

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

Date:	Wednesday, November 17, 2021
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ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS	
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	No
Ellen Eaton RN	Yes
Amy Lischko MSPH, DSc	Yes

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT
Health Director Wendy Hansbury	Yes
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

VISITORS PRESENT: no visitors present
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OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 pm on November 17, 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 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.

Chair Knutsen announced that Recording Secretary Susan Winslow was taking Meeting Minutes. Ms. Knutsen asked if anyone else wished to record the meeting. The Board asked Mr. Rizza to record the meeting via ZOOM.

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Chair Knutsen led the Board and Visitors in a moment of silence.

APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments at this meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2021

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2021. There were none.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2021 as written. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. After determining that there were no further comments or questions, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.

Knutsen – yes

Rizza – yes

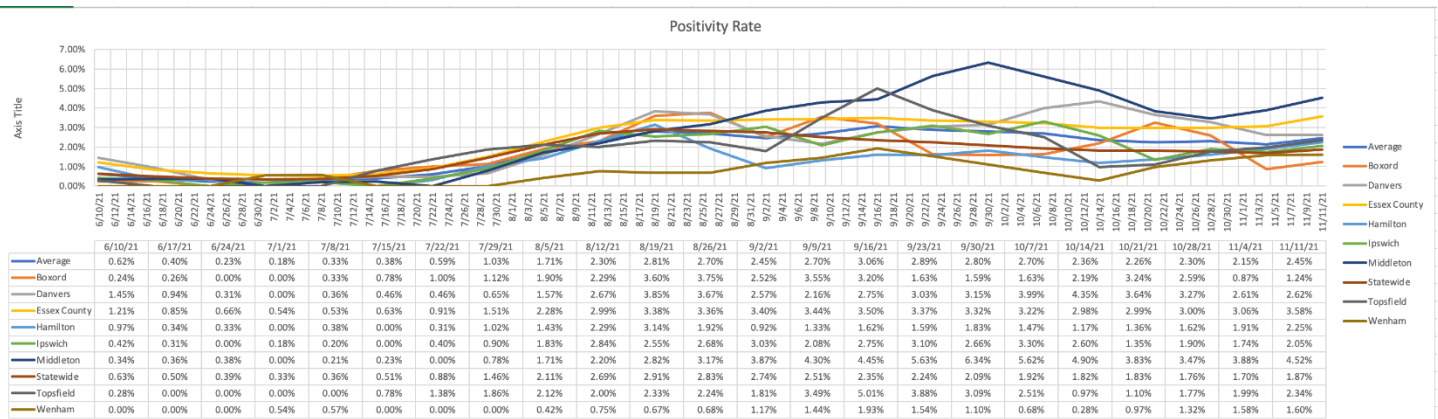
Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 4-0.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mr. Rizza presented information regarding positivity rates and vaccination rates as follows:



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City/Town	County	Population	Total Case Counts	Two Week Case Counts	Average Daily Rate	Change in Last Week	Total Tests	Total Tests Last Two Weeks	Total Positive Tests	Percent Positivity	Change Since Last Week	Testing Rate	Individuals with at least one dose	Proportion of town individuals	Fully vaccinated individuals	Proportion of town fully vaccinated	5 - 11 Years with at least one dose	Proportion of town individuals	Report Date
Boxford	Essex	7,640	613	21	19.6	Lower	22,728	687	22	3.20%	Lower	8,991.58	6,021	79%	5,651	74%			9/16/21
Danvers	Essex	28,667	3,361	82	20.4	Higher	95,602	3,200	88	2.75%	Higher	11,162.71	21,162	74%	19,726	69%			9/16/21
Hamilton	Essex	7,375	470	10	9.7	Higher	21,112	618	10	1.62%	Higher	8,379.51	5,805	79%	5,451	74%			9/16/21
Ipswich	Essex	13,408	884	25	13.3	Higher	35,868	1,201	33	2.75%	Higher	8,957.34	10,641	79%	9,975	74%			9/16/21
Middleton	Essex	10,425	1,459	43	29.5	Lower	29,830	1,102	49	4.45%	Higher	10,570.37	7,231	69%	6,719	64%			9/16/21
Topsfield	Essex	5,778	503	37	45.7	Higher	21,650	738	37	5.01%	Higher	12,773.23	4,963	86%	4,647	80%			9/16/21
Wenham	Essex	5,203	327	18	24.7	Higher	19,706	932	18	1.93%	Higher	17,912.32	3,148	61%	2,883	55%			9/16/21
Essex County	Essex	796,919	105,695	2,575	23	Higher	2,640,370	85,124	2,976	3.50%	No Change		560,909	74%	513,315	69%			9/16/21
Statewide	All	6,964,383	734,280	22,489	23.1	Higher	27,327,406	1,075,473	25,275	2.35%	Lower		4,758,319	68%	4,570,664	66%			9/16/21
Boxford	Essex	7,640	671	8	7.5	Higher	25832	727	9	1.24%	Higher	9,515.10	6,357	83%	5,780	76%	44	7%	11/11/21
Danvers	Essex	28,667	3783	78	19.4	Higher	109140	3203	84	2.62%	No Change	11,173.18	22,346	78%	20,345	71%	95	5%	11/11/21
Hamilton	Essex	7,375	518	14	13.6	Higher	23998	668	15	2.25%	Higher	9,057.46	6,220	84%	5,612	76%	96	16%	11/11/21
Ipswich	Essex	13,408	990	26	13.9	Higher	41374	1414	29	2.05%	Higher	10,545.94	11,440	85%	10,332	77%	132	15%	11/11/21
Middleton	Essex	10,425	1706	47	32.2	Higher	34998	1084	49	4.52%	Higher	10,397.71	7,687	74%	7,033	67%	27	4%	11/11/21
Topsfield	Essex	5,778	553	12	14.8	No Change	24566	640	15	2.34%	Higher	11,077.05	5,259	91%	4,740	82%	59	13%	11/11/21
Wenham	Essex	5,203	362	15	20.5	No Change	23143	939	15	1.60%	No Change	18,046.85	3,381	65%	2,974	57%	52	18%	11/11/21
Essex County	Essex	1,062,821	115,699	2,590	23.2	Higher	2,999,778	83,001	2,974	3.58%	Higher		797,116	75%	712,090	67%	2,505	4%	11/11/21
Statewide	All	6,964,383	810,346	17,738	18.2	Higher	31,938,436	1,070,927	20,007	1.87%	Higher	15,377.20	5,432,218.37	78%	4,813,177	69%	25,736	5%	

- Mr. Rizza informed the Board that the positivity rate has crept up in all local communities, and explained that the spike in the positivity rate in Middleton is related to a COVID-19 outbreak at the Middleton Correctional Facility. Since the October 20, 2021 Meeting, the positivity rate has fluctuated from 5% down to 1% but has crept back up to 2% which is still considered low. The vaccination rate in Topsfield is 80%.
- Mr. Rizza informed the Board that children ages 5-11 are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Chair Knutsen thanked Mr. Rizza for his excellent work with data and technology aspects of the vaccination effort.

Health Director Hansbury gave Board Members the following COVID-19 update:

- There will be a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Town Hall on November 18, 2021, with 113 people registered.
- Topsfield held COVID-19 vaccine clinics for First Responders in late winter and through spring, with weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinics throughout the summer and fall.
- Ms. Hansbury expressed appreciation to Council On Aging Director Kathleen Barbarisi and members of the Topsfield Fire Department for assisting with the COVID-19 vaccine clinics at Little Brook Village and the home-bound. Ms. Barbarisi and her staff have also assisted Topsfield senior citizens with online registration for COVID-19 and Flu vaccine clinics.
- Topsfield is working with Boxford and Middleton to host a COVID-19 vaccine clinic for children ages 5-11 at Masconomet Regional High School. Pandemic Nurse Julia Lobel RN is coordinating this effort.

Ms. Hansbury also thanked Mr. Rizza, Ms. Eaton and Chair Knutsen for their ongoing support and assistance at the vaccine clinics. Ms. Hansbury noted that the Select Board and Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian have also been instrumental in the effort to make COVID-19 vaccinations available to residents and thanked them for their support. Ms. Hansbury also noted that Dr. Marianne Moore has written the required standing orders for all the adult vaccine clinics, and thanked her for her ongoing assistance.

Chair Knutsen echoed those sentiments and commended Health Director Hansbury for her efforts working with the Tri-Town community and Greater Cape Ann Community Collaborative throughout the pandemic.

Chair Knutsen noted that there has been an issue with teachers parking in the Town Hall parking lot, and expressed concern that this may pose a safety issue with the November 18, 2021 COVID-19 vaccine clinic. She informed the Board that at a vaccine clinic in October, many Senior Citizens were forced to park on Washington Street due to a lack of parking spaces in the Town Hall lot. This created a safety issue, as Seniors had to cross busy Washington Street to reach Town Hall. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian was made aware of the situation and has reached out to the school to ask the teachers to use the Proctor School parking lot instead of the Town Hall Parking lot on November 18, 2021. Ms. Hansbury will also reach out to Chief Hovey to ask for assistance with traffic control.

Chair Knutsen gave Board Members an update from the November 16, 2021 COVID-19 Webinar:

Dr. Brown on COVID numbers:

Cases are going back up. This is not unexpected. We were concerned it could happen as the weather got colder and people moved indoors, even with our amazing vaccination rate. There is more and more human interaction as people go about their normal daily life.

- Vaccination continues to work.
- Our biggest concern is hospital capacity.

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- Flu season will put more pressure on hospitals.
- We need to continue to encourage vaccination, help people understand isolation, encourage use of MassNotify.
- With contact tracing, we want to focus on certain high-priority settings.
- Don't see an end game for COVID now.
- Think it will be here forever. Masks – there is a societal element - will society tolerate transmission or will they be willing to tolerate masks in order to reduce risk? Don't know answer to that.

OLD BUSINESS

Excellence in Public Health Grant

Health Director Hansbury gave the Board an update as follows:

- This grant involves Topsfield, Middleton and Boxford.
- MOUs must be signed by all three Towns. It is expected that the Select Board will review the MOU at their Meeting on Monday, November 22, 2021 and the Town Administrator will sign. The Towns of Middleton and Boxford are reviewing the MOU and are expected to sign as well, unless the Boxford Town Administrator makes changes to the document.
- Ms. Hansbury expressed gratitude to MAPC for their help drafting the Quarterly Work Plan that is required for the Grant. MAPC will be acting as the Grant Administrator for this effort.
- The required Job Descriptions are being drafted.
- These grant funds will be used to cover the cost of the Pandemic Health nurse starting in January, 2022.

Chair Knutsen thanked Ms. Hansbury for her efforts to secure this grant.

Castleberry Fair Update

Health Director Hansbury informed the Board that the Castleberry Fair was held at the Arena at the Topsfield Fair Grounds on November 12 – 14, 2021 and reported the following

- 20+ food vendor inspections completed with no issues.
- Approximately 50% of attendees wore face masks.
- Large arena doors were closed but ventilation fans were in use to circulate air.
- Although there was not enough room to ensure 6 feet of social distancing, attendance was lower than in past years, so people were not shoulder-to-shoulder in a crowd.

FINANCIALS

Board Members reviewed revenue received since the October 20, 2021 Meeting as well as invoices that have been paid since that time.

Chair Knutsen and Health Director Hansbury expressed gratitude to Mr. Rizza for acting as the Board of Health liaison to the Finance Committee for the upcoming FY23 Budget Season.

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that the Finance Committee will be particularly interested in the number of vaccines administered and the revenue received for these vaccines through Medicare and Private Insurance reimbursement handled by Commonwealth Medicine. Ms. Lischko graciously offered to reach out to a colleague at Commonwealth Medicine to ask for assistance in obtaining numbers. Ms. Hansbury pointed out that Commonwealth Medicine has done an excellent job coordinating vaccine reimbursement for many years, taking 10% of reimbursement as their fee. Chair Knutsen pointed out that she helped develop the original vaccine reimbursement program which has evolved into the current program run by Commonwealth Medicine, part of the University of Massachusetts medical school. Due to the significant increase in the number of vaccines administered this past year, Commonwealth Medicine has processed more vaccine rosters this past year than in their entire history. This sheer volume makes it difficult to determine the number of rosters that are paid versus the rosters that are rejected.

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In the past, vaccine rosters have been completed by hand. Since January, 2021, registration for vaccine clinics has been done electronically, so the Board of Health does not have hard copies of vaccine rosters.

Once the final numbers are obtained, they will be compared with the cost of vaccine purchased from the VNA to determine if the vaccine program generates enough revenue to continue this Public Health initiative. Ms. Hansbury pointed out that all reimbursements go directly into the Town's General Fund.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Health Director Hansbury gave the Board a report of recent activities including but not limited to:

- Due to a severe backlog with the Building Inspector, key Board of Health projects have been subject to significant delays including issuing a food permit to Perfectly Imperfect and a septic project at 44 Prospect Street. This has also caused tension in the office, as people who are angry about the delay in obtaining a call-back or permit from the Building Inspector are taking out their frustration on the Board of Health and Conservation personnel who are in the shared office space every afternoon and on Fridays when the Building Department is closed.
- Application Forms for Food and Septic will be overhauled for 2022 renewals.
- Ms. Hansbury met with the Building, Plumbing, Electrical and Fire Inspectors as well as Topsfield Fair personnel to review inspection procedures in order to improve and streamline inspections for next year's Fair.
- Flu Vaccine Clinic will be held at Town Hall on December 9, 2021. Information and registration link are posted on the Town website.
- Soil testing, septic installation and repair inspections, building permit reviews are ongoing.
- The number of Title 5 Inspection report reviews has increased significantly due to boom in the housing market.
- Semi-annual white goods/metals collection was held in October.
- The compost facility will close for the season on Saturday, November 20, 2021. The Board of Health handles the sale of compost stickers and tickets as well as the distribution of trash decals and the sale of trash stickers to local vendors.
- Participant in COVID-19 ZOOM calls with Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Greater Cape Ann Coalition and MAPC
- Participant in Department Head and Public Safety Meetings
- Holiday On The Green will be held on December 4, 2021. Food vendors are currently being assisted with permitting and food inspections will be done.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to share at this meeting.

ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr.. Rizza made a motion to adjourn at 7:22 PM. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Rizza – yes

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 4-0.

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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: November 17, 2021
2. Draft Meeting Minutes: October 20, 2021
3. Revenue sheet October 21, 2021 – November 17, 2021
4. Bill Warrants paid between October 21, 2021 – November 17, 2021
5. Graph depicting local COVID-19 positivity rates submitted by Mr. Rizza.
6. Graph depicting local vaccination rates submitted by Mr. Rizza.
7. COVID-19 Webinar update from Chair Knutsen

These Meeting Minutes were accepted at the December 15, 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.