

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

Date:	Wednesday, May 17, 2023
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ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS	PRESENT
Sheryl Knutsen RN Chair	Yes
Mark Rizza	Yes
William Hunt Esq.	Yes
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: James O'Brien, General Manager – Topsfield Fair

OPENING

The meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health was called to order at 6:31 pm on May 17, 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. This meeting was also recorded on ZOOM.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

APPOINTMENTS

Safari Camping Permit – SoulFest! At Topsfield Fair Grounds

Minutes May 17, 2023

Health Director Gerry McDonald explained that SoulFest!, a four-day Christian music festival, is planned for the Topsfield Fair Grounds August 2 – 5, 2023. The event is expected to have between 1,000 – 3,000 guests who will be camping on site. Mr. McDonald presented the following information:

- Camping Permits are issued under MGL 105 CMR 440.
- The event will require Board of Health oversight as well as Building, Police and Fire Department involvement.
- The Safari Camping Permit covers short-duration camping; it is not a permit for a permanent camp ground.
- Topsfield Zoning Bylaws do not permit campgrounds.

Mr. Rizza asked who will be in charge of enforcing regulations during the event.

James O'Brien, General Manager of the Topsfield Fair, responded that Fair Grounds personnel and SoulFest! organizers and staff will ensure that regulations are followed. Mr. O'Brien presented the following information:

- Short-duration camping has been occurring at the Fair Grounds for many years for groups such as local Scout troops.
- SoulFest! Will have 24 hour security and Mr. O'Brien has been in touch with Topsfield Police Chief Neal Hovey.
- The Topsfield Fair Grounds bathrooms, showers and porta-potties will be open for SoulFest! attendees.
- The Essex Agricultural Society/Topsfield Fair will be going before the ZBA at the July Meeting for a special permit for SoulFest! and Mr. O'Brien will ensure that all required permits will be obtained.

Board Members then reviewed the Draft Temporary Campground Permit Application and made suggestions for changes.

This issue and an updated draft of the Temporary Campground Permit Application will be reviewed at the June 21, 2023 Board of Health Meeting.

The Board thanked Mr. O'Brien for his attendance at the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2023

Chair Knutsen asked the Board Members if there were any corrections/comments/questions regarding the Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2023. There were none.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2023 as written. 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

Hunt – abstain (was not in attendance at the April 19, 2023 meeting)

The motion was approved in a vote of 4-0-1.

HEALTH DIRECTOR REPORT

Health Director McDonald reported the following:

- The Tri-Town Public Health Inspector position has not yet been filled. Former Topsfield Health Director John Coulon RS has been assisting with food inspections in Topsfield and the Tri-Town.
- There have been no recent housing issues.
- Sue Winslow continues to field trash complaints and helps with resolution.
- The Spring White Goods/Metals curbside collection will be held May 17, 18, 19, 2023.
- The office remains busy with new and repair septic application reviews, site inspections, building permit reviews, Title 5 Inspection Report reviews, resident questions and assistance.

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

Topsfield BOH Update 5/17/23

COVID:

COVID continues to trend downward past 2 weeks on area wastewater surveillance

Public Health Emergency officially ended May 11, 2023

Quick Look Back:

March 10, 2020 - Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts.

March 11, 2020 - The World Health Organization (WHO) characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic.

Total deaths in MA 22,617 in MA per the Department of Public Health (DPH) as of 5/17

Total deaths in US 1,127,928 in US per the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as of 5/17

Total deaths worldwide 6,932,591 per WHO as of 5/17

3 Years later, 39 months, here we are...

Much has changed since 2020

60% of Americans have now "had" the virus according to the CDC

70% of Americans have been vaccinated according to CDC

85% of people in Massachusetts have been fully vaccinated (received primary series) according to DPH

29% of people in Massachusetts have received the updated booster (after Sept 2022) according to DPH

Testing is readily accessible

Treatments - antivirals/monoclonal antibodies are readily accessible

Another subvariant on the horizon - Arcturus XBB.1.16 - more contagious, no signs of more severe disease at this point. Primarily in India, is being detected in approx 14% of cases in the US, rest of cases are still XBB1.5 strain.

COVID Vaccines:

FDA announced adults 65+ can receive a second bivalent booster 4 months from last dose and other additional changes including removing monovalent vaccines, and simplifying vaccine schedules (IE now only 1 bivalent vaccine for primary series for over 6 years old)

FDA is meeting in June 15 to discuss strains to be included in annual vaccine (no longer referred to as a "booster" dose)

May 18th Topsfield Town Hall 2:30-4pm

May 25th Middleton Flint Library 3-5pm

May 25th Boxford COA 10-12pm

May 26th 10-12pm Four Mile Village

Greater Cape Ann Community Collaborative (GCACC) expects to have access to free federal COVID vaccines available through fall 2023.

Then COVID vaccines will move toward commercialization fall 2023.

Future of GCACC TBD - Tri-Town needs to discuss how they want to proceed with GCACC moving forward. Public health vaccine clinics will continue under GCACC as long as vaccine is free and is available through GCACC to the Tri-Town.

Vaccinations are not as readily accessible to residents in our communities as they are in others.

IE no CVS/Walgreens/Primary care in Topsfield/Boxford.

Public Health Emergency Ended May 11, 2023

The end of PHE status means the federal government will no longer play a significant role in addressing COVID-19, and will be handled like other respiratory viruses. COVID still exists, continues to circulate and infect people, most people have immunity now though.

No update from ihealth on another expiration date extension on test kits. Towns and schools have LOTS of test kits that expired in April 2023....

Govt supply will continue as long as supply from the national strategic stockpile is available.

Addl COVID test kits are available for purchase at a negotiated rate of \$5/test kit

Private insurance no longer required to cover cost or reimbursement of test kits.

EUA's for vaccine and test kits unaffected by end of PHE

Masking:

No longer a federal requirement in healthcare facilities (including school health offices) with the end of PHE - healthcare facilities are required to monitor and implement their own policies based on current trends and cases.

Must still have masks and hand sanitizer readily available. Still advise at town hall/buildings.

MPox (Monkeypox):

May 11 WHO Declares Mpox No Longer Global Health Emergency

As of May 10, a total of 30,395 cases have been reported in the United States (42 deaths). There have been 461 cases in Massachusetts. MPox is spread through person-to-person contact, disproportionately affecting gay and bisexual men, other men who have sex with men (MSM), and transgender people. Spring and summer season in 2023 could lead to a resurgence of mpox as people gather for festivals and other events.

Strep throat:

7 cases at Cole last week, facilities enhanced cleaning over the weekend, other schools have not been seeing strep as much, but still circulating.

Opioid Settlement Fund Discussion:

Topsfield and Boxford have received some funds now, will be more discussions/roundtables coming.

Middleton has been actively involved in Opioid Abatement Roundtable Discussion on how to utilize funds:

SAMBox/NaloxBox Example: they are going to be ordering in Middleton and putting up in public places around town. Can order through MHOA Approx cost is \$300 - good use of opioid funds.



Narcan / Naloxone Update:

Topsfield health Dept has received Narcan for distribution with training by PHN.

Schools can get Narcan from BOH when current supply expires.

Providers now dispensing Narcan along with prescription opioids in case of accidental overdose (co-pay applies)

The FDA-approved Narcan for OTC sale, should be available by summer. (Price point poss around \$50)

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

Per CDC - 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.

The CDC reports that nearly half of fatal overdoses had a bystander present AND 8 out of 10 overdoses happen in the home, NARCAN should be readily available to all.

Education can save lives.

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

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

TTC Hidden in Plain Sight Event:

Held Wed & Thurs April 26 & 27 9am-11am, 7pm-9pm at Topsfield Fair Coolidge Hall

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

Attendance by the community was lower than previous years. Lots of great work went into preparing for event.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Excellence Grant (PHE)

- Chair Knutsen reported that on May 5, 2023, notification was received from Barry Keppard of MAPC that in FY24, the Topsfield Board of Health will be awarded an additional \$136,426.44 above the \$200,000.00 that automatically renews through the PHE Grant for a total of \$336,426.44 for Tri-Town Public Health.
- No Tri-Town Environmental Health Inspector has been hired yet. This position will be an employee of the Town of Middleton.
- With the increase in funding for FY24, it may be possible to hire two Environmental Health Inspectors that could be cross trained to cover food and housing inspections.
- A request for the Board to support the use of Grant Administrator Funds (\$8,000) to pay Wendy Hansbury, Susan Winslow and Gerry McDonald a stipend for four months each for grant administration was presented to the Board. This issue will be revisited at the June 21, 2023 Board of Health meeting.

American Rescue Plan Act Grant (ARPA)

\$100,000.00 was earmarked for the Board of Health from this Grant. At present, the Board of Health has spent \$29,871.00 on items including build-out of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness trailer, public health supplies and numerous items for the Topsfield Fire Department. The Topsfield Fire Department has recently asked that the Board of Health cover the cost for the repair of the Jaws of Life, an extender arm for the Jaws of Life and replacement of air bags. Chair Sheryl Knutsen and Health Director Gerry McDonald have approved the expenditure in the amount of \$13,620.00.

Health Director Authority to Grant Local Upgrade Approvals

At the April 19, 2023 Board of Health meeting, Health Director McDonald was asked to return to the Board with back-up documentation regarding the granting of authority to past Health Directors/Agents for Local Upgrade Approval Requests. In response, Mr. McDonald presented the following:

- Meeting Minutes from 4/29/2020 in which the Board voted to allow Health Director Wendy Hansbury RS to rule on Local Upgrade Approval Requests.
- Meeting Minutes from 6/25/2015 in which the Board voted to allow Health Agent John Coulon RS to rule on Local Upgrade Approval Requests.

Mr. McDonald informed the Board that in the case of a unique or unusual request, he will refer the request to the Board.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to allow the Health Director to grant Local Upgrade Approval requests without Board involvement. 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

Hunt – yes

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

NEW BUSINESS

FY24 VNA Care Contract

Chair Knutsen reported that the Board of Health made three requests to Beverly Salate RN, Case Manager from VNA Care, for the FY24 VNA Care contract. The wrong contract has been sent twice, and the contract received on May 17, 2023 included a fee for FY24 that was higher than the amount submitted to the Board of Health in November, 2023 when preparing for the FY24 Budget season. Health Director McDonald will follow up with VNA Care to obtain the correct FY24 contract and this item will be revisited at the June 21, 2023 meeting.

Commonwealth Medicine (ForHealth) Contract Automatic Renewal

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that this contract renews automatically unless terminated by either party. Commonwealth Medicine, now called ForHealth, is still affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Medical School. They process vaccine records for the Town in order for the Town to receive vaccine reimbursement from private insurers, Medicare and MassHealth, keeping 10% of reimbursements as their fee. All reimbursements received go into the Town's General Fund.

VOTE: Mr. Rizza made a motion to support the ongoing contract with Commonwealth Medicine, now ForHealth, for Fiscal Year 24. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. After determining that there was no further discussion, Chair Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Eaton – yes

Lischko – yes

Rizza – yes

Knutsen – yes

Hunt - yes

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

Mattress Disposal

Health Director McDonald presented the following information including website pages gathered by Susan Winslow regarding mattress recycling in neighboring towns, since the ban on mattresses in curbside collections was instituted by the State on November 1, 2022.

MATTRESS DISPOSAL COMPARISONS

LOCATION	DROP OFF OR CURBSIDE	FEE
Topsfield	Links to Resources on Website – nothing offered by the Town	
Boxford	No Information	
Middleton	Drop at Transfer Station	\$25.00
Ipswich	Drop at Transfer Station or Curbside Collection	\$35 at Transfer; \$50 Curbside Must call to schedule collection
Wenham	Drop at DPW Garage 2 days a week	No fee
Hamilton	Collect every other Thurs	\$30.00
Georgetown	Drop at Transfer Station	\$75.00

The State banned mattress recycling in curbside trash/recycling collection on November 1, 2022, with no solution in place for mattress disposal. JRM/Republic, the Town's hauler, charges residents \$150.00 for mattress or box spring collection and the resident must contract directly with JRM/Republic to schedule the collection.

Board of Health Member Amy Lischko informed the Board that she contacted the United Teen Equity Center (UTEC) in Lowell, MA, regarding mattress recycling. UTEC has a program that offers young people warehouse skills while addressing the issue of mattress disposal/recycling. UTEC is among the resources currently listed on the Trash and Recycling web page at www.topsfield-ma.gov.

Ms. Lischko also informed the Board that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) has a grant program offering \$10,000 for the purchase of a mattress collection container, such as a roll-off, sea container, trailer, or other suitable collection container for mattresses. Ms. Lischko suggested that the Boxford Recycling Center might be willing to serve as the host for the container. Other considerations would be the management of the container ie: who would be in charge of inspecting mattresses to ensure that they would be acceptable, the cost of removing the mattresses to the recycling plant and ensuring that the fee for mattress disposal would cover the cost of removal. The Board directed Health Director McDonald to reach out to Boxford to determine if this is feasible at the Boxford Recycling Center. Ms. Lischko offered to continue to help with this initiative.

FINANCIALS

The Board reviewed revenue received in the amount of \$13,240.44 as well as bills paid during the period between the April 19, 2023 and May 17, 2023 meetings.

CORRESPONDENCE

- White Goods/Metals Curbside Collection Poster for event on May 17, 18, 19, 2023.

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 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

Hunt - yes

The motion was accepted in a vote of 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:25 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:

- May 17, 2023 Agenda
- April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 310 CMR 15.002 MDEP Regulations re: Local Upgrade Approval
- March 25, 2020 Board of Health Meeting Minutes re: Local Upgrade Approval
- June 25, 2015 Board of Health Meeting Minutes re: Local Upgrade Approval
- SoulFest! Information

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- FY24 VNA Care Contract
- Automatically Renewing Commonwealth Medicine (ForHealth) Contract
- Mattress Disposal Comparisons
- MDEP Mattress Recycling Incentive re: Grant for Container
- Spring 2023 White Goods/Metals Curbside Collection Poster
- Bill Lists
- Revenue Sheet

These Meeting Minutes were approved at the June 21, 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.