

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, July 21, 2021
--------------	--------------------------

**ATTENDANCE:**

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Chairperson Sheryl Knutsen RN	Yes	
Member Larry Fixler RPh	Yes	
Member Mark Rizza	Yes	
Member William Hunt Esq.	Yes	

<b>STAFF MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Health Director Wendy Hansbury	Yes
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

<b>VISITORS PRESENT:</b> Dick Gandt, Boxford Cable Television, Ellen Eaton
--

**OPENING**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

*Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting/public hearing will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so in the following manner: Zoom Meeting – see connection information below to join the meeting by Zoom videoconference or calling in by phone. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield Town Website, at <https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/>. You may also reach out to the Topsfield Board of Health at [health@topsfield-ma.gov](mailto:health@topsfield-ma.gov) or 978-887-1520 for information/assistance. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, and public participation in any public hearing conducted during this meeting shall be by remote means only.*

## July 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

*Chair Knutsen announced that Boxford Cable Television was recording the Meeting and Recording Secretary Susan Winslow was taking Meeting Minutes. Ms. Knutsen asked if anyone else wished to record the meeting and Dick Gandt announced that he would be recording the meeting.*

*Mr. Fixler announced that he would like everyone to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Fixler then led the Board and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

### APPOINTMENTS

#### **8 Central Street** Local Upgrade Approval Request – Pierce//Domestic Septic Design Inc.

Health Director Hansbury outlined the request from Dan Johnson RS of Domestic Septic Design Inc.. Mr. Hunt expressed his opinion that it might be a conflict of interest for the Health Director to present the facts in the Local Upgrade Approval request. Ms. Hansbury responded that she was introducing the request and was not acting as an advocate for Mr. Johnson. Ms. Hansbury confirmed that Board Members received all the documents related to the LUA via email. Once this was confirmed, Chair Sheryl Knutsen asked Board Members if they had any questions before taking a vote on the request.

- Mr. Rizza pointed out that Mr. Johnson's septic design plan included a statement that it conformed with Hamilton regulations. Ms. Hansbury responded that the review of the septic design plan is separate from this LUA request, and as part of her review of the septic design plan, she will bring this to Mr. Johnson's attention.
- Mr. Rizza asked if the LUA conforms with Title 5 Regulations. Ms. Hansbury responded in the affirmative.
- Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury to clarify the meaning of the acronym SAS. Ms. Hansbury responded 'Soil Absorption System'.
- Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury to confirm that the LUA request is for a reduction of the distance from the Soil Absorption System to the foundation of 20 feet to 5.5 feet. Ms. Hansbury responded in the affirmative.
- Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury if the foundation is a slab or full. Ms. Hansbury responded that it is a full foundation.
- Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury to confirm that the perc rate is less than 2 inches per minute at this location and asked if this is considered a good perc rate. Ms. Hansbury confirmed that the perc rate is less than 2 inches per minute and it is considered a good perc rate.
- Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury if the requested reduction in the distance between the SAS to high groundwater from 5 feet to 4 feet complies with Massachusetts Title 5 and the Town's Supplemental Regulations. Ms. Hansbury responded in the affirmative and confirmed that high groundwater was found at 84 inches. Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury to clarify the types of soil outlined in the soil logs for this project. In response to Mr. Fixler's question about the types of soil, Ms. Hansbury gave the Board a description of sandy loam, loamy fine sand and medium sand.

*VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the Local Upgrade Approval for 8 Central Street as written in the Form 9A Application received at the Board of Health on July 14, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote after determining that there was no further discussion:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Fixler - yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*Hunt – no*

*The motion passed in a vote of 3-1.*

### MEETING MINUTES

#### May 19, 2021

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to approve the May 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote after determining that there were no corrections or comments.*

## July 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

## June 30, 2021

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to approve the June 30, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote after determining that there were no corrections or comments.

Knutsen – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

Hunt – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

## OLD BUSINESS

### COVID-19 UPDATE

Chair Knutsen gave the Board an update on the COVID-19 Inter-agency Webinars as follows:

07/21/2021 TBOH meeting: **Inter-agency Local Boards of Health COVID-19 Webinars**

There have been 8 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. The following is a summary of my notes from these calls through June 15<sup>th</sup>, when the State of Emergency was lifted by the Governor.

**5/25/2021 The Community Tracing Collaborative** will slowly reduce staffing until its contract ends at the end of September. The statewide COVID vaccination pre-registration system is winding down. [Note: On 5/27, Topsfield will resume holding COVID vaccination clinics at the Topsfield Fairgrounds every Thursday afternoon.] The state is offering to set up **mobile vaccination clinics** for employers, schools, community organizations, priority populations, and other groups. More than 35,000 people participated in the **COVID-19 Community Impact Survey**; The State has now analyzed the data and updated findings can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-community-impact-survey-ccis-preliminary-analysis-results/download>. 45 Topsfield residents participated in the survey; municipal data tables can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-community-impact-survey-ccis-data-tables-data-by-county-municipality-and-demographic/download>

**6/01/2021 The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)** issued updated COVID-19 guidance for the remainder of this school year, including minimum standards for K-12 graduation ceremonies. Vaccinated teachers do not have to wear masks outside. The **Public Health Excellence Grant Program for Shared Services** is a significant milestone in the effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Local public health system. Statewide, there will be 29 shared services arrangements, representing 191 cities and towns, which will receive a total of \$7.7 million dollars. [Note: Topsfield has been awarded one of these grants.]

**6/08/2021** Tomorrow the state will release a new RFR for funding to support ongoing LHD contact tracing and case investigation which is geared toward building local public health nurse capacity.

**MassNotify** [www.mass.gov/MassNotify](http://www.mass.gov/MassNotify) the official COVID-19 automated exposure notification system for Massachusetts, will be launched on June 16<sup>th</sup> when Android and IOS smartphone users in MA can enable an app on their phones that will notify them about potential exposures from other MassNotify users with whom they have been in close proximity. It is anonymous (users won't know where or by whom they were exposed) and privacy-focused (it won't track where users go). **The definition of a close contact** has been changed: you are a close contact of a COVID-19 positive person if you were within 6 feet of them while indoors for at least 15 minutes while they were symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset. According to CDC guidance, individuals are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during outdoor activities, even without the use of masks.

**6/15/2021** As of today, over 4 million people in MA have been fully vaccinated. On May 28, 2021, Governor Baker issued **Order #69 which lifts remaining COVID-19 restrictions and rescinds most COVID-19 Orders**. On May 28<sup>th</sup> the Governor also issued a modified declaration of a public health emergency under the public health statute, to continue certain public health requirements, like requiring face coverings in certain settings.

Since the State of Emergency has been lifted, I will therefore cease to summarize these inter-agency Webinars at our TBOH meetings. However, I will continue to attend these weekly calls and will send written notes to the TBOH.

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that, although the Governor has lifted the Emergency Order and face coverings are no longer mandatory, the pandemic is not over. Ms. Hansbury reported the following:

- Massachusetts is experiencing a small increase in cases of COVID-19.
- The Delta Variant is more contagious than other COVID-19 variants and is a concern.
- Topsfield has a high rate of vaccination.
- Topsfield has joined the Greater Cape Ann Community Collaborative which is comprised of ten towns. As part of this Collaborative, Topsfield is hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics at the Bee Building at the Topsfield Fair Grounds every Thursday from 2 – 3:30 through the end of August, 2021. People may sign up or walk in and there is a choice between the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

Mr. Hunt asked if the new cases of COVID-19 are as serious as cases before extensive vaccinations. Ms. Hansbury responded that it's a case by case situation and some are as serious. Mr. Rizza informed the Board that as of July 17, 2021, there have been 5100 Massachusetts residents testing positive for COVID-19 and of these, 57 have died.

#### Update in Excellence in Public Health Shared Services Grant

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board regarding the following:

- Topsfield applied for this grant with Middleton and Boxford in April, 2021.
- The Grant was awarded in the amount of \$213,000 over three years, and will be presented to the Select Board for review and acceptance at their July 26, 2021 Meeting. Topsfield will hold the funds. Ms. Hansbury expressed gratitude to the Select Board for adding this to their Agenda in a timely fashion in order to comply with the requirements of the Grant.
- The Grant requires the Towns of Topsfield, Boxford and Middleton to share some services in order to strengthen and increase Public Health services.
- The Grant will be used to fund a shared public health Nurse and a shared Health Inspector.
- The job descriptions will include language indicating that the positions are grant-funded and therefore will not be positions that the Town will have to fund.
- It is anticipated that the Grant will be extended beyond three years at some point in the future.
- The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will act as Grant Coordinator.
- The MAPC assistance will ensure that the administration of this grant does not add significantly to Wendy Hansbury's duties.

## July 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members for their consensus regarding support for this grant funding. Ms. Knutsen asked if there were any reservations from Board Members. There were none. Chair Knutsen asked Board Members for a consensus to support this grant:

Mr. Rizza – yes

Mr. Fixer – yes

Mr. Hunt – yes

Ms. Knutsen – yes

Ms. Knutsen asked Board Members to attend the July 26, 2021 Select Board meeting via ZOOM to show their support for the initiative.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Bill Warrants

The Board reviewed Bill Warrants processed since the June 30, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. Fixler questioned the cost of Dead Animal Pickups. Ms. Hansbury explained that TW Excavating has been contracted to handle Dead Animal Pickups since Town employees stopped doing this job a few years ago. The fee is \$150 to collect dead animals during regular business hours and \$195 outside of regular business hours. Ms. Hansbury also explained the locations in Town where small dead animals are collected including the downtown area, school areas, school bus stops areas. Ms. Hansbury explained that the Town Administrator is working to try to bring the collection of small dead animals back into the Town, but the Town does not have the ability to handle the collection of large animals such as dead deer, so large animal collection will continue with TW Excavating.

Mr. Hunt questioned the cost of the Verizon Bill. Ms. Hansbury explained that each Department has a line item for Telephones, and the Board of Health bundled with Conservation through Verizon to obtain a monthly rate of just over \$50.00. Ms. Knutsen explained that the nature of the position requires that Ms. Hansbury is on call at all times, thus she requires a cell phone funded by the Town.

### Revenue

Ms. Hansbury reviewed the Excel Spreadsheet distributed to Board Members indicating revenue received at the Board of Health since the June 30, 2021 Meeting.

### Vaccine Reimbursement

Ms. Hansbury reviewed the Excel Spreadsheet distributed to Board Members indicating reimbursement received for vaccine administration since November, 2020. This included reimbursement for both Flu Vaccine and COVID-19 Vaccine.

Mr. Hunt expressed concern that Commonwealth Medicine and the Private Insurance companies are taking a long time in his opinion to reimburse the Town. Mr. Hunt suggested that the Town could sue the private insurance companies for triple damages because they have not issued vaccine reimbursement in a time frame appropriate under the law. Mr. Hunt questioned the use of a third party to coordinate vaccine reimbursement.

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that she has experience in developing the program that was the predecessor of the Commonwealth Medicine vaccine reimbursement program that runs through UMass Medical School. Ms. Knutsen informed the Board that medical billing is a specialty that is both time consuming and requires special software and training that would be prohibitive for the Town. Commonwealth Medicine receives 10% of reimbursement as their fee for handling vaccine reimbursement from private insurance companies, Medicare and Mass Health.

Ms. Winslow informed the Board that Commonwealth Medicine traditionally sends out reimbursement funds in batches throughout the year, and this is made clear during the training sessions held each September. Ms. Winslow will send a copy of the 2020 training materials and a copy of the Commonwealth Medicine Contract and Addendums to Mr. Hunt.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## July 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- Town of Topsfield 2020 Water Quality Report
- SOLITUDE Lake Management Notification of Aquatic Treatment, Hood Pond, Ipswich/Topsfield

### HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Health Director Wendy Hansbury reported that the Board of Health has been very busy including but not limited to the following:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics continue every Thursday
- Septic Activities: soil testing, inspections, septic repair applications, Title 5 Inspection reports, oversight on removal and replacement of bad sand on a project, emergency failure of septic system
- Beaver activity and review of mitigating circumstances when requests are made outside of beaver trapping season (November 1 – April 15)

### ADJOURN

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 PM. Seconded by Mr. Fixler. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Fixler – yes*

*Rizza – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

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

Minutes submitted by: Susan Winslow.

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. 8 Central Street Form 9A Local Upgrade Approval Request
3. 8 Central Street Septic Repair Application
4. 8 Central Street Soil Logs
5. May 19, 2021 BoH Meeting Minutes
6. June 30, 2021 BoH Meeting Minutes
7. Inter-agency Local Boards of Health Webinar – update from Chair Sheryl Knutsen
8. Bill Lists from 6/20/21 through July 20, 2021
9. Flu/COVID-19 Vaccine Reimbursements Received between November 2020 and July 2021
10. Town of Topsfield 2020 Water Quality Report
11. SOLITUDE Lake Management Notification of Aquatic Treatment Hood Pond Ipswich/Topsfield

*These Meeting Minutes were accepted at the August 18, 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.*