

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

Date:	Wednesday, April 21, 2021
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ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS	PRESENT	ABSENT	Arrived at/Departed at
Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen RN	XX		6:30 / 8:16
Member Anthony Alley RN		XX	
Member Larry Fixler RPh	XX		6:30 / 8:16
Member Mark Rizza	XX		6:30 / 8:16
Member William Hunt Esq.	XX		6:30 / 8:16

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT	ABSENT	Arrived at/Departed at
Health Director Wendy Hansbury	XX		6:30 / 8:16

VISITORS PRESENT:
Ellen Eaton

OPENING

The regular meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on April 21, 2021 by Chair Sheryl Knutsen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. 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.

Boxford Cable Television is recording this meeting and Mark Rizza is taking notes for Minutes of this Meeting and recording minutes to the cloud for future use by the BoH. 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS:

VOTE: Larry Fixler made a motion to approve the March 17th Meeting Minutes as written.

Seconded by Bill hunt. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote after determining that there was no further discussion:

Knutsen – Aye

Fixler – Aye

Rizza – Aye

Hunt – Aye

The minutes were reviewed and approved

OLD BUSINESS

1. COVID-19 Update:

Chair Knutsen gave the Board an update on the *Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 Webinar* Calls she has participated in since the March 17th 2021 Board of Health Meeting. Chair Knutsen read the following information into the record:

There have been ten 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.

3/19/21 All municipalities may move into Step 1 of Phase IV of the state's reopening plan effective March 22nd. Capacity limits for large venues were adjusted. Gathering limits for event venues and in public settings will increase to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 25 people, with indoor house gatherings remaining at 10 people. The Travel Order became a Travel Advisory. Overnight summer camps will be allowed to operate this summer. Sector-specific workplace safety rules remain in place. Starting March 22, all MA residents age **60+ and certain workers will be eligible to be vaccinated** and can pre-register for an appointment at a mass vaccination site. Vaccine supplies are still insufficient to meet demand.

3/23/21 Detailed rules for operating **summer camps** safely will include: no mixing of camper cohorts; extra health care staff; and COVID standards for gatherings, social distancing, food service, cleaning, sports, beaches/pools, and transportation. [LBOHs inspect and permit summer camps for children.] The Commonwealth is working with LBOHs to offer **in-home vaccinations for homebound individuals** who cannot leave their home to get to a vaccination site. Many LBOHs (including Topsfield) are managing their own homebound vaccination programs, while others will partner with the state's program through Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA). **FEMA funds** are available to support community vaccination; the focus is on equity for communities that are of highest risk on the CDC Social Vulnerability Index. It is especially important to prevent community spread of COVID in order to prevent the **variant strains** of COVID from taking over. Currently there are 3 "variants of concern:" B.1.1.7, B.135.1, and P.1, all of which are more transmissible than original COVID.

3/26/21 Numbers of COVID cases are **plateauing** statewide. Since January, there has been an uptick in sports-related clusters; the largest cluster is related to ice hockey. **MassNotify**, the 'official COVID-19 automated exposure notification system for Massachusetts,' is being pilot tested in two cities. It works via Bluetooth technology on smartphones, and is voluntary and anonymous. It does not replace contact tracing but is an additional layer to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The Commonwealth of MA and FEMA today announced a partnership to expand access to the COVID-19 vaccine by bringing 6,000 **federal doses** daily to the Hynes Convention Center vaccination site.

3/30/21 MA has created '**the Last Mile**' vaccination program which will bring vaccines to the 20 hardest-hit communities using mobile vans. **Federal vaccine allocations** were explained: this separate stream of vaccines is separate from, and in addition to, the state vaccine allocations. The federal strategy currently prioritizes vaccine to retail pharmacy chains and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), whereas the state's allocation is currently flat. The state is beginning to **vaccinate homebound individuals**; 4,571 people have called MassOptions and so far 25 individuals have been vaccinated by CCA. 20% of callers live in a municipality running their own homebound program, and were referred back to their LBOH. CMG Associates continues to support LHDs in **managing the stress associated with the pandemic** by providing webinars as well as individual counseling.

4/2/21 The CDC updated its detailed 'Interim **Clinical Considerations**' guidance for all 3 vaccines currently authorized for use in the U.S. to include guidance on the Janssen/J&J vaccine. The importance of training and education for vaccinators was stressed, and new resources were shared. Massachusetts this week will distribute **\$4.7M of federal grant funding to the 20 communities most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19**. This will enable them to lead vaccine clinics and promote vaccine trust and confidence. The 20 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. As of March 30th, over 18% of MA residents are **fully vaccinated**. As of April 5th, **people ages 55+ and individuals with one certain medical condition will be eligible** to be vaccinated. The MA **vaccination supply** is still relatively flat, and there are more people being eligible to be vaccinated, so it may still take a few weeks to get an appointment. MA still does not have a reliable source of J&J vaccine, which has experienced manufacturing challenges. Since the amount of vaccine coming into MA is relatively flat, there is no plan right now to send vaccines to LHDs for local clinics. [Topsfield receives a small amount of vaccine for use in low-income senior housing and for the homebound.]

4/6/21 Noting that **anxiety** rates have risen, Bruce Cedar from CMG Associates reassured LBOHs that "we are here for you" in the form of individual support, training, and leadership coaching for LPH staff and BOH members. **Homebound individuals** are being vaccinated via state and local efforts. MDPH has vaccinated 287 people so far; much work is being done locally, but there is no way for the State to track this. This is a new focused grassroots outreach to 20 prioritized communities which: offers assistance in community-wide town halls; recruits local influencers to participate in messaging outreach interviews; coordinates and staffs hyper-local public events; and reaches out via door-to-door canvassing, virtual phone banking and text messaging.

4/9/21 The MDPH Vaccine Equity Initiative provides **COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassadors** who are public health professionals, available upon request to attend community forums or meetings to share information about the safety and development of the vaccine, answer questions, and/or listen to feedback to share with DPH. There is also a [Guide to hosting a forum on the COVID-19 Vaccine | Mass.gov](#) which is designed for providers, community groups, and others to host local meetings or forums about the COVID-19 vaccine, with the goal of increasing vaccine confidence.

MDPH maintains an **Interactive Dashboard for City/Town COVID data** [COVID-19 Response Reporting | Mass.gov](#) which is updated weekly. The Homebound Vaccination program has received over 10,000 calls and has referred over 2,000 calls back to municipalities. **Fully vaccinated persons** in the community who are exposed to COVID disease do not need to quarantine unless symptomatic. **Colleges and universities** are beginning to require vaccinations for returning students.

4/13/21 The CDC and FDA are reviewing data involving 6 reported U.S. cases of a **rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the J&J vaccine**; 181,034 doses of J&J have been administered in MA thus far. Administration of the J&J vaccine will be **temporarily paused** while the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) looks into this problem. Supplies of J&J vaccine that have already been received should be refrigerated and marked as “do not use; awaiting guidance.” Based on the currently available data from late March, **an estimated 29.4% of COVID-19 cases in MA are caused by the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7.** Vaccine is not the only tool in the box. We need to continue to mask, socially distance, stay home when sick, and test close contacts. Signed into law on March 11, the \$1.9 trillion **American Rescue Plan Act** provides the latest round of stimulus funding to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This federal aid package includes \$350 billion in direct aid to states, local governments, tribes and territories to support the COVID response: \$7.9 billion total for MA; broken down into \$4.5 billion for the state and \$3.4 billion for counties and towns. There are 4 eligible uses of this money: 1) response to the public health emergency or its negative economic consequences; 2) provision of premium pay to eligible workers; 3) revenue replacement and 4) investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. Detailed guidance is forthcoming from the U.S. Treasury Department; funds will come to small communities (<50,000 population) via the State). See [MMA estimates of American Rescue Plan allocations for each Massachusetts city and town](#) (192K PDF)

4/16/21 As of Monday, April 19th, **all people 16 years of age and older** who live, work or study in MA will be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. A legally authorized representative (usually a parent or guardian) must give permission (**consent**) for vaccination for someone under the age of 18. Moderna vaccine (instead of the paused J&J vaccine) will be used to vaccinate **homebound** individuals.

4/20/21 DESE has updated its quarantine guidance for close contacts as follows: “Close contacts who were exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom or on the bus while both individuals were masked do not have to quarantine unless they were within 3 feet of distance of the COVID-19 positive individual for a total of 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. This does not apply if someone was identified as a close contact outside of the classroom or bus (e.g., in sports, extra-curriculars, lunch, etc.) or if masks are not worn by both persons at the time of the exposure. All other close contacts must follow the standard protocol for when a close contact may return to school.” MA is administering 84,356 doses of COVID vaccine per day. So far, **over 2 million people in MA are fully vaccinated.** Demand for vaccines continues to outstrip supply, partly because MA is low in vaccine hesitancy. We are just over halfway to the goal of vaccinating 4.1 million people in MA. The **mask order cannot yet be lifted** despite articles published in local and national media. There is not yet any change in guidance for Memorial Day or 4th of July celebratory activities. **Local Public Health Excellence grant applications** (Topsfield has applied) are under review.

2. FY22 Budget Update: Final Approved Budget for Town Meeting

- Request to the Finance Committee to approve an additional budget item for a once-a-month meetings minutes secretary was denied.
- Request to the Finance Committee to approve an additional 2 hours a week for the administration assistant was approved.
- The following budget item increases were approved:

- Dead animal pick-up
- Vaccine administration
- Sharp's removal
- Wendy Hansbury mentioned that next year's budget would include a new request for meetings minutes secretary.

3. Update on Excellence In Public Health Grant for Shared Services

- Notified the BoS that this grant program would be beneficial to the Town of Topsfield and the BoH – BoS approved the submission
- Paperwork submitted on April 1, 201 to meet the state deadline.
- The town will be notified on or about May 3, 2021 on approval status
- Portions of the proposal include:
 - Shared nurse across the 3 towns of Boxford, Middleton and Topsfield for vaccines and other health activities.
 - Health Inspector to augment the staff for off hours work, special events and other health duties
 - Health Assistant to augment the staff to support the administrative assistant on projects, presentations and other health related activities.
- MAPC Coordinator has begun the process.
- MOU is needed between all of the towns upon positive approval of the grant.
- Larry Fixler – Asked about the BoS response to the grant. Wendy Hansbury and Sheryl Knutsen both stated the initial response was positive and they were working with the Town Administrator on final details.

NEW BUSINESS

• Chapter 40B Development process discussion

- Wendy Hansbury – Need to focus on the special characteristic of the 40B Comprehensive Permit process as it can supersede some local regulations.
- Wendy created an initial draft of items for BoH Members to discuss prior to sending a memo of recommendations to the Zoning Board.
- Bill Hunt – Requested a discussion of jurisdiction between BoH and the Zoning Board on items in the Comprehensive Permit.
 - Wendy – All State Regulations are still in effect and the developer must meet them as part of the Comprehensive Permit process.
- Question and Answer Sessions ensued on State and Local Regulations:
 - The BoH agreed to recommend to the Zoning Board that two local provisions remain intact when issuing the Comprehensive Permit:
 1. Reserve Area Requirement
 2. 30 Minute Perk Test Requirement

• Definitive Subdivision Plan for Proposed Two-Lot Subdivision at 27 High Street aka School Street (Old Highway Garage)

- Wendy Hansbury – Notified the BoH that the BoS is looking for possible selling opportunities for the parcel. It was noted that this parcel will still need to follow all normal BoH processes if development should begin.

• Discussion: Board Members to take Meeting Minutes

- Discussed the taking of meeting minutes by individuals at the BoH Meetings going forward now that a meeting minutes secretary budget but was denied by the Finance Committee.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Mass Health Provider Approval Letter: implication for future immunization revenue for the town

- MassHealth application filed by Sue Winslow to participate in special programs and contracts which includes vaccination administration has been approved.

HEALTH DIRECTOR'S REPORT 3/17/2021 to 4/21/2021

- Worked with Town Administrator and certain Department Heads on town hall reopening, town events planning, and other issues related to COVID.
- Attend Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) hazard mitigation workshop for Topsfield.
- Continue to provide updated state, regional, and local COVID numbers for the Topsfield Elementary School Committee. Attended several conference calls to discuss the COVID metrics. Worked with the tri-town nurse to provide information to the schools.
- Worked with the Senior Housing Authority to get individuals and homebound vaccinated with the help from Chief Collins-Brown, Sheryl Knutsen and Mark Rizza. The 2nd dose will be administered to that group tomorrow.
- Applied for the Excellence in Public Health Shared Services grant from the state with help from the Board Chair and MAPC. Attended Select Board and several follow up meetings.
- Met with Town Administrator and Highway Superintendent on issue of wasps at the sandlot and working with the Topsfield Playground Committee on a solution.
- Continued to work with the Highway Superintendent on the flare removal project and other items related to the landfill.
- Attended Finance Committee meetings on the Board of Health budget requests.
- Witnessing soil testing and septic installation inspections, completed design plan, Title 5 inspection reports, and building permit reviews continue at an increased pace.
- Attended COVID calls and meetings as needed and meetings for other town and public health concerns.
- Continued to work with, reach out to, and otherwise be available to answer questions about an array of issues; COVID19 being a large part of the calls (general information, sector specific guidance clarification, complaints, event activities, venues, and camp opening). Also, many conversations regarding building permits, food code questions, septic design and miscellaneous concerns. Follow up on food/COVID complaints.

ADJOURN

VOTE: Bill Hunt made a motion to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Seconded by Mark Rizza.

Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – Aye

Fixler - Aye

Rizza – Aye

Hunt - Aye

Minutes submitted by: Mark Rizza.

Per the Open Meeting Law, the documents that were either distributed to the Board of Health before the meeting in a packet or introduced at the meeting were:

1. Agenda
2. DRAFT - Board of Health Meeting Minutes of March 17th 2021

3. Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 webinars report from Sheryl Knutsen RN
4. Definitive Subdivision Plan for Proposed Two-Lot Subdivision at 27 High Street aka School Street (Old Highway Garage)
5. MassHealth Approval Letter
6. BOH Director's Report 3/17/2021 to 4/21/21
7. Draft 40B memo 4-21-21
8. Chapter 40B Handbook for Zoning Boards of Appeal
9. Guidelines for Local Review of Comprehensive Permits

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the May 19, 2021 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.