

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

Date:	Wednesday, January 18, 2023
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ATTENDANCE:

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

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

VISITORS PRESENT: Julia Lobel RN, Gerard McDonald, Topsfield Cable Television
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OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:31 pm on January 18, 2023 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 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.

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- The Recording Secretary is taking Meeting Minutes. Topsfield Cable Television recorded the meeting.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments at this meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

December 21, 2022

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2022. There were none.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2022 as written. Seconded by Ms. Lischko. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Hunt – abstain (was not at December 21, 2022 meeting)

Knutsen – yes

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

NEW BUSINESS

Gerard McDonald, Health Director Candidate

Chair Knutsen introduced Gerard McDonald to the Board as a candidate for the position of Health Director. Board Members reviewed Mr. McDonald's resume and spoke with Mr. McDonald about pertinent experience in the field of public health including his tenure as a professional engineer with HL Graham Associates in Ipswich, MA, service to the town of Manchester-By-The-Sea Health Department and work he did with HL Graham Associates on the Topsfield Town Hall Renovation project. Mr. McDonald assured the Board that he had no misgivings about moving from the private sector to public sector and welcomed the opportunity to join the Topsfield Board of Health.

Board Members thanked Mr. McDonald for appearing at this meeting.

The Board took a consensus and unanimously approved of Mr. McDonald for the position of Health Director. Chair Knutsen will contact Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian to request that he begin negotiations with Mr. McDonald for the position.

OLD BUSINESS

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN gave the Board the following update:

COVID Update:

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Getting past "post holiday surge" (as expected) and now heading in downward trend on wastewater data with COVID and FLU, RSV has peaked already. (School admins and nurses confirm same in TTU and Masco)

Omicron variant XBB.1.5 rates jumped and now accounts for over 75%-80% of cases in the Northeast, overtaking BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, no evidence of XBB causing more severe disease and go-to prevention and treatment tools still work, but if you were infected with an earlier omicron variant, you can be reinfected with XBB.1.5. (evades immunity from past infection)

COVID deaths down in MA to 142 reported in past 7 days

HHS extended Federal PHE Declaration on 1/11/23 for another 90 days, gives EUA for COVID test kits & vaccinations - so possibly will see another extended exp date on COVID test kits if they continue to be effective in detecting current sub-variant XBB.

COVID Vaccination:

Tri-town vaccination clinics have been successful, each clinic serves ages 6 months and up clinics will continue to run through June 2023

January 19th Topsfield Town Hall

January 20th Masco High School Cafe

January 26th Middleton Flint Library

Thereafter, Topsfield Town Hall & Middleton Library

All individuals 6 months and up are now eligible for an updated bivalent booster vaccine.

COVID Testing:

Antigen and PCR testing continues to be tested for reliability against new variants

Some iHealth test kits shipped in Dec were short dated and exp in Jan, Topsfield kits are ok and all exp in June

TTU schools received short dated exp kits that exp in Jan.

Influenza:

Current estimated flu severity in MA is still in VERY HIGH category (ranges from LOW, MOD, HIGH VERY HIGH)

Hospitalizations for flu is high

Influenza-like illnesses (fever, cough sore throat) remains high but continue to decline in most areas

The vast majority of cases are influenza A (Second wave of FLU with influenza B expected late winter, early spring)

The influenza vaccination rate in MA is about 42% (sl inc from prev weeks at 36%, but still low)

22-23 Influenza vaccine is expected to be a good match for the circulating virus based on data from southern hemisphere!

Flu clinics every Wednesday in January 10am-4pm at Topsfield Town Hall to cover those who have yet to be vaccinated. (Using Middletons vaccine that was left)

Trailer unit:

The mobile vaccination unit is coming together, purchased with ARPA funds. Being worked in at DPW building, will be a mobile unit to use around Tri-Town for mainly Flu and COVID vaccine clinics. Buildout includes 2 vaccinator stations and the unit will be towed by DPW to specified locations (IE schools, COA, 55+ communities, health fairs, etc)

Senior at Risk Task Force:

Monthly meetings to help assist seniors and connect with services, can be to connect with ongoing services through Senior Care or 1 off services that seniors need assistance with. Voluntary service referred through police, fire, COA, veterans agent etc.

Update on 13 Ross Rd:

Mr W is out of rehab, house is being cleaned with help by brother and nephew. 1/5/23 COA director Kathleen Barbarisi and I met with Mr W to provide guidance on what needed to be done in house. On phone call prior to this meeting, Mr W had stated he was under the impression BOH wanted him to "throw everything away" and I had reiterated the goal is for the health and safety in the household. At the meeting, I reviewed orders from the health inspector (gave addl copy of the report) and gave clear guidelines to help clarify correction orders (IE trash and clutter) for Mr W to review on what inspector would be looking for on inspection retrieved Quick reference guide from Center for Hoarding and Clutter: <http://www.centerforhoardingandcluttering.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UIC-Quick-Reference.pdf>

Also provided Mr. W letter from BOH stating hours are from 8-5 for entering house, and informed Mr W condemnation sign will be placed on house now.

Follow-up phone call 1/17/23 Mr W states he is almost ready for BOH inspection, cleanup progressing well, he will contact me or BOH when he is ready for the inspector.

Public Health Excellence Grant

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that there will be a meeting with Grant Coordinator Barry Keppard on January 23, 2023.

ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Grant

Chair Knutsen reported that she and Mr. Rizza attended the January 11, 2023 meeting of the ARPA committee. The Town received two million dollars in funding, of which \$100,000 has been allocated to Board of Health projects. Board of Health expenditures thus far in FY23 include purchasing Personal Protective Equipment, clinic supplies, the public health emergency preparedness trailer build-out, stretchers and associated installation costs for the Topsfield Fire Department ambulances.

FY24 Budget

Chair Knutsen thanked Mr. Rizza for his assistance with the FY24 Budget. Chair Knutsen and Mr. Rizza will be meeting with the Town Administrator and the Select Board to review the proposed FY24 Budget.

FINANCIALS

The Board reviewed bills paid and revenue received during the period between the December 21, 2022 and January 18, 2023 meetings.

HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Chair Knutsen presented the report submitted by Susan Winslow in the absence of a Health Director.

Housing:

Amberwood Mouse Complaint- Tri-Town Health Inspector Mark Carleo to conduct inspection.

68 River Road – on hold pending application for demolition and involvement of Historical Commission. Heidi Gaffney has been conducting site visits with reps from DEP re: dewatering basement which continues to flood.

13 Ross Road – BOH issued letter allowing Mr. Wilson to enter the house 8 am – 5 pm 7 days a week to conduct the clean-up.

29 Central Street neighbor complaint about trailer in driveway – Tri-Town Health Inspector to stop by for inspection for anything related to trash/harborage/septic.

Thank you to:

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Sheryl Knutsen RN for hands-on management of the Board of Health in the absence of a Health Director.

Mark Rizza for his assistance with the FY24 Budget planning.

Gary Wildes, Public Works Superintendent, who has been handling Landfill oversight while we have no Health Director. North Coastal Management is managing the Landfill monitoring for the Town.

Also to Mr. Wildes for hauling the Public Health Emergency Preparedness trailer from the parking lot at the old DPW building downtown to the Public Works facility and allowing the build out the trailer build out to take place in the Highway Garage.

Other:

Title 5 Inspection Reports, Food Permit Renewals, Septic Installer and Hauler Renewals, Septic Reviews, Certificates of Compliance issued, projects moving forward.

Office fields trash, neighbor complaints, flu and COVID questions, distributes COVID tests.

Common Victualer License Renewals – John Coulon RS conducted follow-up inspections on establishments that did not pass inspection on the first round. Information has been submitted to the Select Board office for their meeting on January 23, 2023.

Follow up on Bring Me Joy Supper Club advertising partially cooked meals on Facebook. Letter issued, operations ceased, Tri-Town Health Inspector Mark Carleo to follow up with homeowner.

Hydronic Heater – first one in Town on Campmeeting. Building Inspector and TFD have been out to inspect it. Per Building Inspector Ray Chesley, the model is DEP certified. Some BoHs are implementing regulations for these types of heat sources.

We received a large shipment of COVID Test Kits and we have been giving them out to the public.

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN is doing a great job with Wednesday Flu Vaccines and continuing COVID Vaccine Clinics

CORRESPONDENCE

VNA First Quarter Report

Chair Knutsen introduced the VNA First Quarter Report submitted by Beverly Salate RN at VNA Care as follows:

VNA CARE

Quarterly Report

July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022

Topsfield Board of Health

VNA Care provided public health nursing for the Topsfield Board of Health for the above time period as follows:

Elder Health Clinics

VNA normally provides clinics for elder residents at the Council on Aging twice per month; nursing services include: health assessment; health monitoring; blood pressure checks; glucose testing; medication review; teaching (medications, diet, nutrition, health condition, disease management, lifestyle changes); vitamin B-12 injections; and referrals to physicians, programs and resources as indicated.

Immunization Services/Vaccine Management

Ensure flu vaccine was properly stored and handled.

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Monitored refrigerator temperatures twice daily.

Submit vaccine refrigerator log to DPH on a monthly basis. Continue on going refrigerator audit reports.

Review DPH advisories on flu, COVID-19, and other communicable diseases.

Communicable Disease Follow-up

Monitored MAVEN (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiological Network) on a daily basis for communicable diseases in the Town.

Investigated, followed-up and completed case reports on all reportable communicable diseases through MAVEN, according to DPH protocol. The cases are attached in separate MAVEN report, provided by Joan Fitzpatrick.

Other

Both Joan Fitzpatrick and Beverly Salate attended numerous DPH webinars in relation to communicable diseases and updates. Both attended numerous webinars in relation to BOH and COVID-19.

Beverly and Joan attended numerous vaccine management updates.

Submitted: Beverly Salate RN, BSN 01/15/2023

Chair Knutsen noted that the report submitted by VNA is not satisfactory. Ms. Knutsen will work with Ms. Eaton to determine how to obtain more timely and in-depth reporting from VNA.

Email from Joan Fitzpatrick RN BSN at VNA Care dated 1/6/23 re: 47 cases of COVID.

ADJOURN

Chair Knutsen asked if there was any further business. Determining that there was none, Ms. Knutsen called for a motion to adjourn.

VOTE: Mr. Hunt made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Hunt - yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was accepted in a vote of 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susan Winslow.

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

- January 18, 2023 Agenda
- December 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- Resume: Gerry McDonald PE
- Office Activities List submitted by Ms. Winslow
- VNA First Quarter FY23 Report
- Email dated 1/6/23 from Joan Fitzpatrick RN BSN
- December, 2022 UMMS December 2022 Disbursement Report (Vaccine Reimbursement)

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- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the February 22, 2023 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.