



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

March 17, 2021

6:30 PM

Board Members present: Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen RN and Board Members Anthony Alley RN, Larry Fixler RPh, Mark Rizza and William Hunt Esq. Also in attendance: Select Board Member Richard Gandt, Health Director Wendy Hansbury and Senior Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow.

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

MEMA: Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

CEU: Continuing Education Unit

MRC: Medical Reserve Corps

CEMP: Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

COIN: Community Outreach Information Network

DESE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DPH: Department of Public Health

NEMMC: Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control

EEE: Eastern Equine Encephalitis

EDS: Emergency Dispensing Site

PHEP: Public Health Emergency Preparedness

ESHWT: Estimated Seasonal High Water Table

POD: Point Of Dispensing

EP: Emergency Preparedness

RN: Registered Nurse

FDA: Food & Drug Administration

RS: Registered Sanitarian

HHS: Health and Human Services

SAS: Soil Absorption System

HMCC: Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

TBOH: Topsfield Board of Health

LSAC: Local State Advisory Committee

TRMRC: Topsfield Regional Medical Reserve Corps

MDPH Mass. Dept. of Public Health

VNA: Visiting Nurse Association

WNV: West Nile Virus

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sheryl Knutsen called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

Topsfield Town is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Time: Mar 17, 2021 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83667239505?pwd=d2hXbExzTmsxazVyWlcyVElwdmEyZz09>

Meeting ID: 836 6723 9505

Passcode: 605551

or

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

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. 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.

Susan Winslow is taking notes for Minutes of this Meeting. Is there anyone else who wishes to record this meeting?

(There was no-one else 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

February 17, 2021

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen asked if there was further discussion. The Board determined that Mr. Hunt might have an edit he wished to make but Mr. Hunt had momentarily left the meeting. When Mr. Hunt returned to the Meeting, he informed the Board that he wished to change the wording on page 10 under "Update on Proposed Concert Venue".

Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote to amend Mr. Fixler's motion.

Knutsen – yes

Alley – abstain (was not present at February 17, 2021 Meeting)

Fixler - yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0-1

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended by Mr. Hunt. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote to approve the February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended.

Knutsen - yes

Alley – abstain (was not present at February 17, 2021 Meeting)

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0-1

COVID-19

Vaccinating Educators and School Opening

Health Director Wendy Hansbury informed the Board that educators in the Tri-Town were sent a registration link for the Merrimack Valley vaccination site following guidance from MDPH.

Topsfield schools have started with a 4-day week this week. Ms. Hansbury expressed thanks to the School Board for working closely with the local Boards of Health prior to the reopening of the schools. Because Masconomet Regional High School is in Boxford, the re-opening of that school is governed by Boxford.

Vaccine Clinics

Ms. Hansbury reported that there have been five (5) vaccine clinics at the Topsfield Fair Grounds since the February 17, 2021 Board of Health Meeting, with a total of sixteen (16) vaccine clinics encompassing regional First Responders, Sheriff's Department employees and Senior Citizens. Because Topsfield is located close to the vaccine mega-site at the Doubletree in Danvers, MA, under the Governor's Order, Topsfield will no longer receive vaccine for

local COVID-19 vaccine clinics beyond the home-bound population. The final COVID-19 vaccine clinic hosted by the Topsfield Board of Health at the Topsfield Fair Grounds was on March 12, 2021.

Ms. Hansbury expressed thanks to the following:

- Sheryl Knutsen RN – for leadership, clinic organization and vaccine administration
- Mark Rizza – for extensive IT support, data analysis and extensive volunteer time at vaccine clinics
- Dr. John Szymanski – for clinical lead support
- Liisa Jackson, Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator – coordination of volunteer support
- Northern Essex County Medical Reserve Corps - volunteers
- James O'Brien – for Topsfield Fair Grounds use of Coolidge Hall
- Kurt Schmakel – for facilities assistance at Topsfield Fair Grounds and help with attendees
- Suzanne Lacombe – for facilities assistance at Topsfield Fair Grounds and help with attendees
- Essex Agricultural Society – for generous use of facilities at Topsfield Fair Grounds
- Kathleen Barbarisi, Topsfield COA Director – for assistance with Senior Citizens and COVID-19 help line
- Diane Drinan, Topsfield Housing Director – for assistance with clinics at Little Brook Village
- Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown – for extensive assistance at Fair Grounds and Little Brook Village clinics and vaccinating the homebound
- Firefighter/EMT John Hallinan – for extensive assistance with vaccine administration
- Susan Winslow – assistance with vaccine clinics
- All volunteers who assisted with clinics

Vaccination Data Collection

Chair Sheryl Knutsen informed the Board that Mark Rizza did an exceptional job setting up and maintain the computer program, PrepMod, used for tracking volunteers and vaccine administration during the COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Ms. Knutsen also thanked Mr. Rizza for his efforts with the Backfill List, mandated by the state to ensure that no vaccine was wasted if there were extra doses left after all registered individuals had been vaccinated. Ms. Knutsen asked Mr. Rizza to give a short presentation on the data he collected.

Mr. Rizza referred Board Members to the document, "Town of Topsfield 2021 First Quarter Moderna Vaccination Summary". Mr. Rizza informed the Board that 1,655 people were vaccinated at the vaccine clinics hosted by the Town of Topsfield including but not limited to the following statistics:

- Approximately 41.7% / 58.1% split between females and males vaccinated
- 21% of those vaccinated were Topsfield residents
- 325 of those vaccinated were Tri-Town residents

Board Members thanked Mr. Rizza for his extensive volunteer assistance with the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics.

COVID Command Center Conference Calls

Chair Knutsen gave the Board an update on the COVID Command Center Conference Calls she has participated in since the February 17, 2021 Board of Health Meeting. Chair Knutsen read the following information into the record:

For 03/17/2021 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. From 400 to 700 people join these calls every Tuesday and Friday. The following is a summary of my notes from these calls.

2/19/21 LHDs have played an important role in vaccinating first responders and residents age 75 and older. As of February 18th, individuals age 65 and older, those who have 2 or more specific medical conditions that increase the risk of COVID-19, and individuals living in low income and affordable senior housing (and staff) are now eligible for vaccination. MA has been receiving only 110,000 first doses each week, which is an inadequate supply of vaccine to support clinics in every city and town. Therefore, going forward, the Governor is asking LPH to focus on: 1) promoting vaccine acceptance, 2) supporting vaccination of residents/staff in low income and affordable senior housing, 3) supporting vaccination of homebound residents, 4) establishing regional collaborations, and 5) promoting equity by vaccinating individuals in disproportionately impacted communities.

2/23/21 The Community Tracing Collaborative reported that cases are trending downward and staff is being proportionately downsized. The Academic Public Health volunteer Corps (APHVC) developed a survey to assess vaccination attitudes and the degree of vaccine hesitancy among people in MA. Results will inform messaging.

Questions were voiced about where people will access their second doses of vaccine and how LOBHs will vaccinate the homebound if the state is no longer supporting LBOH vaccination clinics. There were concerns about clinics that were postponed due to vaccine shipping delays caused by a nationwide extreme weather event.

Regional vaccination sites or any clinic that is open to the public cannot exclude anyone who lives, works or studies in MA. However there is no requirement to prove residency. Regional LPH COVID vaccination sites must be able to vaccinate 750 people per day, five days per week and must not be near a mega site. [As so defined, Topsfield does not qualify to be part of a regional site due to its proximity to the Danvers mega site. Therefore, Topsfield will no longer receive any doses of vaccine from MDPH.]

2/26/21 Results of a Community Impact Survey that was conducted between September and November 2020 were reviewed. There were over 33,000 adult respondents in the final sample; results to be released on March 10th.

The 2-1-1 Vaccine Scheduling Resource Team explained that use of this phone help line is only for people who are unable to use the internet to schedule an appointment online. It is not a shortcut to getting an appointment. There are 700 call-takers who have been swamped by calls from people who are experiencing great difficulty in making appointments on line. If callers have a complex question or situation, they are referred back to their LBOH. People are struggling to make their second dose appointments but 2-1-1 cannot help with this.

The Governor announced that effective March 1st we will be returning to Phase III Step 2 which will allow indoor performance venues such as concert halls, indoor recreational activities, certain industries such as fitness centers, museums and places of worship to open at 50% capacity. Restaurants will no longer be subject to a percent seated capacity limit but must continue to space tables 6 feet apart, with 6 people per table. .

3/2/21 While DESE announced that schools will allow singing indoors if singers wear a mask, stay 10 feet apart, sing at low volume and limit singing to 30 minutes in large ventilated spaces, singing indoors is still not allowed in performance centers, concert halls and restaurants. The COVID-19 Command Center Food Security Task Force announced that food boxes can now be used to support people who self-isolate due to at-risk status and are food insecure; and grocery store gift cards are now available for those isolating or quarantining due to COVID-19. The

Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps reviewed a variety of ways in which it supports LPH. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services announced plans for two ways that LBOHs can support vaccination of homebound individuals: 1) identify the truly homebound and assume responsibility for in-home vaccinations within the municipality or 2) partner with the State In-Home Vaccination Program to manage and administer in-home vaccinations. The Emergency Use Authorization has been signed for the new J & J Janssen vaccine which requires only one dose; however none of this vaccine available for use at this time.

3/5/21 Public Health nurses from the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences presented and in-depth review of the new Janssen vaccine, for which only a single dose is required. They stressed that the three COVID vaccines are not interchangeable, and recommended frequently checking the CDC website, which is updated frequently, for the latest guidance and information on all three COVID vaccines. The Federal government has issued a directive to vaccinate educators. This includes licensed providers and school staff. Massachusetts vaccination statistics are reported weekly in great detail at the Weekly Vaccine Dashboard <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates#weekly-covid-19-vaccination-dashboard>

3/9/21 Persons who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (those who have received two doses of either Moderna or Pfizer vaccines or a single dose of the Janssen vaccine) more than 14 days ago and who do not have symptoms, do not need to obtain a negative test prior to traveling to, or quarantine upon arrival to, MA. DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) released updated guidance on in-person learning: Elementary students should return to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week effective April 5th. Middle school students should return to full-time, in-person instruction by April 28th. Details for high school students will be announced at least 2 weeks in advance of return to in-person learning. Following a Federal directive, All K-12 school staff and licensed child care workers are eligible to be vaccinated starting March 11th. This will add approximately 400,000 people to the group who are already eligible to be vaccinated in MA, but the state will not receive any additional doses of vaccine for this initiative.

The MDPH Bureau of Community Health and Prevention announced that 20 high-need communities have been identified using the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index and community COVID case rates. These communities will receive special services and outreach from an MDPH Community Liaison, with the goals of increasing trust in the vaccine's safety and efficacy, reducing barriers to accessing vaccination, and facilitating strategic allocation of vaccine, acknowledging that in many communities of color, mistrust and hesitancy can stem from a history of medical mistreatment. These communities are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, and Worcester.

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services reviewed details of LBOHs working in partnership with Senior Affordable Housing to vaccinate residents and staff of those housing units. The first step is for the Housing Agency to identify a provider partner which could be a LBOH or other agency such as a pharmacy. The State will reserve and release doses of vaccine to the partner agency, but the Housing Authority must plan the clinic details.

3/12/21 Updated workplace safety standards for indoor and outdoor events go into effect March 22nd. Indoor events at a venue are limited to 100 persons; outdoor events are limited to 150 persons. Amusement parks, festivals, parades, road races, bars, nightclubs, and breweries must remain closed until Phase IV step 2 of reopening. This week marks the one year anniversary of the declaration of a state of emergency in MA. Vaccination data

Massachusetts COVID-19 vaccination data and updates | Mass.gov is now tracked daily by municipality and data are presented in chart form weekly. 784,789 MA residents (11% of Essex County) are now fully vaccinated; 1,074 residents of Topsfield or 19% of the population of 5,778 are fully vaccinated. Greater than 95% of people over the age of 75 in Topsfield are fully vaccinated. MassVax Sites Pre-registration signups started today: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/preregister-for-a-covid-19-vaccine-appointment> . Statewide, numbers of COVID-19 variants have been increasing steadily. The overwhelming majority is the B.1.1.7 variant, which is spreading within the state (not through travel) and mostly in younger age groups.

3/16/21 DESE is providing technical assistance to support the return to full-time, in-person school five days per week, which will proceed in 3 phases: grades K-5 April 5th; Grades 6-8 April 28th; and grades 9-12 TBA in April, although parents will still have a choice for their children to learn remotely through the end of this school year. The first case of the P.1 variant (from Brazil) was first reported in MA today. The supply of vaccines to MA is not expected to increase for at least several weeks.

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

Other COVID Topics

Mr. Hunt asked Ms. Hansbury if we will be moving from a Government Advisory of 6 feet of separation for social distancing to 3 feet.

Ms. Hansbury explained that the government has allowed DESE to set guidelines for schools, which are considering changing from 6 feet of separation to 3 feet of separation but at this time, no change has been made, and there is no change in the 6 feet of social distancing for the general public.

Mr. Hunt asked why we are using 6 feet as the separation distance. Ms. Knutsen explained that this guidance comes from the CDC.

OLD BUSINESS

FY22 Budget

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that the following items were approved at the Finance Committee Meeting on Monday, March 15, 2021:

- Funding for sharps collection
- Funding for Dead Animal Disposal
- Funding for vaccine purchase

The following items will be addressed at the Finance Committee Meeting on Monday, March 22, 2021:

- Funding for Minutes Secretary
- Funding for restoration of 2 hours to Administrative Assistant position

FY20 Annual Report

Chair Sheryl Knutsen read the FY20 Annual Report into the record. Mr. Rizza commented that he joined the Board in March, 2020. Ms. Winslow will make that correction and resubmit the report.

Excellence in Public Health Grants Program

Chair Knutsen explained that this grant opportunity would allow for funding for shared services with other local Boards of Health. The Topsfield Board of Health will collaborate with the towns of Boxford and Middleton for the grant submission to cover shared services in the following areas to expand services:

- Grant Coordinator
- Nurse Coordinator
- Administrative Services
- Food/Environmental Inspector

There are 30 grants available at \$300,000 each. The Board agreed that this is an exceptional opportunity.

VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to endorse all efforts to participate in the Excellence in Public Health Program. Seconded by Mr. Alley. Chair Knutsen asked if there was further discussion:

Mr. Fixler asked where the grant funds will go. Ms. Knutsen explained that the funds will be distributed among the Topsfield, Boxford and Middleton Boards of Health. The funds will be deposited into a special account for Public Health use and will not go into the general funds for each Town. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Health Employee Reclassification Letters

Ms. Hansbury explained that the Board of Health received templates of letters to Senator Joan Lovely and Representative Brad Hill asking them to support HD 291, a bill to reclassify health officials into Group 2 of the public retirement system. Ms. Hansbury explained that this reclassification reflects the dangers and stressful situations Public Health Officials are exposed to, and serves as a means to provide an equitable retirement system to Public

Health Officials in line with others such as Building Inspectors and others that deal with enforcement of laws and regulations.

VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to send letters to Representative Brad Hill and Senator Joan Lovely supporting HD 291 for the change in retirement status of the Health Agent as outlined in the draft letters. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Fixler asked if Bill HD 291 would be retroactive and include former Health Agent John Coulon. Ms. Hansbury responded that she did not know if the Bill is retroactive, but that Mr. Coulon may still be a Health Agent in the town of Nahant. The Board determined that all Board Member names will be listed on the letters, but Chair Knutsen will sign the letters.

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

Knutsen – yes

Alley - yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

DEP Letter dated 2/24/2021: Modification of Post-Closure Monitoring and Maintenance Plan Landfill Gas Monitoring and Third-Party Inspections Conditional Approval

Ms. Hansbury explained that the 2/24/2021 letter from DEP is the result of a collaboration between Ms. Hansbury and Public Works Superintendent Gary Wildes to continue maintenance of the Pye Brook Landfill. As part of the maintenance, Gas Flares will be converted to Passive Gas Vents. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that this conversion will save money for the Town. The physical maintenance of the Landfill falls under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department, but the Board of Health shares oversight.

HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that, in addition to planning and executing numerous COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics, she has been involved with the following activities:

- 62 High Street septic repair
- 71 Howlett Street septic repair
- 37 River Road new septic
- 104 Wenham Road new septic
- 41 Cross Street soil testing
- 41 Campmeeting Road soil testing
- Answering questions and follow-up with residents
- Annual permit and license renewals
- Preparation for and meeting with the Finance Committee

- Submission of NEMMC Best Practices Management Plan to the Select Board
- Preparing for Sports, Camps, Weddings as COVID-19 restrictions ease this coming summer

Discussion about COVID-19

Mr. Alley informed the Board that people are still becoming infected with COVID-19, so we must remain vigilant, even after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine because there is still a 5% chance to become infected after vaccination. Mr. Fixler informed the Board that anti-virals are being developed to fight COVID-19 infection. The Board discussed the Federal effort to reach herd immunity via mass vaccination by July, 2021. There is concern that there is a bottleneck in vaccine distribution that will make this goal impossible. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that she continues to work on consistent messaging and outreach to the community.

ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 PM. Seconded by Mr. Fixler. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley - yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza - yes

Hunt - yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Winslow, Recording Secretary

Items distributed:

1. Agenda
2. Board of Health Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2021
3. Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 webinars report from Sheryl Knutsen RN
4. Town of Topsfield 2021 First Quarter Moderna Vaccinations Summary
5. Board of Health Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report
6. Draft Letter re: HD 291 to Representative Brad Hill
7. Draft Letter re: HD 291 to Senator Joan Lovely
8. February 24, 2021 DEP Letter Modification of Post-Closure and Maintenance Plan Landfill Gas Monitoring and Third-Party Inspections Conditional Approval
9. March 1, 2021 Thank you letter from Ilona Vele
10. March 15, 2021 Thank you email from Kim Daly

These Meeting Minutes were accepted at the April 21, 2021 Board of Health Meeting.