



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

November 18, 2020

6:30 PM

Board Members present: Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen RN and Board Members, Anthony Alley RN, Larry Fixler RPh and Mark Rizza. Also in attendance: Health Agent Wendy Hansbury, Senior Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow, Boxford/Topsfield Cable Television and Selectman A. Richard Gandt. Board Member William Hunt Esq. was not in attendance.

**COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS:**

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

BOH: Board of Health

BOS: Board of Selectmen

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

ESHWT: 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

MAVEN: Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network

MDEP: Massachusetts Department of Environmental  
Protection

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 6:32 pm.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

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 [www.topsfield-ma.gov](http://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.

Topsfield Town is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Time: Nov 18, 2020 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84065234442?pwd=SFFyUmw3REl2RGYxWnlIGL2M2UkFQdz09>

Meeting ID: 840 6523 4442

Passcode: 387061

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Susan Winslow 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 others who wished to record the 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.

## APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments at this meeting.

## MEETING MINUTES

October 21, 2020

*VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the October 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Alley. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Alley – yes*

*Fixler– yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*The motion passed in a vote of 4-0*

## COVID-19

### COVID Command Center Conference Calls

Chair Knutsen gave the Board an update on multiple COVID Command Center Conference Calls she has participated in since the October 21, 2020 Board of Health Meeting. Chair Knutsen read the following information into the record:

*For 11/18/20 TBOH meeting: Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 webinars*

*There have been eight Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 webinars since our last Topsfield BOH meeting. Over 400 people join these calls every Tuesday and Friday. The following is a summary of my notes from these calls.*

*10/23 The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's guidance calls for districts to monitor three weeks of reports before making changes to learning plans for schools. In addition, districts and schools currently open for in-person instruction are encouraged to remain open even if their local community is designated as red, so long as there is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission in the schools. School districts are required to inform DESE when they learn that a student or staff member has tested positive. The CDC revised its definition of close contacts: "being within 6 feet of an infected person or persons for at least 15 minutes cumulative over a 24-hour period." Callers had many questions about isolation and quarantine procedures and rules, and COVID testing, especially as related to school issues such as a symptomatic child with an alternative diagnosis. Effective today there will be a 2 week closure for ice rinks in MA relative to the increased clusters that we are seeing in MA related to ice hockey. This is similar to action taken by NH and VT. The COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Draft that the Governor submitted to the CDC on October 16th did not have any direct input from Local Boards of Health.*

*10/27 The conference calls have moved to a webinar format. MDPH created new guidance about how to be safe when carpooling and how to celebrate Thanksgiving safely during COVID-19; indoor gatherings with people who are not in your household are discouraged. The MDPH Director of Immunization reviewed the MA COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Draft. It was based on a 'Framework for Equitable Allocation of a COVID-19 Vaccine' report which was released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine on October 2nd. They recommend a four-phased approach since initial vaccine demand will likely exceed supply. Phases 1 and 2 will cover high risk health workers, first responders, people with comorbid and underlying health conditions that put them at high risk, older adults living in congregate settings, K-12 teachers & staff and child care workers, critical workers in high-risk settings, people and staff in homeless shelters, group homes and prisons, and all adults age 65 and older. The Local*

*Public Health role will come in phases 3 and 4 when young adults, workers in industries and occupations important to the functioning of society and at increased risk of exposure, and everyone else in the United States will be vaccinated. Broad immunization of children will depend on whether COVID-19 vaccines have been adequately tested for safety and efficacy in these age groups. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD) recently announced an initiative to deliver 150 million Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Point of Care (POC) SARS-CoV-2 rapid diagnostic tests to schools and other strategic environments. Over the course of the school year, Massachusetts will obtain approximately 2 million tests for use in schools. So far approximately 100 schools and districts will participate in phase 1 of these tests. The State Epidemiologist announced the identification of clusters of COVID that are showing up in at least 22 different settings, the most common place being within households. Identifying clusters may help the state create targeted restrictions rather than implement another broad shutdown, as we approach winter. Cluster statistics will be posted in the weekly COVID data report. 67 questions were submitted prior to this call. There will be no call on Election Day, November 3rd.*

*10/30 The Department of Labor Standards posted updates and clarification to some sector-specific protocols and best practices, and shared lessons learned from Salem's Halloween COVID prevention efforts. The Community Tracing Collaborative and the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps remain available to supplement and support Local Boards of Health in COVID contact tracing and outreach. The MA Department of Housing and Community Development announced an Eviction Diversion Initiative.*

*11/02 A last-minute conference call was held today in lieu of tomorrow, Election Day. In response to rising COVID case numbers, the Governor issued revised Orders: #53 – Early Closing and Alcohol; #54 – Revised Gatherings; and #55 – Revised Face Coverings, as well as a Stay At Home Advisory urging all people to be at home between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., all to become effective on November 6th. 24 questions were answered about all of the above.*

*11/06 The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) issued many updates to guidance about Youth and Adult Amateur Sports, (including tournaments and travel out of state, Outdoor Recreational Experiences and Educational Activities, Charter Vessels and Recreational boating, zoos, wildlife reserves, nature centers, public swimming pools, and ski areas. DLS clarified how the new Governor's Orders will affect many different sectors, especially restaurants. DESE announced a new FAQ document about guidance on classroom ventilation in cold weather and what schools should consider if they are thinking of buying a classroom air purifier. Guidance about face coverings in schools was clarified. All school districts are expected to prioritize in-person learning regardless of the risk category of their community. DESE, DPH and local school officials will work to create customized strategies for communities with the highest COVID caseloads. Fully remote instructional models should be implemented only as a last resort.*

*11/10 The Governor issued Order #56 revising provisions for Phase III re-openings in municipalities with reduced incidence of COVID-19 infection. Also a new set of metrics was rolled out to help assess where jurisdictions are with regard to COVID cases in order to be more aligned with other jurisdictions (states) and to get kids in school. The color coded risk maps will no longer be produced, nor will asterisks be used to indicate cities/towns with high case numbers in institutions that are located in their town. DLS reviewed: details of recently released guidance about Order #55: face coverings, especially as applied to town committees and boards; Order #53: mandatory closing period for certain businesses ; religious services; employees on 2nd and 3rd shifts not covered by mandatory closing order; special rules for restaurants; and alcohol or cannabis sales that are not permitted from 9:30 p.m. – 5 a.m.; and Order #54 (Gatherings): Indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people including at rental properties, except for any sector with its own capacity limit, in which case use 50% or 10 persons per 1,000 square feet. Businesses must comply with LBOH instructions about contact tracing. The term "Essential Business" does not apply any more. Staff from the Division of Housing Stabilization reviewed the new Eviction Diversion Initiative (EDI) and Rapid Rehousing Rental Assistance, including a public information campaign about where to get help and plans to work with MEMA on*

*setting up shelters. Unfortunately, PrepMod will not be ready for use by LHDs this flu season due to technical challenges, legal contracting and privacy issues.*

*11/13 Travelers arriving in MA from places not designated 'low risk' will no longer receive daily texts reminding them to quarantine for 14 days (unless they have a negative test result). Updates to Youth & Adult Amateur Sports include a new exemption for facial coverings, and Massachusetts-based teams, athletes or coaches that choose to travel must comply with the MA Travel Order. MA, ME, NH, VT, CT, RI & NJ issued a joint statement about suspension of Interstate Youth Hockey competitions through December 31st. The CTC is delayed in taking new cases due to a rise in cases. 20 questions were answered, including queries about testing of asymptomatic people and routine random testing in schools and hospital settings. MDPH Assistant Commissioner Ferguson acknowledged that Massachusetts passed a grim milestone yesterday: Massachusetts Deaths from COVID since the beginning of the pandemic are now over 10,000. "This pandemic is terrifying and exhausting. We are all working so hard to keep those numbers from growing. Let us keep these 10,000 people in our hearts as we go forward."*

*11/17 MDPH announced that COVID vaccine will be rolled out in phases starting in late December and going into the spring/summer. LBOHs will get vaccine to hold large clinics, but not until phases 3 & 4. There will be more details in coming months as more information is known. DESE released more information about BinaxNOW testing in schools: 100+ districts have been chosen to participate in Phase 1. A message was sent from the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association to all MA Chiefs of Police saying all law enforcement personnel should abide by and comply with Order No. 55 and wear a mask or face covering while working details. 28 questions were answered, most about previously issued guidance.*

Board Members thanked Chair Knutsen for the time and effort she has put into attending and reporting on these meetings.

Health Agent Wendy Hansbury informed the Board regarding the following:

- Local restaurants are still doing take-out business, but the six (6) wedding venues in Town have been hit hard by restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19.
- Ms. Hansbury continues to assist with the local COVID-19 report card to schools
- The local COVID-19 Response Team has been activated. This consists of two (2) School Committee representatives, the Superintendent of Schools, School Principals, School Nurses and Tri-Town Health Agents working to ensure that information is distributed in an organized, consistent manner.
- A Tri-Town COVID-19 Nurse Liaison will be hired to help with contact tracing focusing primarily on the schools.
- Region 3A Health Leaders met with MAPC remotely regarding future funding.
- Halloween in Topsfield was successful. Ms. Hansbury noted the efforts of the Public Safety team including Fire Chief Jenifer Collins Brown and Police Chief Neal Hovey.
- There are currently 5 active cases of COVID-19 in Topsfield with a total since the pandemic started of 142 in Topsfield.
- The Board of Health is assisting with the Governor's messaging to stay home at Thanksgiving to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- The November 5, 2020 Flu Vaccine Clinic was successful with 88 people vaccinated. Combined with the September 30, 2020 Flu Vaccine Clinic, the Board of Health and VNA Care were able to administer over 350 Flu Vaccines. Ms. Hansbury noted the efforts of volunteers Sheryl Knutsen RN, Mark Rizza and members of the Medical Reserve Corps as well as support from Senior Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow.

- Ms. Hansbury thanked James O'Brien and the Essex Agricultural Society for allowing the Board of Health to use Coolidge Hall at the Fair Grounds for the Flu Vaccine Clinics. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that they have generously offered to allow a future vaccine clinic to be held at the Fair Grounds once a COVID-19 vaccine has been approved.
- Health Agent Hansbury will be meeting with the Middleton and Boxford Health Agents to coordinate a Tri-Town Vaccine Clinic once a COVID-19 vaccine is available.
- Moderna and Pfizer show promise for a COVID-19 vaccine to be available in Spring 2021.
- Emergency Medical Technicians may be allowed to give vaccines by that time to help meet the projected need for vaccinators.

## NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board regarding the following:

### Holiday On The Green

Holiday On The Green will be a virtual event this year on December 5, 2020 due to COVID-19, with no public gathering allowed under the Governor's Emergency Order. Boxford Cable Television will broadcast the event live on local Cable, with Selectman Marshall Hook as the host. Events include tree lighting, carolers, raffle, door decorating event, Toys for Tots, Fill A Truck for the food pantry.

### Soil Testing Policy and Fee Schedule

Ms. Hansbury asked the Board to consider a revision to the current Soil Testing policy to include clarification on requests for additional testing for new construction beyond the current maximum of 4 deeps and 2 percs. This is because an Engineer recently attempted to include multiple days of testing on a single lot under one application. The Board reviewed the current Fee Schedule and discussed revising fees to more effectively cover costs.

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to set the fee for additional soil testing beyond the initial 4 deeps and 2 percs allowed for new construction at \$100 for 2 deeps and 1 perc. Seconded by Mr. Alley. Chair Knutsen asked for discussion and Mr. Fixler voiced his support for this additional fee. After determining there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Alley – yes*

*Fixler – yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.*

Board Members reviewed the Fee Schedule to consider updating the fees for Camp Permits, Tobacco Permits and Title 5 Inspection Report Reviews to more accurately cover costs involved.

*VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to increase the following Board of Health fees effective immediately:*

*Camp Permit fee to be increased to \$75.00*

*Tobacco Permit fee to be increased to \$45.00*

*Title 5 Inspection Report Review fee to be increased to \$35.00*

*Mr. Rizza seconded the motion. After determining there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Alley – yes*

*Fixler – yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.*

### FY22 Budget

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that numbers for the proposed FY22 Budget will not be available until the last week in November. There are a few areas that are predicted to exceed this year's budget including Dead Animal Pick Ups and the expense to purchase Flu Vaccine. Town Employees will not pick up dead animals, so that task is covered by an outside contractor. Due to the pandemic, there is a mandate in place that requires all school age children to be vaccinated for the Flu. This has caused a significant increase in the flu vaccine purchased by the Board of Health for the Flu Vaccine Clinics. Currently, the Board of Health must pay for \$6,000 worth of vaccine from the September 30, 2020 Flu Vaccine Clinic and there will be an additional invoice for flu vaccine used at the November 5, 2020 Flu Vaccine Clinic. Ms. Hansbury has submitted to the CARES Act for assistance, and the Town will receive reimbursement through Commonwealth Medicine for flu vaccine and administration, but these funds will go directly into the Town's General Fund. Discussion ensued on the possibility of requesting a revolving fund for the purchase of flu vaccine from reimbursements. Chair Knutsen informed the Board that this type of request has been made in the past, and was denied by the Selectmen. The Board will revisit this topic at a future meeting.

### Sharps:

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that there will be a new line item on the FY22 Budget for Sharps Collection. Currently, this expense is covered in the line item, "Miscellaneous" and has run approximately \$125.00 every two months because Topsfield has shared the cost with Boxford; each town alternately covering the collection fee. Boxford now has their own sharps disposal kiosk, so this arrangement no longer exists. There has also been an increase in the use of the Topsfield sharps disposal kiosk, with some collections doubling the cost to \$250 for two containers. Ms. Hansbury explained this is most likely reflected by the number of people working from home during the pandemic.

### Minutes Secretary:

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that this line item is no longer funded. Board Members expressed concern that the current Budget print-out dated 11/16/2020 did not include the line item. Ms. Hansbury will follow up with the Town Accountant on this.

Member Larry Fixler expressed concern that Susan Winslow was not being financially compensated for attending Board Meetings and writing Meeting Minutes. Ms. Winslow was paid in the past for this duty, but now receives compensatory time in return for attending Board of Health Meetings and writing the Meeting Minutes. Selectman Gandt expressed his opinion that this arrangement must end. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that the Minutes Secretary position has not been funded since 2018. Ms. Winslow works for the Board of Health 17 hours per week and 17 hours per week for the Conservation Commission, thus covering the office for both Departments for the 34 hours a week that Town Hall is open. Ms. Hansbury will follow up on this issue.

Septic Loan Program:

Ms. Hansbury would like to request once again that the Selectman put this on the Town Meeting Warrant. The Select Board refused this item for the 2020 Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that she received a letter of support for the Septic Loan Program from Veterans Services Officer, Richard Cullinan and will try again this year to get this item on the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant.

Employee Title:

Health Agent Hansbury requested a change in title to Director to more accurately reflect the nature of her duties. Ms. Hansbury noted that the other Tri Town Health Departments use the title, "Director". This would not change the nature of her duties or compensation. Selectman Gandt expressed concern that a change in job title should be reviewed by the Town Administrator and that the Board may request that the Town Administrator and Select Board make the change, but the Board of Health may not vote to change the job title.

*VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to send a letter to the Town Administrator and Select Board supporting a review of the Health Agent Job Description to change the title from Agent to Director. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Alley – yes*

*Fixler- yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.*

## HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that despite COVID-19, the office remains staffed for regular Town Hall Hours although Town Hall remains open by appointment only and business continues as usual with Department Head Meetings, Public Safety meetings, septic inspections, food inspections for Common Victualler Licenses, soil testing, ZOOM conference calls, septic plan reviews, Title 5 Inspection Report reviews and follow-up on resident concerns and questions. Ms. Hansbury has also been working on the Hazardous Mitigation Report with information on wells still to come.

## ADJOURN

*VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to adjourn at 8:36 PM. Seconded by Mr. Fixler. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Alley - yes*

*Fixler – yes*

*Rizza – 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 October 21, 2020
3. Synopsis of LPH COVID Command Center Conference Calls
4. Year-to-Date Budget Report generated 11/16/2020
5. Memo: Change in Fee Schedule dated 11/13/2020
6. Memo: Employee Title Review and Change dated 11/13/2020
7. Board of Health Fee Schedule
8. Massachusetts Interim COVID-19 Vaccination Draft Plan dated 10/26/2020

*These Meeting Minutes were APPROVED at the December 16, 2020 Board of Health Meeting.*