

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

Date:	Wednesday, April 19, 2023
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ATTENDANCE:

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

STAFF MEMBERS	PRESENT
Gerard McDonald, Health Director	Yes
Julia Lobel RN, Tri-Town Public Health Nurse	Yes
Susan Winslow, Minutes Secretary	Yes

VISITORS PRESENT: Topsfield Cable Television, Richard Gandt, Kimberly Foss – NEMMC, Barry Noone – NEMMC, Andrew Sheehan – NEMMC, Daniel Johnson RS

OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:31 pm on April 19, 2023 by Chair Sheryl Knutsen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Sheryl Knutsen made the following announcements:

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, 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.

- The Recording Secretary is taking Meeting Minutes. Topsfield Cable Television recorded the meeting. Richard Gandt announced that he was also recording the meeting.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

APPOINTMENTS

Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control (NEMMC) Presentation

Barry Noone District Director of NEMMC, NEMMC Entomologist Kimberly Foss and NEMMC Field Crew Supervisor Andrew Sheehan presented information on the NEMMC goals and responsibilities for Topsfield. They presented the following information:

- NEMMC Best Management Practices for Topsfield were submitted to the Board of Health in March. The Board of Health accepted the Best Management Practices and the Select Board also approved the Best Management Practices for Topsfield for calendar year 2023.
- NEMMC is responsible for 32 municipalities in the District.
- Reports are posted to the NEMMC website: <https://www.nemassmosquito.org/>
- There were no residential service requests and one adulticide request in calendar year 2022.
- NEMMC offers a tire collection program to mitigate mosquito breeding habitats.
- There were no cases of EEE or WNV in Topsfield in 2022; drought conditions led to lower mosquito numbers.
- There are 23 habitat site inspection areas in Topsfield.
- Larviciding was conducted on 4/11/23 in preparation for the upcoming mosquito season.
- NEMMC will be hosting a Question and Answer event for Boards of Health on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 1 pm.
- Traps are checked weekly throughout spring, summer and fall, and if there is a positive finding of EEE or WNV in a trap, the policy is for NEMMC to contact MDPH and the local Board of Health.

The Board thanked Mr. Noone, Ms. Foss and Mr. Sheehan for their presentation.

14 Woodside Road – Request for Reclassification of Bedroom Count

Daniel B. Johnson RS of Domestic Septic Design, Inc. presented a request for a reclassification of bedroom count at 14 Woodside Road from three (3) bedrooms to four (4) bedrooms based on the following:

- The three (3) bedroom system was designed when the Topsfield Septic Regulations required 200 gallons per bedroom per day, so the system was built for 600 gallons per day.
- A four (4) bedroom system under today's Topsfield Septic Regulations requires 110 gallons per bedroom per day, with a total of 440 gallons per day.
- There was a variance granted in 1995 from 10' to 5' for the leach field setback due to trees, but the leach field had four (4) feet of impervious materials below and was built to accommodate 600 gallons per day.
- The system meets the 1993 Title 5 code with a 440.3 gallons per day household flow.
- Mr. Johnson submitted a passing Title 5 Inspection Report dated 5/19/2020.
- Mr. Johnson informed the Board that a camera was used to confirm that the laterals in the leach field are in good condition.
- Mr. Johnson presented information that the septic design plan shows an area that would be feasible as a reserve area with test holes showing four (4) feet of natural material – Class 1 soils.

Mr. Rizza questioned whether the system would meet current criteria required for the leach field. Mr. Johnson indicated that the leach field is 34' x 17.5 feet which would meet today's criteria.

Health Director McDonald added that, although the original system was built to accommodate a garbage grinder, this is no longer allowed in Topsfield, so the approval language should include that information.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to approve the reclassification of bedroom count at 14 Woodside Road from three (3) bedrooms to four (4) bedrooms with the stipulation that no garbage grinder is allowed. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Rizza – yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0.

82 Salem Road – Health Director Authority to Rule on Variance Requests

Health Director McDonald presented the Local Upgrade Approval Request for a 1 foot reduction to seasonal high groundwater at 82 Salem Road to the Board as an example of the variance request that the previous Health Director was able to rule on during the COVID pandemic. Because the COVID Emergency Order has been lifted, Mr. McDonald asked the Board if he could continue making decisions on variance requests, or if the Board wishes to have variance requests presented to them at meetings.

Mr. McDonald added that in any type of situation that was unique, he would present the variance request to the Board for their review.

Mr. Rizza stated that he recalled giving the authority to the previous Health Director, but the Board determined that they needed more information on the previous vote granting such authority. This issue will be revisited at the May 17, 2023 Board of Health Meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

March 15, 2023

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2023. There were none.

VOTE: Ms. Eaton made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2023 as written. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote.

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Rizza - yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was approved in a vote of 4-0

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Health Director McDonald reported the following:

- The Home and Food Truck Show and the Essex County Trail Association Equine Event will be held at the Topsfield Fair Grounds the weekend of April 22 and 23, 2023 with multiple food truck inspections planned. Lauren Roach and former Topsfield Health Agent John Coulon will be assisting with inspections.
- Food inspections for local restaurants will be starting soon. Mr. McDonald will be shadowing Mr. Coulon to learn the process.
- The Board of Health office remains busy with septic repair inspections, soil testing, plan reviews, building permit application reviews and Title 5 Inspection Report reviews continuing on a regular basis.
- Mr. McDonald has met with Tina Benson de la Cruz from Benson's ice cream for a possible ice cream shop to open in the former Gift Horse location at the Topsfield Village Shopping Center.

Tri-Town Public Health Nurse Julia Lobel reported the following:

Topsfield BOH Meeting April 19, 2023

COVID:

Slight uptick recently on some Boston area wastewater plants end of March/beginning of April

No correlation to an increase in hospitalizations - could be an incidental finding due to weather/rain, more tourists or other causes?

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

FDA announced adults 65+ can receive a second bivalent booster and other additional changes.

Tri-Town leadership needs to discuss a path forward after PHE ends and after Ipswich ends the financial host agreement with GCACC.

I would support a 1 year continuation of GCACC during the transition period, then towns could possibly form regional MHS, and order and store their own vaccine at some point in the future.

April 20th Topsfield Town Hall

April 27th Middleton Flint Library

Boxford COA is now open and I have addl office space there.

WHO Confusion on Do Children Really Need a COVID Vaccine?

CLAIM: The World Health Organization now says COVID-19 vaccines are “not recommended” for healthy children and teens.

AP’S ASSESSMENT: False. A WHO advisory group released new guidance that suggests countries prioritize continued COVID-19 vaccinations for those most at risk, such as older people and those with underlying health conditions. The group said countries should consider prioritizing vaccines against more threatening diseases for healthy young people, but it did not recommend against COVID-19 shots, which it said are safe and effective.

THE FACTS: The WHO’s Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization met this month and updated its COVID-19 vaccine guidance. The revisions account for changing conditions, including the fact that many people now have either been infected, vaccinated or both.

But social media posts responding to the development wrongly suggested the WHO was now recommending against children and teens receiving COVID-19 vaccines — or conceding that young people never needed them.

“WHO now recommends healthy, young people NOT get the Covid Vaccines,” one tweet claims.

That misrepresents the updated guidance.

The WHO said in an announcement that the new guidance indicates that countries’ COVID-19 vaccine and boosting strategies should focus on those most at risk — such as older adults and those with underlying conditions.

TTC Hidden in Plain Sight

Community event to identify substance use and risky behavior in youth.

Wed & Thurs April 26 & 27 9am-11am, 7pm-9pm

Collaborative event with Tri-Town Police, Behavioral Health Helpline, PAARI

Opioid Settlement Fund:

Topsfield has not received any opioid funds yet, both rounds have been applied for now.

Will be more discussions/roundtables coming.

Overview of opioid funds from MA

Over \$900 million in settlement funds for prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services.

As of February 15, 2023, over \$42 million has been paid to Massachusetts cities and towns from the Distributors and J&J settlements.

Naloxone/Narcan Update:

The FDA-approved naloxone for OTC sale 3/29/23, should be available by summer.

Price point for OTC unknown, poss around \$50.

I have ordered a free supply from the DA's office and am working on training to be able to supply residents.

Consider having it readily available. Think of same as epi-pen, AED, fire extinguisher...

STATS:

Every 5 minutes an American dies from an opioid or fentanyl overdose.

Policy restriction and changes to dispensing prescription opioids has led to a *more dangerous drug supply* now more than ever.

Criminal drug market has taken over and adulterated drug supplies.

The CDC reports that nearly half of fatal overdoses in 2021 had a bystander present.

Nearly 85% of overdose deaths involved illicitly manufactured fentanyls,* heroin, cocaine, or methamphetamine (alone or in combination)

There is a lot of stigma still surrounding use.

Short Video everyone should watch: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Our2RaXhRVQ>

CDC Educational Info: <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/index.html>

Racial Equity Training

Required training from DPH for all for Health Dept and BOH Members

<https://calendly.com/olhraciaequity/101training?month=2023-04&date=2023-04-28>

Board Members thanked Mr. McDonald and Ms. Lobel for doing a fine job.

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that Board of Health Administrative Assistant Susan Winslow has been doing a good job handling difficult resident complaints about trash collection, including a resident who threatened to come to Town Hall and throw his trash at her because he had not stickered it correctly and it was not collected.

OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Excellence Grant (PHE)

- Chair Knutsen reported that she, Ms. Lobel and Ms. Winslow attended the Shared Service Arrangement (SSA) Capacity Assessment Results Toolkit (CART) meeting on April 6, 2023 via ZOOM. Chair Knutsen has asked the panel for a copy of the responses submitted last Fall to the Public Health Capacity Assessment.
- No Tri-Town Public Health Inspector has been hired yet.

American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

- Chair Knutsen reported that these meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, if any Board Members would like to attend.
- In response to a question from Ms. Eaton, Chair Knutsen clarified that ARPA funds must be allocated by December of 2023, with funds to be spent by 2025.
- Mr. Rizza added that the spread sheet for ARPA funds is the responsibility of Debi Morong at Town Hall.

NEW BUSINESS

FY24 Meeting Dates

Board Members reviewed the following meeting dates for FY24 Board of Health Meetings:

- JULY 19, 2023
- AUGUST 16, 2023
- SEPTEMBER 20, 2023
- OCTOBER 18, 2023
- NOVEMBER 15, 2023
- DECEMBER 20, 2023
- JANUARY 17, 2024
- FEBRUARY 21, 2024
- MARCH 20, 2024
- APRIL 17, 2024
- MAY 22, 2024
- JUNE 19, 2024

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the proposed Meeting Dates for Fiscal Year 2024. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Rizza – yes

Knutsen – yes

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

Future Meetings via ZOOM

Board Members discussed continuing meetings via ZOOM versus hybrid or in-person meetings. The Government is allowing the use of ZOOM through March of 2025. The Board took a consensus and all members indicated they prefer to continue with ZOOM and were in favor of the purchase of an annual ZOOM account for \$149.00.

VOTE Mr. Rizza made a motion to continue Board of Health meetings via ZOOM. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Rizza – yes

Knutsen – yes

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

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to purchase a ZOOM license account in the amount of \$149.00 for an annual account. Seconded by Ms. Eaton. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

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Lischko – yes

Rizza - yes

Knutsen – yes

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

Review of Criteria for Bedroom Count Reclassification

Health Director McDonald addressed the Board to request that they consider discontinuing offering residents the opportunity to request a reclassification of bedroom count based on the change in the Board of Health regulations requiring 110 gallons per bedroom per day versus the old 200 gallons per bedroom per day.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that, while on paper, some systems could appear to comply with the updated regulation with a bedroom count increase, there is no sure way to determine that an older system built when the regulation required 200 gallons per bedroom per day would continue to function well with the added flow from an additional bedroom. Mr. McDonald pointed out that most other towns in our area require that a homeowner apply for a septic upgrade if they wish to increase the bedroom count in a residence with a septic system.

The Board asked Mr. McDonald to gather information from surrounding towns to present at the next Board of Health Meeting.

FINANCIALS

The Board reviewed revenue received in the amount of \$7,626.59 as well as bills paid during the period between the February 15, 2023 and March 15, 2023 meetings.

Chair Knutsen reminded Board Members that all funds received from vaccine reimbursement go directly into the Town's General Fund.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from The Massachusetts Public Health Council dated April 19, 2023 thanking local, regional and state public health workers and Board of Health members for their dedication and hard work during the pandemic and beyond.

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

Lischko – yes

Rizza - yes

Knutsen – yes

The motion was accepted in a vote of 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:31 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:

Minutes April 19, 2023

- April 19, 2023 Agenda
- March 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- March 2023 Disbursement Report: Non-COVID Vaccine reimbursement from Commonwealth Medicine
- 14 Woodside Road Septic Design Plan dated 1993
- 14 Woodside Road Title 5 Inspection Report dated 5/19/2020
- 14 Woodside Road Letter from Daniel B. Johnson RS
- 82 Salem Road Form 9A Local Upgrade Approval request received April 4, 2023
- 82 Salem Road Septic Repair Application received April 4, 2023
- 82 Salem Road Septic Design Plan dated March 23, 2023
- KP Law - Open Meeting Law Legislative Update Practical Considerations July 13, 2022
- Department of Public Health Letter to Boards of Health dated April 19, 2023
- ZOOM pricing document
- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the May 17, 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.