categories, the State Epidemiologist stated "in general, we have **sustained transmission across MA** and despite our efforts, COVID is in every community and transmission is actively occurring. There is a potential for rapid increase in cases everywhere." Callers raised frustration with the **complexity of interpreting COVID lab test data** that is posted in MAVEN.

8/28 Although the CDC recently changed its **COVID testing guidance** to say "If you have been in close contact (within 6 feet) of a person with a COVID-19 infection for at least 15 minutes but do not have symptoms you do not necessarily need a test unless you are a vulnerable individual or your health care provider or State or local public health officials recommend you take one" **Massachusetts recommends testing for contacts** and has no plans to change its guidance; asymptomatic testing is a foundation of contact tracing. Governor Baker signed **Executive Order** No. 49 which directs EEC (Department of Early Education and Care) to provide for the creation of '**remote learning enrichment programs**' which provide supervised group care for school-aged children who are learning remotely; these programs **must be approved by the local municipality**, which will be responsible to see that they comply with minimum EEC-issued health and safety standards for operation. MDPH contract s with CMG Associates to provide **short term counseling** to local Health Agents and Board of Health members who are experiencing symptoms of stress associated with the response to the COVID pandemic.

9/01 This call focused on complex details of the **three new ways communities can support options for families to access additional support during virtual learning activities**: 1) expanded access to new spaces for EEC-licensed programs; 2) new remote learning enrichment programs approved by municipalities; and 3) remote learning parent cooperatives. DESE has created family-friendly guidance for returning to school. DPH announced the launch of a **COVID Community Impact Survey** starting the week of September 14th. A recurring call-in question is “are **bandanas and gaiters** allowed in schools?” The [Mask Up MA! | Mass.gov](#) guidance says face coverings should have ear loops or ties. LBOHs continue to get many questions about modifying **individual sports**.

9/04 DESE released updated **guidance for school health offices and school nurses** which included guidance on medical waiting rooms and working/communicating with LBOHs; use of PPE in different school scenarios; and procedures for working with students with special health care needs. MDPH is working on plans for rapid **distribution of COVID vaccines**, as soon as the vaccine(s) are authorized by the FDA. A hearing (via Webex) will be held tomorrow on a proposed regulation from the Department of Labor Standards which will incorporate workplace safety rules which are currently under the Governor’s emergency powers, into a **permanent state regulation** under 454 CMR 31.00. Callers had questions about a new **Abbott Ag PCR test**, and about the **Quidel testing system** being used in nursing homes. MDPH is working on clarifying guidelines on **how to assign COVID cases to a jurisdiction**, which can be complicated as college students move in and out of state. A **Stop COVID-19 messaging campaign** rolled out today, focusing on the top five highest-risk communities in MA. A **MAVEN webinar on COVID clusters**, including those in higher education and boarding schools, was held today.

9/08 The Commissioner of Early Education and Care (EEC) reported updated policies, guidance and processes for **Municipal Approval Authorities** with regard to the new Remote Learning enrichment programs. One caller had many questions about the requirement for municipalities to conduct CORI and SORI checks. Another caller reported that local school committees are struggling with return-to-school logistics, specifically regarding social distancing, and LBOHs are struggling with how to advise them, resulting in exhaustion from constantly needing to revise decisions.

The Department of Labor Standards clarified policy standards for attendance at places of worship. LBOHs are awaiting details about **PrepMod**, an electronic vaccination software product which will help with sign-up and billing for flu (and the anticipated COVID) vaccination clinics. A **COVID-19 WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS webinar** hosted by the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety and the Coalition for Local Public Health (CLPH) was held today. **Webinars** will be held on September 9 & 10 to learn more about helping to engage local communities on filling out the statewide **COVID-19 Community impact Survey**; findings can be used to shine a light on where help is needed most.

9/11 The DESE Senior Associate Commissioner reported on two new protocols: a **Protocol for Requesting Mobile Rapid Response Units** (in schools) and a **protocol for superintendents to report positive cases to DESE**. The State Epidemiologist reported that the COVID pandemic has created new complicated factors of **tracking cases in MAVEN** which causes new challenges, because of the sheer volume of testing & also because of the number of re-tests; she recommends running a report daily in order to find new cases that require follow-up. The list of the **Governor’s COVID-19 Emergency Orders has been reorganized on the Mass.gov COVID-19 State of Emergency webpage** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency>. Since March 10th, when Governor Baker declared a state of emergency, there have been 50 Emergency Orders issued, about: Gatherings,

Travel Restrictions, Masks and Face-Coverings, Reopening Protocols, Early Education and Child Care, K-12 Schools, Recreation and Beaches, Pharmacy & Grocery Operations, Health Insurance, Health Care Workforce, Health Care Delivery, Labs and Hospitals, Congregate Care, State Permits/Licenses/Inspections, Registry of Motor Vehicles, Governor's Council, Essential Services, and Miscellaneous/Other. Many of these orders have lapsed or have been rescinded or revised. The latest order (#50), issued yesterday, authorized the extension of outdoor dining provisions and the opening of gaming arcades.

9/15 CMG Associates, which is contracted with MDPH to provide **mental health** access and support to LBOHs, has created three **webinars** which will be available in September and October: "Building Resilience," "Defusing Tense Situations," and "Anxiety in Uncertain Times." Regarding COVID case investigations and contact tracing, **MAVEN** released new guidance on how to respond to jurisdictional issues and how to work with other municipalities and across state lines. In response to questions, the State Epidemiologist did a deep-dive on the **Definition of a Close Contact**. **Flu Clinics** are exempt from the Gathering Order. A caller asked for clarification about Release from Isolation for a positive case in **School** and testing of close contacts. LBOHs are starting to get questions about Halloween and Toys for Tots.

Board Members thanked Ms. Knutsen for participation in the Conference Calls and the insightful notes to keep everyone abreast of the changing COVID-19 situation.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that she continues to work closely with the School Board and Superintendent Scott Morrison in preparation for a hybrid model of education in the Topsfield Schools this Fall due to COVID-19.
- Ms. Hansbury has worked on producing a Topsfield 'Report Card' regarding facilities, transportation and current health metrics to assist the School Board and parents.
- There have been less than five cases of COVID-19 in the two weeks prior to September 16, 2020, but Health Officials are concerned about an increase in cases once school is underway.
- One of the most challenging issues for the schools is the implementation of HVAC changes to comply with the Governor's COVID-19 guidelines.
- There are currently no plans at the State Level to move to Phase 3/Step 2.
- Restaurants will not be opening at full capacity until at least December, but decisions will be based on COVID-19 numbers.
- Ms. Hansbury has been working with local private and community food establishments to help them with questions and compliance with the State's COVID-19 guidelines.
- Fall athletics have commenced including soccer, softball and Little League.
- The Topsfield Town Library will be open by appointment starting the week of September 21, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

Wellness Clinics

Wellness Clinics were suspended due to COVID-19. VNA Care is hoping to restart Wellness Clinics for Topsfield Senior Citizens at Town Hall. The Town Administrator has approved this pending approval by the Board of Health. Clinics will be held by appointment, as Town Hall is open by appointment only. Senior Citizens will be required to pre-register, and will be met at the door to be escorted into the building. PPE will be used and there will be disinfecting between each appointment.

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to restart VNA Care Wellness Clinics. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

Flu Vaccine Clinics

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that a Flu Vaccine Clinic has been scheduled for September 30, 2020 at Coolidge Hall at the Topsfield Fair Grounds. Ms. Hansbury expressed gratitude to the Essex Agricultural Society and Topsfield Fair General Manager James O'Brien and Fair Superintendent Kurt Schmamel for their generosity in allowing the Board to conduct the Clinic at the Fair Grounds. Board Members echoed this sentiment. Ms. Hansbury hopes to host a second Flu Vaccine Clinic in October or November. This will be helpful in preparation for a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic once a vaccine is available. Ms. Hansbury asked if any Board members would be willing to volunteer at the Flu Vaccine Clinic. PPE will be provided and the Clinic will run by appointment only in order to comply with social distancing guidelines. Sue Winslow will provide a poster and information will be posted on the Town Kiosk, Topsfield Village Shopping Center Kiosk, through the schools and Town Departments, on Topsfield Cable Television, on the Town Website and in the local newspaper.

COVID Impact Survey

Ms. Hansbury informed Board Members that a survey will be coming out with questions about the impact of COVID-19.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Fixler informed the Board that he read an article indicating that there were 4 cases of EEE and 7 cases of West Nile Virus in Massachusetts.

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that the Town does not conduct truck-mounted roadside spraying unless there is a positive finding of EEE in a human or animal or in a mosquito trapped in Town. The NEMMC mosquito testing season concludes mid-October.

HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Ms. Hansbury reported the Board of Health remains very busy with the standard work of the office including but not limited to:

- Topsfield remains low risk for EEE and WNV - no pools of animals/people have tested positive for either WNV or EEE in Town thus far this season.
- Soil testing continues on multiple properties in Town.
- Activity regarding new septic systems, septic system repairs and component replacements remains steady.
- Building Permits are high volume, requiring Health Agent review.
- Trash Complaints continue on a weekly basis.
- Participation in multiple ZOOM Conferences including weekly Public Safety, Department Head and MDPH.

- A decision will be made soon regarding whether or not to allow trick-or-treating on Halloween. Ms. Hansbury will be working with MDPH and the Topsfield Town Administrator, Police Chief and Fire Chief to make the decision.
- The Town Administrator is spearheading a Downtown Beautification program which will include trash receptacles at strategic points in the downtown/rail trail/school areas.

ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 PM. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Winslow

Recording Secretary

Items distributed:

1. Agenda
2. Board of Health Meeting Minutes of August 19, 2020
3. Synopsis of LPH COVID Command Center Conference Calls
4. Documents related to 28 Ipswich Road Appointment
5. Documents related to 32 Fox Ru Road Appointment

These Meeting Minutes were APPROVED at the October 21, 2020 Board of Health Meeting.