

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, December 15, 2021
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**ATTENDANCE:**

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

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

<b>VISITORS PRESENT:</b> Topsfield Cable Television, Robert Grasso PE, Jennifer DiCarlo Esq., Richard Gandt
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**OPENING**

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:30 pm on December 15, 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.*

## December 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

*Chair Knutsen announced that Recording Secretary Susan Winslow was taking Meeting Minutes and the Meeting was being recorded by Topsfield Cable Television. Ms. Knutsen asked if anyone else wished to record the meeting. No-one else wished to record the meeting.*

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

### APPOINTMENTS

#### 35 Fox Run Road Variance Request

Jennifer DiCarlo, Esq. informed the Board that she was representing the homeowners at the Meeting. Ms. DiCarlo gave the Board a brief history of the property ownership including the fact that a condition of the sale of the property was to upgrade the septic system. Ms. DiCarlo explained that the homeowners wish to utilize a traditional gravity-fed septic system. To accomplish this, Vladimir Nemenchok PE from Merrimack Engineering submitted a Septic Design Plan dated 11/19/2021 with a Form 9A request for a reduction in separation between the soil absorption system and high groundwater of one foot.

*VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to grant the Variance Request submitted for 35 Fox Run Road for the septic design plan dated 11/19/2021. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. After determining that there were no further questions or comments, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Hunt - yes*

*Eaton - yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

#### 129 Washington Street Variance Request

Robert Grasso, PE appeared before the Board to represent the homeowner with a request for a reduction in separation between the soil absorption system and high groundwater of one foot. The request may be found on the Form 9A submitted by Mr. Grasso and on the revised septic design plan for 129 Washington Street dated 12/15/2021. Mr. Grasso explained that the only revision on the septic design plan (original date 12/8/2021) was a correction on the wetland boundary line corrected on 12/15/21. Mr. Grasso explained that this reduction is allowed with the use of a Presby system. Mr. Grasso also informed the Board that he has submitted a Notice of Intent with the Topsfield Conservation Commission and met with Conservation Agent Heidi Gaffney.

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to grant the Variance Request submitted on Form 9A and on the septic design plan dated 12/15/2021 for 129 Washington Street. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. After determining that there were no further questions or comments, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Eaton - yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

## MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2021

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of November 17, 2021. There were none.

*VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of November 17, 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*

*Hunt – abstain*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*The motion was approved in a vote of 3-0-1.*

## COVID-19 UPDATE

### COVID-19 Update for December 15<sup>th</sup> TBOH Meeting

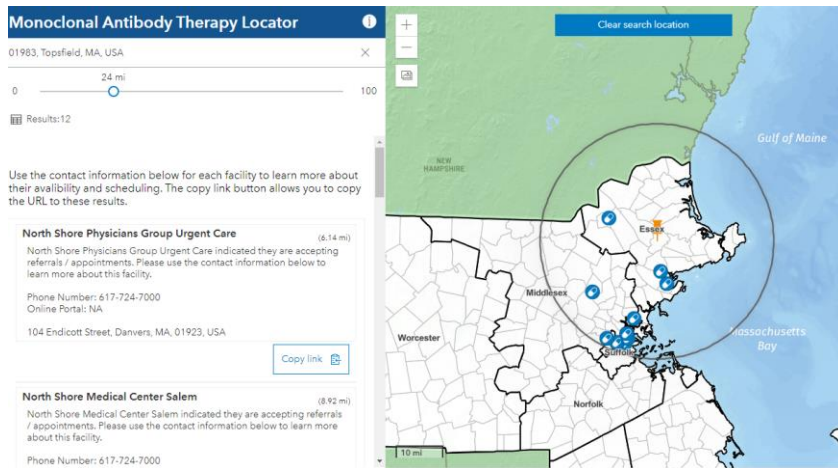
Since the November 18<sup>th</sup> TBOH meeting, the following has happened:

- On November 18, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that all Massachusetts residents aged 18 and over are eligible to get a **COVID-19 booster** six months after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or two months after receiving a Johnson & Johnson single dose vaccine. CDC recommendations allow for **mixing and matching** of different COVID-19 booster doses, and eligible **individuals may choose** which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. We are asking local health departments to **please provide booster and other COVID-19 vaccination clinics**. It may be appropriate to continue some regular interval of booster clinics in order to ensure that you reach your residents. **Consider partnering** with other communities, schools, councils on aging, or other community groups in order to promote the clinics and increase staff support. In order to ensure that people are aware of clinics, clinics should be **posted on** <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>
- The **last day to send cases to CTC** (the Contact Tracing Collaborative) was Tuesday, November 30, 2021.
- On November 30<sup>th</sup>, The Baker-Polito Administration announced the deployment of **three state supported mobile units for monoclonal antibody treatment for high-risk individuals who have been exposed to or have COVID-19**. [Monoclonal antibody \(mAb\) therapy treatment for COVID-19 | Mass.gov](#)

These new clinics have the capacity to treat a combined 500 patients per week with therapies that have shown to be effective in reducing severity of disease and keeping COVID-19-positive individuals from being hospitalized. **Referral from a health care provider is required** for treatment at any of the three new mobile clinics. Massachusetts residents can now receive monoclonal antibody treatment at 32 publicly available locations. A map of sites can be found at Monoclonal Antibody Therapy Locator:

<https://mdphgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/index.html?appid=82983fa9f6d44e2aaf1d5bd420aa57ff>

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- There is a new [Public Health Nurse Support group flyer.01.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#) which is designed for Public Health Nurses to openly share with peers their experiences/challenges over the past year and a half, whilst working in a pandemic.
- Beginning on December 8<sup>th</sup>, MDPH and LHDS can **prioritize case investigation & contact tracing** to settings with vulnerable populations or those likely to support ongoing transmissions, such as Health Care Facilities, large congregate settings (shelters/prisons), EEC programs, K-12 schools, Higher Education & Disease clusters. **Not every case or close contact needs outreach. Encourage people to notify their own contacts.**
- Encourage the use of **MassNotify**, a tool that works through smartphones, with a focus on privacy, to alert users who may have been exposed to COVID-19. [Enable MassNotify on your smartphone | Mass.gov](#)
- On December 13<sup>th</sup>, The Baker-Polito administration secured 2.1 million iHealth Labs **over-the-counter (OTC) at-home rapid antigen tests**. While the initial tests will be distributed to 102 high-need communities across the Commonwealth, the Administration is finalizing plans to allow municipalities and other public entities to directly purchase tests from test manufacturers at fixed, state-negotiated prices. Municipalities will be able to order them in January 2022. Municipalities are able to utilize American Rescue Plan Act funding, as well as Federal COVID-19 Relief funding to purchase the rapid antigen test kits.
- The **Omicron variant** is spreading across the country; the earliest case was found on November 15<sup>th</sup> and was travel related. Data suggest it is more transmissible than Delta, but it is still unknown if it causes more or less severe illness, or if there is decreased efficacy of vaccines or if monoclonal antibodies will maintain efficacy. In Massachusetts so far there have been 16 cases reported into MAVEN, with others under investigation. Delta remains the predominant variant in Massachusetts, at >97% of cases.

### MassNotify

Chair Knutsen informed the Board about the benefits of MassNotify, and instructed Board Members how to activate MassNotify on their phones. This is a service that maintains user privacy, but can alert users if they have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Knutsen has produced an information flyer about MassNotify which is currently on the Board of Health web page:

For TBOH website

December 15, 2021

**Enable MassNotify on your smartphone**

Know if you've been exposed and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

MassNotify is a free smartphone service that people in Massachusetts can voluntarily use to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Launched in June of 2021, MassNotify was developed in partnership with Apple and Google, and it can be enabled on an iPhone or Android phone in seconds.

**How it Works:**

When two people using MassNotify are near each other, their phones exchange random codes using Bluetooth. These random codes are completely anonymous, with no location tracking or exchange of personal information. When a person in Massachusetts tests positive for COVID-19 they will receive a text message with instructions on how to anonymously share their test result. If they do share their result, MassNotify users who were near the person who tested positive may receive an anonymous alert on their phone about their possible exposure to COVID-19.

MassNotify can be easily enabled on a smartphone through Settings on both Apple and Android phones. Instructions for enabling on a phone, along with more information about MassNotify, can be found at [www.mass.gov/massnotify](https://www.mass.gov/massnotify)

MassNotify is safe, anonymous, secure and voluntary. It will not collect information about who you are, where you go, or with whom you come in contact. Users can maintain privacy while utilizing a COVID-19 awareness tool to help protect themselves and their families.



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

- The State will begin to distribute COVID test kits to cities and towns for distribution to underserved populations, and there are plans for municipalities to purchase test kits at a fixed state-negotiated price starting in January 2022.
- BiNax home test kits are currently available at CVS for \$24.00
- The Public Safety Committee has been working on methods of distribution of test kits once they are available.
- The Omicron variant which became known in November, has been found to be more easily transmissible than Delta and other variants seen thus far. 16 cases of the Omicron variant have been reported to MAVEN as of December 15, 2021. Although currently the Delta variant is present in 97% of current cases, it is expected that the Omicron variant will become the prevalent variant.
- The COVID situation is evolving rapidly.
- The PCR is considered the 'gold standard' test and can detect all of the variants through gene sequencing.
- December case numbers: there are currently 59 cases of COVID-19 in Topsfield; 11 cases in the elementary school.
- This is equal to the number of cases in the entire month of November, but we are only halfway through December. The Thanksgiving Holiday may have contributed to this rise in case numbers.
- The positivity rate in Topsfield is currently 7.79%; the positive rate in Essex County is 7.08%
- The State will be transitioning away from contact tracing after January, with COVID-19 considered as endemic versus pandemic. More information will be forthcoming from MDPH in January, 2022.
- Our Public Health Nurse, Joan Fitzgerald RN and Pandemic Nurse Julia Lobell RN, have reported a rise in Influenza A, strep throat and common colds this month.
- The Topsfield Board of Health is hosting a COVID vaccine clinic offering Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on Thursday, December 16, 2021. There are preliminary plans for future clinics starting in January, 2022.
- The Topsfield Board of Health participated in two pediatric COVID vaccine clinics on November 20, 2021 and December 11, 2021 with another planned for January, 2022, the date still to be determined.
- The combination Flu Vaccine and COVID Vaccine clinic held on December 9, 2021 at Town Hall was very successful with over 140 attendees.
- Other vaccine clinics may be found on the Greater Cape Ann Community Collaborative Website and Vaxfinder.gov.

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- Thank you to the Council on Aging and many volunteers who have made these clinics possible.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### Financial Update

Board Members reviewed the following:

- Revenue and Expense Sheet – 2021 Topsfield Fair
- Revenue received at the Board of Health since the November 17, 2021 Meeting
- Bills Paid since the November 17, 2021 Meeting

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Health Director Request: Local Upgrade Approval

Health Director Wendy Hansbury presented a memo titled, 'Local Upgrade Approval Process' with a request to be given approval to review and grant Local Upgrade Approval requests except those that affect abutters and require abutter notification including variances to wells and property lines.

Board Members discussed the merits of this request including time saved for homeowners and a decrease in cost to homeowners with simple local upgrade approval requests that will no longer require the expense of hiring a Consultant to appear at the Board of Health Meeting to present the request.

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that she had spoken with someone at the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection/Northeast Regional Office to confirm that her request was valid.

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to grant the authority requested in the Memo: Local Upgrade Approval Process dated December 13, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. After determining that there were no further questions or comments, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

#### Season for Non-Emergency Percolation Testing

Health Director Hansbury presented a memo titled, 'Season for Non-Emergency Percolation Testing' with a request to be given approval to halt non-emergency percolation testing during the months of December, January and February, with the discretion to review all types of soil testing on a case-by-case basis when weather is conducive to outdoor activity during this period.

Ms. Hansbury explained the difficulty of perc testing in cold New England weather. Ms. Hansbury confirmed that Title 5 Inspections would not be affected by the adoption of this request. Ms. Lischko asked Ms. Hansbury to draft a policy to be presented at the January 19, 2022 Meeting, but the Board was in agreement that this request was appropriate.

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion that no perc test shall be done in the months of December, January and February unless the Health Director in her discretion determines that such a test is appropriate and desirable. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there were no further questions or comments, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

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*Hunt – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

### Use of a Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction

Health Director Hansbury presented a memo titled, 'Use of a Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction' asking the Board if they wish to allow the use of a Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction when a homeowner wants to add a family room, finish a basement or otherwise add to the total room count of the house. Ms. Hansbury explained that, under Title 5, a four bedroom home cannot exceed a total of 9 rooms in total. Ms. Hansbury will draft policy language.

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to make it a policy that the Board of Health require a Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction before approving a building permit if the number of rooms exceeds the regulatory maximum. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there were no further questions or comments, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

## HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

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

- Budget meetings are underway for the FY23 Budget year. Ms. Hansbury expressed thanks to Mark Rizza for his assistance with the budget process.
- Board Members Amy Lischko and Mark Rizza have had productive meetings with Commonwealth Medicine in an effort to obtain figures related to vaccine reimbursement and projected reimbursement.
- The Landfill budget is no longer under Parks & Cemetery. At present, it has not been determined which Department will be tasked with managing the Landfill budget.
- Ms. Hansbury expressed thanks to Financial Committee Members John Guido and David Larson for their assistance with the FY23 Budget process.
- Common Victualer food establishment inspections have been completed.
- Building Inspector Glenn Clohecy has returned from retirement on a part-time basis to help restore order to the Building Department. This has allowed projects that had been stalled to start moving forward again.
- Mark Carleo conducted food inspections at the Holiday On the Green and reported no issues.
- The Department continues to stay busy with Title 5 Inspection report reviews, soil testing, septic inspections, and assisting the public with questions and concerns.
- The Health Director continues to participate in meetings including Department Head Meetings, Public Safety, and Excellence in Public Health Meetings.



## CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Sheryl Knutsen referred Board Members to an email received at the Board of Health praising the efficiency of the December 9, 2021 Flu and COVID vaccine clinic.

## ADJOURN

*VOTE: Mr. Hunt a made a motion to adjourn at 8:13 PM. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Knutsen – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

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

Minutes submitted by Susan Winslow. These Minutes were reviewed and approved at the January 19, 2022 Board of Health Meeting.

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: December 15, 2021
2. Meeting Minutes: November 17, 2021
3. 35 Fox Run Road Septic Repair Application
4. 35 Fox Run Road Form 9A
5. 35 Fox Run Road Septic Design Plan
6. 129 Washington Street Septic Repair Application
7. 129 Washington Street Soil Logs
8. 129 Washington Street Septic Repair Plan
9. 129 Washington Street Form 9A
10. COVID-19 Update for December 15<sup>th</sup> TBOH Meeting
11. MassNotify Flyer
12. Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction
13. 12/13/21 Memo: Use of a Title 5 Bedroom Count Deed Restriction
14. 12/13/21 Memo: Local Upgrade Approval Process
15. 12/13/21 Memo: Season for Non-Emergency Percolation Testing
16. 2021 Topsfield Fair Revenue and Expense
17. Revenue Received Between November 18, 2021 and December 15, 2021
18. Bills Paid Between November 18, 2021 and December 15, 2021
19. Email re Flu Clinic dated 12/9/21

*These Meeting Minutes were accepted at the*

*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.*