

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

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, February 22, 2023
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**ATTENDANCE:**

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	Yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	Yes
Ellen Eaton RN	Yes
Amy Lischko MSPH, DSc	Yes

<b>STAFF MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

<b>VISITORS PRESENT:</b> Julia Lobel RN, Topsfield Cable Television, Thomas Mannetta CE, Alan Rosenbaum
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**OPENING**

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:01 pm on February 22, 2023 by Chair Sheryl Knutsen. Chair Knutsen reminded the Board and visitors that the meeting originally scheduled for February 15, 2023 was canceled due to technical issues with ZOOM.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair 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](http://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.*

- 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.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### 97 North Street – Request for Reclassification of Bedroom Count

Representing homeowners Alan and Wendy Rosenbaum, Thomas Mannelta CE addressed the Board to present the request for a reclassification of bedroom count at 97 North Street from 3 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms. Mr. Mannelta presented the following information to support the request:

- The system was originally built under the 200 gallons per bedroom per day requirement in 1992 to constitute a 3 bedroom home at that time. A letter from Mr. Mannelta dated 2/7/23 indicates that the system has a capacity for 5 bedrooms under the currently accepted design rate of 110 gallons per day per bedroom and a leaching field area of 1140 square feet with a capacity of 604 gallons per day.
- Although the system has the capacity for 5 bedrooms under the current requirement of 110 gallons per bedroom per day, the homeowner is only asking for a reclassification to 4 bedrooms.
- Review of Sanitary Disposal Plan by Lanata and Associates, Inc., revised date of December 16, 1992 – no variances were requested on original septic design plan.
- As-Built Plot Plan by Lanata & Associates, Inc., revised date of October 5, 1993.
- A passing Title 5 Inspection Report dated 1/18/23.

The Board determined that the request met the criteria required to grant a reclassification.

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to grant the request to reclassify the bedroom count at 97 North Street from 3 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:*

*Rizza – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was accepted in a vote of 5-0.*

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### January 18, 2023

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2023. There were none.

*VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2023 as written. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.*

*Rizza – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was approved in a vote of 5-0.*

#### January 25, 2023

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2023. There were none.

*VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2023 as written. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.*

*Rizza – yes*

*Eaton – yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*Hunt – yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was approved in a vote of 5-0.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Report

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel RN presented the following report to the Board:

#### **COVID Update:**

Trending down on wastewater

MA hospitalizations and deaths trending down

Tri-town vaccination clinics continue to run on monthly basis - serves ages 6 months and up clinics will continue to run through June 2023 - mostly infants being vaccinated at clinics right now

February 16th Topsfield Town Hall

February 23rd Middleton Flint Library

Masco clinics have been paused

May add Boxford COA once new space is open and I have office space there

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

Demand for vaccines is not significant this time with the low level of cases, the severity of overall disease has decreased and transmission has lessened.

Plan looking ahead is moving toward simplifying vaccines and annual vaccines like flu vaccines. GCACC future still TBD or if towns will pay for vaccines.

**Test Kits:**

TTU & Masco did final test iHealth kit distribution this week -

FDA extended expiration dates on iHealth test kits an additional 3 months in January (for a total of 9 months from original expiration date listed on package) (Or 15 months from date of manufacture, which is not actually listed on package)

QR codes were finally updated on the packaging yesterday - was causing confusion.

**Flu Update:**

Influenza severity for Massachusetts is low this week

45% vaccination rate coverage

Will likely see a second wave with flu B later in winter / early spring - some flu B cases coming into MAVEN already

Flu vaccines continue to be offered weekly at Topsfield Town Hall while supplies last

**Public Health Emergency** set to end May 11, 2023

The end of PHE status means the federal government will no longer play a significant role in addressing COVID-19, will be handled like other respiratory viruses.

Very complex issue still to address, the shift will be to private insurance companies but people will still be able to access free vaccinations at local clinics.

**NEW Behavioral Health Helpline (CALL or TEXT) 1-833-773-2445**

<https://www.masshelpline.com/>

Massachusetts introduced the rollout of the behavioral health helpline (BHHL) that launched Jan 3

Connects residents with qualified professionals in need of mental health and addiction services: crisis dispatch, clinical triage, mobile crisis intervention team, and community behavioral health centers. Collaborates with 211, 988, BSAS, SAMHSA (substance use hotline).

Available FREE to all MA residents of all ages and available in multiple languages, 24/7.

Can call yourself or on behalf of someone else you are concerned about.

Community Behavioral Health Centers - <https://www.mass.gov/community-behavioral-health-centers>

Still a work in progress, Essex county is a desert for these services.

Promo materials have been ordered....

**Trailer unit:**

The mobile vaccination unit is almost complete waiting on decals on the outside.

Will be a mobile vaccine unit and can also function as a mobile response unit for tri town for responding to situations where triage/assessment needs to be done by public health or public safety dept. Outbreaks, emergency response situations, hoarding response, evacuations. Gary Wildes at DPW has been instrumental in assisting with the buildout project!





**Senior at Risk Task Force:**

Monthly meetings continue 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.

**GCACC**

Working on an after-action report with Rachel Lee for GCACC - Have meeting in March to start report  
To date, GCACC has administered approx 20,000 COVID vaccines throughout member communities.

**Tri-Town Council (TTC):**

I Participated as table host for "Community Conversation" at Masco in January - Masco Youth presented Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data highlighting positive community norms of "non-use" of alcohol and other substance in Masco students, YRBS also identified high rates of youth mental health issues (can find link for this on Boxford TV, they did an amazing job!)

Monthly TTC meetings - discussion on the need for more places for tri town teens to have safe places to "hang out" - no rec centers, YMCA, gyms, etc in towns.

TTC is hosting Youth Mental Health First Aid - April 4&5 - open to the community

Hidden in Plain Sight coming up in May at Coolidge Hall - I will have a public health outreach effort there, with table/materials

<https://www.tritowncouncil.org/events>

**Opioid Settlement Fund**

Middleton working with PAARI (police, assisted, addicted and recovery initiative)

Looking to meet with Boxford and Topsfield chiefs to discuss possible collaboration

Initial community discussion on things like getting Narcan boxes more accessible in public places - like near AED boxes.

68 River Road Update

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that the homeowner has submitted a building permit application to demolish the structure. There is a 60 day demolition delay in place. Although the property is not in the Topsfield Historic District, the Historical Commission is working with the homeowner regarding architectural salvage. Conservation Agent Heidi Gaffney continues to work with Project Manager Bill Mitchell to monitor the de-watering process for groundwater that repeatedly enters the basement.

Public Health Excellence Grant (PHE)

Chair Knutsen has been attending PHE Meetings and most recently met with Barry Keppard, the Grant Administrator from MAPC on February 9, 2023. On February 8, 2023, Chair Knutsen met with the Boxford and Middleton Health Directors to interview a candidate for the 19-hour employee position based out of Middleton for the Tri-Town Public Health Inspector. The candidate did not realize that the position would include food inspections on weekends at the Topsfield Fair Grounds, so the individual will not be pursuing the job. Currently, Mark Carleo REHS is a contractor in the position of Tri-Town Public Health Inspector. Mr. Carleo's contract for this position will expire at the end of the FY23 fiscal year (June 30, 2023).

Ms. Knutsen informed the Board that Mr. Carleo and Ms. Lobel have been doing an excellent job for the Town of Topsfield.

American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

Chair Knutsen has been attending meetings of the ARPA Committee. Ms. Knutsen informed the Board that the Town of Topsfield received \$1,980,000 in ARPA funds. Ms. Knutsen presented the following document:

**ARPA Funds Committed and Completed**

93000	December 2021 Premium Pay
177000	FY23 Operating Budget off-Set
50000	Fire Generator
50000	Police Generator
25000	Election Tabulators
20000	BOH Researve
55000	Town Hall Generator*
70000	DPW Lifts*
9000	Zero Turn Mower*
57000	Pye Brook Irrigation well (Phase 1)

**606000**

**ARPA Funds Committed and in Progress**

30000	Master Plan
75000	Culvert Study
190000	Library HVAC
69000	Public Works Dump Truck*
44000	Public Works Pick-up Truck*
50000	Cemetery Waterline Expansion*

**458000**

**ARPA Funds Select Board Acknowledged**

80000	BOH Reserve
40000	Pye Brook Irrigation (Phase 2)

110000	Cemetery Roadway Improvements *
100000	Planner
	Planner (Removed from consideration at this time)
-100000	
<b>230000</b>	

### Potential ARPA Projects

100000	Ambulance
12000	Pocket Park DT - Soft costs
250000	Pocket Park DT - Hard costs
300000	Morton Building
109000	Recycling Toters
100000	Trash toters
50000	Town Hall Energy upgrades/improvements
75000	COA Patio
200000	Fiber Phase 2
<b>1196000</b>	

<b>1980000</b>	Available ARPA Funds
<b>1294000</b>	Committed/Approved ARPA Costs
<b>686000</b>	Remaining Balnce

\* = Reallocation of funding from approved Free Cash or Cem funds at Town Meeting to ARPA

### FY24 Budget Planning

Mr. Rizza reported that he and Chair Knutsen attended the February 6, 2023 meeting of the Finance Committee. Salaries will remain level-funded and the Committee accepted the \$308 increase in the FY24 VNA Care contract. Mr. Rizza informed the Finance Committee that the Board of Health received \$50,000 in vaccine reimbursement that went into the General Fund, as well as the \$200,000 PHE grant (shared with Boxford and Middleton) that has enabled the Board of Health to enhance services to residents.

Chair Knutsen thanked Mr. Rizza for his help with not only the FY24 Budget, but his extensive assistance with Vaccine Reimbursement.

### Health Agent Report

Chair Knutsen presented the Board with the following report from Sr. Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow in lieu of a Health Director:

### Report of Activities

### Housing:

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

Minutes February 22, 2023

Mr. Carleo has been assisting with septic repair/installation inspections, plan reviews and reviews of As Built and CoC submissions. He also did a residential kitchen inspection and inspection of temporary worker housing at Connemara Farm.

Thomas Mannello CE has also been assisting with plan reviews.

John Coulon RS assisted with reviewing a Septic Installer Exam.

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

13 Ross Road – At January 25, 2023 Meeting, the Board voted to allow the resumption of human habitation. Mr. Wilson is working on getting his wife back home.

29 Central Street neighbor complaint about trailer in driveway – second complaint received from Mr. Dindo via telephone. Letter issued 2/3/2023 to explain again that the Tri Town Health Inspector saw no infractions of the State Sanitary Code or evidence that anyone is living in a trailer at the location during two site visits. At the request of Mr. Dindo, we added information to the letter about Massachusetts State Sanitary Code 105 CMR §410.430, explaining that use of a trailer for primary occupancy is only allowed on a temporary basis with permission from the local Board of Health, even though the Tri Town Health Inspector found no evidence that the trailer on the property was being used for that purpose.

Barry Keppard from MAPC has been assisting with PHE Grant Deliverables. Sheryl Knutsen has been attending ARPA meetings.

#### Other:

Thank you to Chair Knutsen for stepping into the lead role in the office and to Mark Rizza for his help with the FY24 Budget process.

Offer letter issued to Gerry McDonald for position of Health Director.

Huge sprinkler system break and flooding at Town Hall during the extreme cold overnight Friday, February 3 into Saturday, February 4, 2023. Town Accountant's office and Treasurer/Collector's offices were severely damaged and must be renovated. INNO4 (the Town's new tech support company) and Town Hall staff worked diligently to set up computers/electronics for these offices in the Select Board and First Floor Conference rooms, so work was able to continue Monday morning, February 6, 2023.

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

Second notices sent to Food Establishments that have not submitted renewal applications for 2023.

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

The Town Administrator has been working to extend the current JRM/Republic contract for another year – through FY24.

Upcoming: two pool inspections due before Memorial Day, Food Establishment Inspections to be done, Camp Application reviews and inspections to be conducted. Numerous soil testing and septic repair projects, food inspections at events on weekends.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**



Health Director Position

Chair Knutsen announced that an offer was made to Gerard McDonald by Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian in a letter dated February 2, 2023. Mr. McDonald signed the letter on February 6, 2023 agreeing to accept the position of Health Director. Mr. McDonald will start on March 1, 2023.

Bills Paid and Revenue

The Board reviewed bills paid since the January 25, 2023 Meeting.

The Board reviewed revenue received since the January 25, 2023 Meeting in the amount of \$3,899.42

Trench Permit Memo

The following reminder regarding the importance of obtaining a trench permit before soil testing or septic repair/installation was sent to septic design engineers who have worked in Topsfield in the past 2 years as well as all Septic Installers on the FY22 septic installer list. A reminder was also posted on the Board of Health web page.

## MEMO

Date: February 3, 2023

Re: Trench Permitting

This is a reminder that trench permits for soil testing and septic system repairs or installation **must be obtained from the Topsfield Building Department before work may begin.**

The Topsfield Board of Health will require proof of a trench permit before soil testing is scheduled or a Board of Health permit is issued for septic repairs or installation.

Trench permit regulations and information may be found on the Building Department web page at

<https://www.topsfield-ma.gov/inspectional-services/pages/trench-regulations> .

The application and payment options are available online through Permitlink at

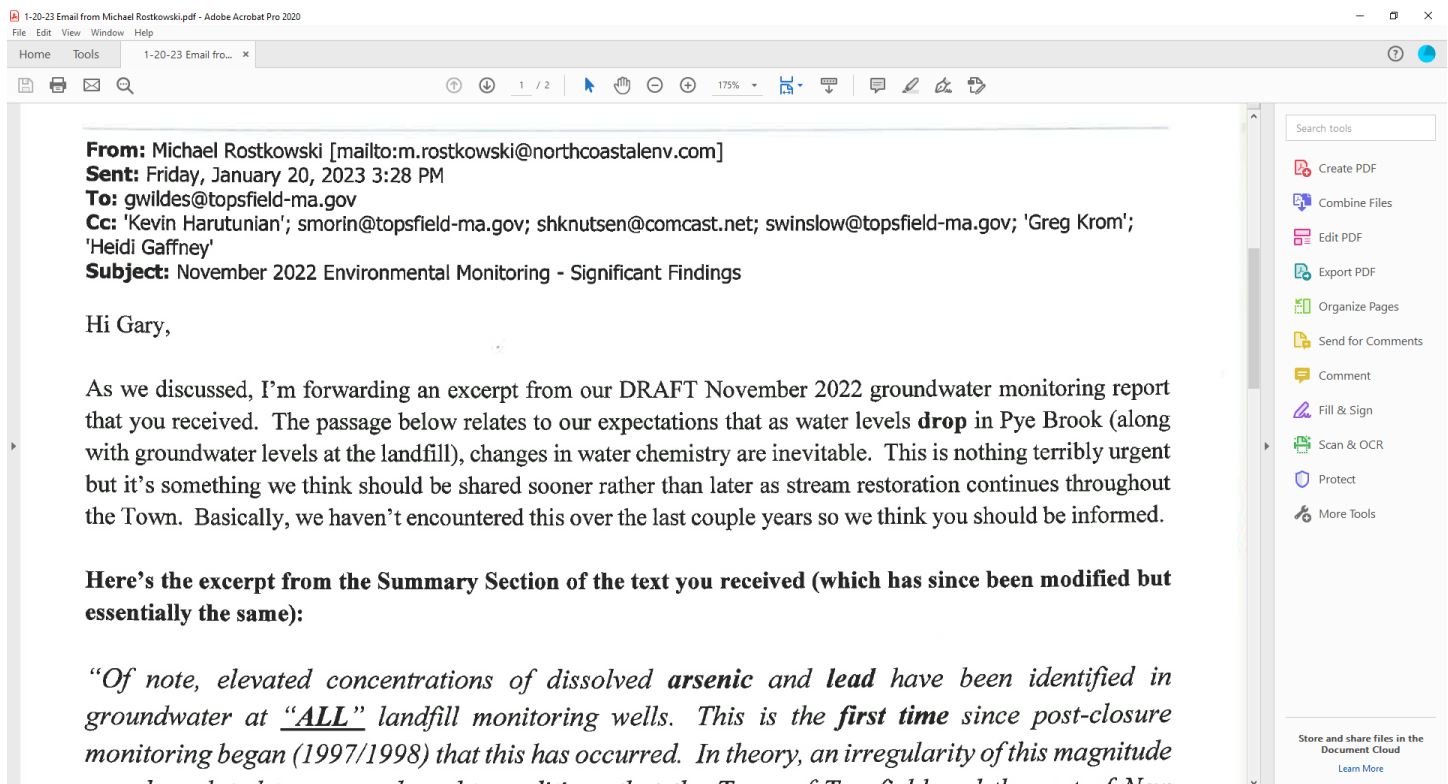
<https://www.permitlinkonline.com/csp/topsfield/DocumentLink.PublicWelcome.cls>

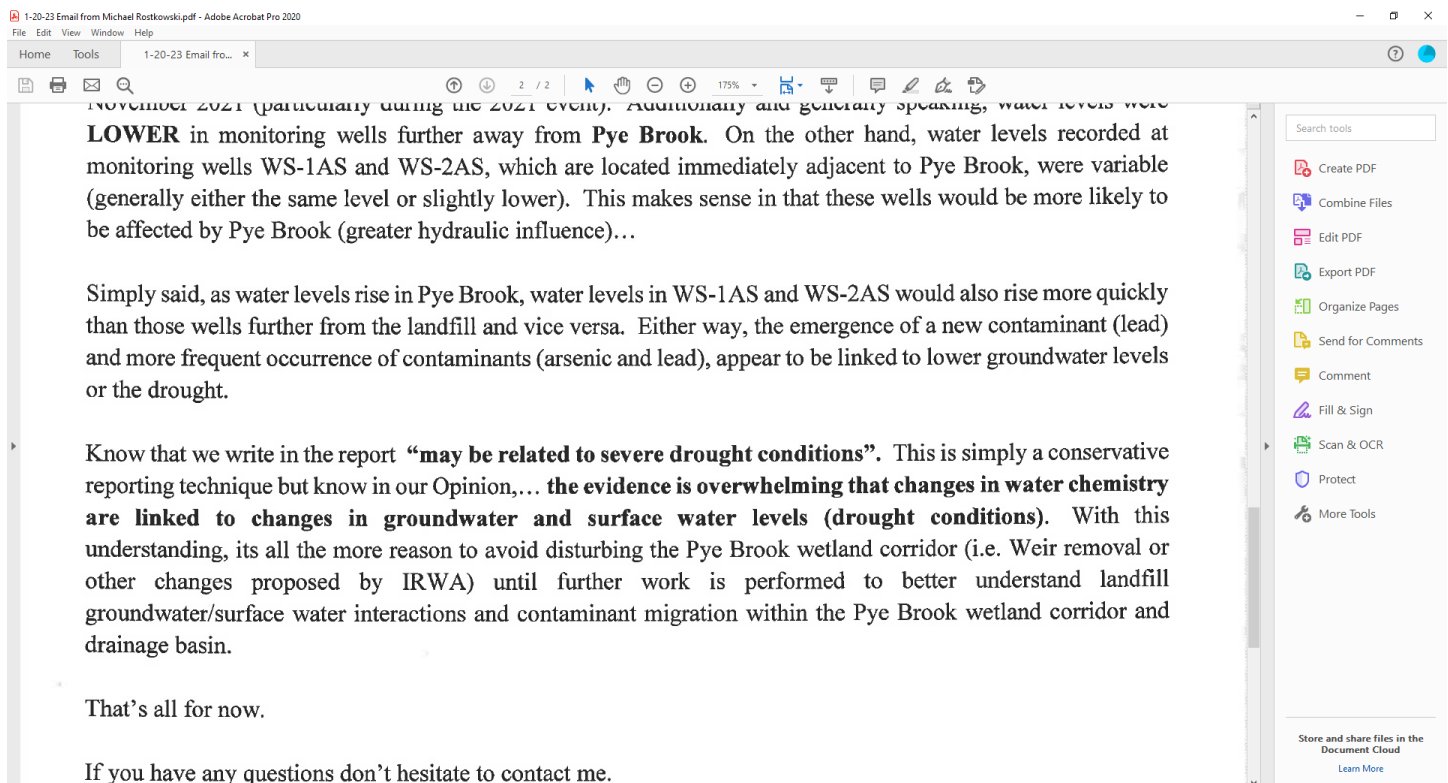
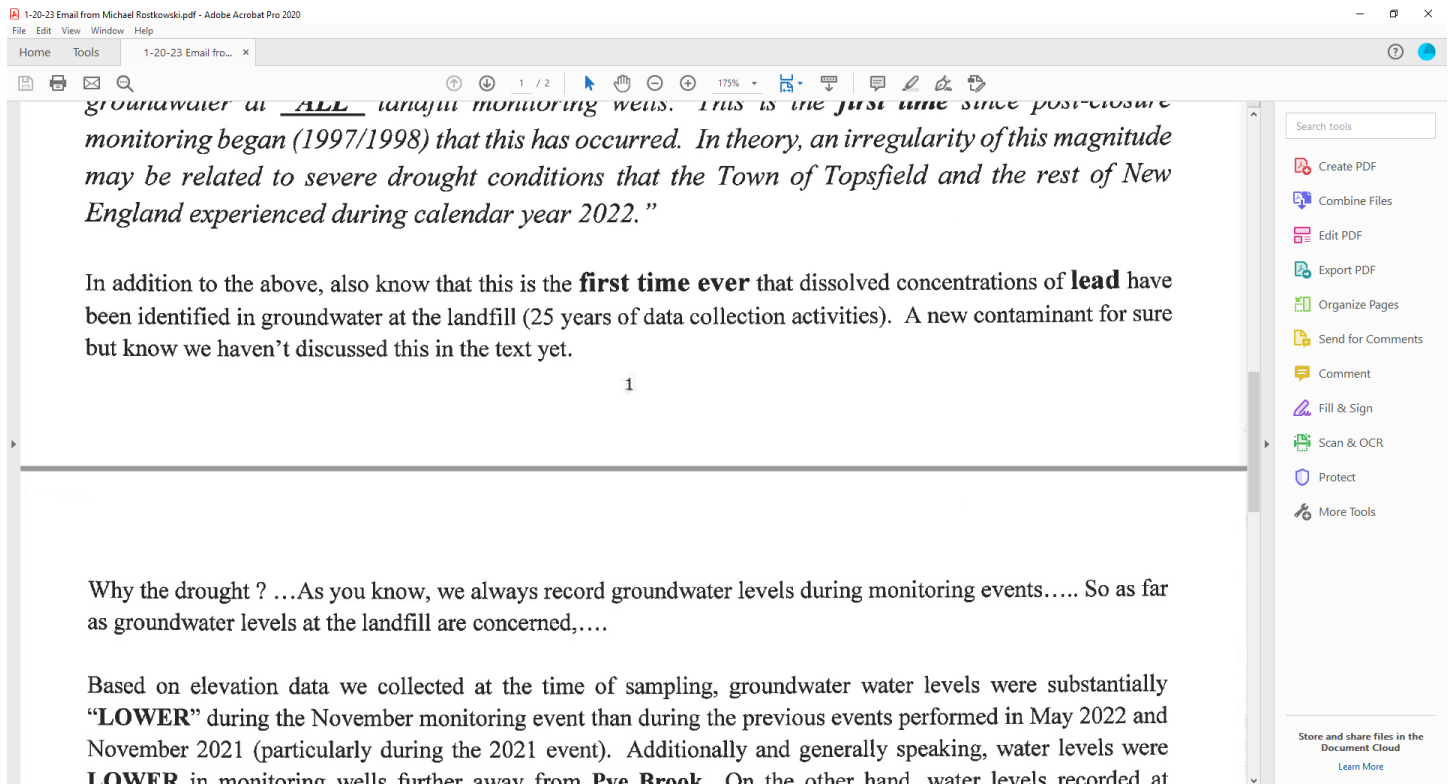
#### Trash and Recycling

Chair Knutsen has been attending the Trash/Recycling Meetings. Ms. Knutsen reported that Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian has been able to extend the existing JRM/Republic contract for an additional year, ending in June, 2024. Automated collection may be instituted after the completion of the contract. This is still to be determined.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that she was copied on an email from Mike Rostkowski from North Coastal Management, the firm responsible for Landfill Monitoring dated January 20, 2023 with a Draft November 2022 groundwater monitoring report. The following email accompanied a Draft section of the 2022 Groundwater Monitoring Report:





Ms. Knutsen informed the Board that she brought this information to the attention of the Town Administrator. Since that email was sent, Mr. Rostkowski has completed the 2022 Landfill Monitoring Report which is available for public viewing at the Board of Health Office.

Ms. Knutsen also met with the Town Administrator, Water Superintendent, Public Works Superintendent and Mr. Rostkowski to discuss the email and 2022 Landfill Monitoring Report.

Mr. Rizza commented that the email refers to an anomaly created by the drought conditions in 2022. The Board determined that they will consider inviting Mr. Rostkowski to a future meeting if more information is required.

## 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. Rizza 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*

*Rizza - yes*

*Lischko – yes*

*Hunt - yes*

*Knutsen – yes*

*The motion was accepted in a vote of 5 - 0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 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:

- February 22, 2023 Agenda
- January 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- January 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 97 North Street Letter from Thomas Mannello CE dated 2/7/2023
- 97 North Street Application-Permit-Certificate of Compliance dated 1992
- 97 North Street Title 5 Inspection Report dated 1/18/2023
- 97 North Street Septic As Built Plan dated 1992
- Letter to Gerard McDonald from Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian dated 2/2/2023
- Email from Mike Rostkowski dated February 2, 2023
- Draft Section of 2022 Landfill Monitoring Report
- 2022 Landfill Monitoring Report
- Trench Permit Memo
- Monthly Revenue Document
- Bills Paid

*These Meeting Minutes were approved at the March 15, 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.*