



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

Minutes of April 29, 2020

6:30 PM

Board Members present via computer or telephone were Chair Sheryl Knutsen RN and Members Anthony Alley RN, Larry Fixler RPh and Mark Rizza. Vice-Chair Gerry Topping PE was not in attendance. Health Agent Wendy Hansbury and recording Secretary Susan Winslow were in attendance as was Selectman A. Richard Gandt.

COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

BOH: Board of Health

BOS: Board of Selectmen

MAVEN: Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network

MDEP: Massachusetts Department of Environmental
Protection

CDC: Center for Disease Control

MEMA: Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

CEU: Continuing Education Unit

MRC: Medical Reserve Corps

CEMP: Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

COIN: Community Outreach Information Network

DPH: Department of Public Health

NEMMC: Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control

EEE: Eastern Equine Encephalitis

EDS: Emergency Dispensing Site

PHEP: Public Health Emergency Preparedness

ESHTW: Estimated Seasonal High Water Table

POD: Point Of Dispensing

EP: Emergency Preparedness

RN: Registered Nurse

FDA: Food & Drug Administration

RS: Registered Sanitarian

HHS: Health and Human Services

SAS: Soil Absorption System

HMCC: Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

TBOH: Topsfield Board of Health

LSAC: Local State Advisory Committee

TRMRC: Topsfield Regional Medical Reserve Corps

MDPH Mass. Dept. of Public Health

VNA: Visiting Nurse Association

WNV: West Nile Virus

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Knutsen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Sheryl Knutsen conducted Board Member Roll Call for attendance in case anyone was participating by telephone. Roll Call as follows:

Knutsen – present

Fixler – present

Alley – present

Rizza - present

Audio/Video Conference Call Announcement

Chairman Knutsen made the following announcement:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. 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/>. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting, may do so in the following manner: join the ZOOM audio-video conference call (see information below). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield Board of Health website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Join the 6:30 PM Board of Health Zoom Meeting on April 29, 2020:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85690723158?pwd=a0xRb1hUL3N6eXR2WHU2VVBUVGJKdz09>

Meeting ID: 856 9072 3158

Password: 942940

Telephone:

+1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

Continuation of Public Hearing Related to R:1-2 Supplemental Regulations to MA Title 5

The Public Hearing on R: 1-2 Supplemental Regulations to 310 CMR 15.00 The State Environmental Code duly advertised on January 16, 2020 and January 23, 2020 and opened at the February 19, 2020 Board of Health Meeting will be continued to the next scheduled Board of Health Meeting as soon as the restrictions on public gatherings related to the COVID-19 outbreak are lifted.

APPOINTMENTS:

There were no Appointments scheduled for this meeting.

MEETING MINUTES:

March 25, 2020

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to accept the Minutes of March 25, 2020 as written. Seconded by Mr. Rizza

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – abstain (was not in attendance at 3/25/20 Meeting)

Fixler – yes

Rizza – abstain (was not a Member of the Board at the 3/25/20 Meeting)

The motion passed in a vote of 2-0-2.

OLD BUSINESS

Topsfield Village Shopping Center

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that there have been no complaints regarding the Topsfield Village Shopping Center since the March 25, 2020 Meeting. Chair Sheryl Knutsen noted that there have been no complaints during the eighteen months this has been a standing Agenda item and suggested the Board remove this as a standing Agenda item.

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to remove the Topsfield Village Shopping Center as a standing Agenda item for future meetings. Seconded by Mr. Rizza.

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

New Board Member Mark Rizza:

Chair Sheryl Knutsen and the other Board Members welcomed new Board Member Mark Rizza and thanked him for his willingness to serve the Town as a Member of the Board of Health.

Discussion of Public Hearings, Permits and Licenses Issued by the Board of Health During COVID-19 Pandemic

Health Agent Wendy Hansbury referred Board Members to her document dated March 31, 2020 in which Ms. Hansbury requests that the Board of Health postpone decisions until the Emergency Declaration is resolved. Ms.

Hansbury pointed out that the State has adopted Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 which allows Boards of Health to postpone decisions until after the Emergency Declaration is resolved.

Ms. Hansbury recommended that any new license application of any type such as installers and restaurants, all temporary food permit requests and any extraordinary requests of the Board such as Local Upgrade Approvals on plans that have non-convention septic system designs, be postponed until the meeting(s) following the end of the Massachusetts Declaration of Emergency and the Topsfield Declaration of Emergency. Ms. Hansbury explained that an application has been presented with an alternative system that is new and will require in-person explanation from the Design Engineer.

Mr. Fixler asked if postponing Local Upgrade Approvals would slow up anyone wishing to upgrade a septic system.

Ms. Hansbury explained that this would only pertain to new septic installer licenses, new or temporary food permits or new alternative septic system applications where there is no hardship involved.

Ms. Hansbury also requested that during time period covered by the COVID-19 State and Town Declarations of Emergency, The Board grant her the ability to review and grant Local Upgrade Approvals for routine requests. Ms. Hansbury explained that there are currently three requests in front of the Board that are routine in nature:

- Request for reduction in distance between septic tank and foundation.
- Request for reduction in distance between groundwater and inlet tee.
- Request for use of Sieve Analysis in lieu of Percolation and Deep Hole Testing due to high groundwater.

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that all regular business continues on track and will continue in this manner including but not limited to septic repairs, Title 5 Inspections, Building Permit Prerequisites, Soil Testing Applications and Well Permit Applications.

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to allow the Health Agent to grant Local Upgrade Approvals without Board involvement until the COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency is lifted by Governor Baker. Seconded by Mr. Fixler.

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to suspend any new applications, licenses and permits until the COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency is lifted by Governor Baker. Seconded by Mr. Fixler.

Discussion: Mr. Fixler asked if Ms. Hansbury and Ms. Knutsen could review individual requests and act on them together. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that she will keep Chair Knutsen apprised of any Local Upgrade Approval Requests but as Health Agent, Ms. Hansbury would make the determination regarding routine Local Upgrade Approval requests. Ms. Hansbury explained that in any type of extraordinary circumstance, she would inform the full Board about the request. Ms. Hansbury reaffirmed that this request is only for unique circumstances where resident hardship is not an issue.

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- VNA Care Third Quarter Report
- Westin & Sampson Quarterly Gas Monitoring Report at Topsfield Landfill

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Chairman Knutsen read into the record the following summary of Situation Report Conference calls between the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Local Boards of Health that she has participated in since the start of the Pandemic:

For 4/29/20 TBOH meeting Weekly Conference calls between MDPH and LPH:

3/31 The growing burden of case & contact tracing was discussed, and the response from MDPH to recruit 1,000 volunteers from universities to help; also discussed was confidentiality of contact tracing and the need to share info with only emergency responders; special guidance for testing & quarantining first responders; return to work guidelines; and the validity of a case that has not been confirmed by testing.

A Q&A session included discussions of providing case numbers by county only; isolation & quarantine in homeless shelters; permits for recreational camps, camping trailers and farmers markets; self-serve beverages in stores.

4/07 There was new guidance issued for grocery stores. The Community Tracing Collaborative was introduced. National Guard testing in Nursing homes was announced. Many questions about testing were discussed such as priority groups to be tested, false negatives and serology testing for antibodies. The idea of wearing masks in public settings was introduced by the CDC but it was stressed they are not a substitute for social distancing. Many questions about enforcement of the state sanitary code are arising, and a running list of guidance is gathered on a LBOH FAQ page on the MDPH website. There were continued questions about testing of first responders and return to work guidelines.

4/14 There were over 550 Academic Health volunteers deployed to 51 communities to help with contact tracing. Simultaneously the state is working with Partners in Health to develop the Community Tracing Collaborative which will ultimately be available to all towns. Towns will have the choice to continue to follow the cases or turn them over to the CTC. However, complex situations, like homeless people or nursing home clusters, will continue to be the responsibility of towns to work with.

More detail about the National Guard or Fallon ambulance doing testing in Nursing homes was announced, in response to the emerging information about the high percentage of COVID cases in congregate care settings. Tests need to be ordered by the provider who writes orders for the nursing home. Guidelines were issued for healthcare workers in nursing homes to be able to return to work if they were exposed – they must wear a mask and have symptoms monitored. Callers expressed concern about nursing home staffing, which can be augmented through a LTCF staffing needs portal. Testing is affected by lack of access to PPE.

4/24 A CTC Webinar was held the previous week to explain in detail about how the CTC will work. Some glitches occurred about cases not showing up in MAVEN – this was attributed to a nation-wide testing problem involving Quest Labs.

Two laws were passed regarding postponing elections and permitting interim budgets.

New FAQs address guidance about cleaning of food establishments, guidelines for food trucks and pools and camps, the latter of which is still under discussion. LPH will f/u complaints about private essential businesses, but the MDPH Occupational Health Surveillance program will f/u with complaints from public sector employees.

Guidelines for Housing Authorities is being worked on. Coastal towns are looking for guidance on marinas and public toilets at beaches and parks.

One town is still having difficulties around what information can be released to the public safety dispatcher.

Some LBOHs want to know how to go about testing residents who live in housing complexes for people over age 55 (not nursing homes or housing authority properties). Others want to know how to get on the list for National Guard testing at Nursing homes. There is a separate program for testing in Group homes.

Towns expressed difficulties with the variation in local regulations regarding orders for the public to wear masks.

4/28 (yesterday). The Governor announced that the stay-at-home order will remain in effect until May 18th. There have been some minor problems with the interface with MAVEN and the CTC data. Contact tracers will begin texting people prior to calling them. There are scams where people are being called and asked for the SSN or Health insurance number.

Doug Kress, Somerville Director of Health & Human Services, described the process they went through to set up COVID testing at a senior housing building with 65 units. The validity of antibody testing remains uncertain.

Jana Ferguson discussed guidelines for farm stands, farmers markets and CSAs. Guidance about the opening of recreational camps for children is still forthcoming, much to the chagrin of towns that are getting questions from camps who are beginning to hire staff from all over the world.

There was no new guidance about town meetings, or graduation ceremonies.

The PPE supply chain continues to be challenging. There is a new FAQ about KN95 masks, as opposed to N95 masks.

HEALTH AGENT REPORT

Health Agent Hansbury thanked Chairman Knutsen for participating in the MDPH Situation Report Conference Calls and for providing the Board with such in-depth information.

Ms. Hansbury reported that she has been involved with multiple conference calls regarding:

- Contact tracing
- State of MA Situation Reports
- Public Safety Meetings & Briefings
- Department Head Meetings
- Meetings with Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian and Topsfield Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown – minimum twice a week.
- Region 3A Coalition Meetings
- Conference Calls with local school administrators
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council Conference calls
- Calls/meetings with Council on Aging Director Paula Burke

Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that the Town's Public Health Nurse from VNA Care, Joan Fitzpatrick RN has been conducting contact tracing on COVID-19 positive individuals. Contact tracing involves speaking with patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and following up with individuals they have been in contact with to advise self-quarantine, testing and follow-up with their primary care physician.

Ms. Hansbury explained that the State's secure electronic system, MAVEN, is used for tracking COVID-19 cases.

Masconomet Healthcare Center

Masconomet Healthcare Center General Manager Jeff Gangi has worked closely with the Health Agent, Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian and Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown to keep them abreast of the COVID-19 situation at the Center. Statistics at Masconomet Healthcare Center as of April 29, 2020:

- 55 residents positive for COVID-19
- 15 staff members positive for COVID-19
- 18 deaths since 4/9/2020

\$10,000 in Grant Funds Received

Ms. Hansbury applied for and was awarded two grants from the MAPC totaling \$10,000 to be used for COVID-19 related expenses.

Kraft Family Foundation Donation of PPE

Ms. Hansbury was able to obtain PPE through the Kraft Family Foundation donation of emergency supplies to the Commonwealth. Most of the supplies have been given to the Topsfield Fire Department, but masks and gloves have also been given to the Council on Aging for the Meals On Wheels program, and masks/gloves have been made available for Town Hall Employees who are working in the Town Hall Building during the Emergency. Ms. Hansbury explained that testing indicates the masks in this shipment from China do not meet the standard of N95 masks required to keep First Responders safe, but they are used on residents being transported by the Topsfield Fire Department as a safety precaution.

Contacting Local Businesses and Senior Citizens

Ms. Hansbury thanked Susan Winslow and Diane Rizza from Inspectional Services for contacting all local businesses to check in with them and share Town website information during the COVID-19 Emergency.

Dissemination of Information

Ms. Hansbury thanked Susan Winslow for maintaining daily updates on the Town Website regarding COVID-19 information. COVID-19 information has also been posted on the Town kiosk, in local newspapers, on local cable television, via email and through Swiftreach calls to residents.

Signage

Susan Winslow delivered laminated signs to all food establishments with COVID-19 voluntary guidelines written by the Health Agent.

Free Face Covering Program

Ms. Hansbury thanked Susan Winslow for donating supplies and sewing more than 100 face coverings to be donated to Topsfield residents. The Topsfield Library has also produced face coverings, and as of April 29, 2020, the Board of Health has given out 172 face coverings. Ms. Winslow collects and tracks requests, packs face coverings and directions and they are delivered to Topsfield Residents by the Topsfield Fire Department.

OPEN FLOOR

Questions/Comments from Mr. Fixler

Mr. Fixler asked Ms. Hansbury if there will be inspections required at food establishments before the COVID-19 Emergency Order is lifted and the Town returns to a normal business routine. Ms. Hansbury explained that the Federal Food Code requires that food establishments are inspected twice a year. Ms. Hansbury has already conducted inspections on most of the food establishments in Town, so there will be no need to hold special inspections for businesses that have remained open during the Emergency Order. However, Ms. Hansbury will be inspecting food establishments that closed during the Emergency Order prior to their reopening.

Mr. Fixler complimented Ms. Hansbury, Ms. Knutsen and Ms. Winslow on the job they are doing during the COVID-19 Emergency. Mr. Fixler also complimented the Executive Branch of Town Government for their actions during the pandemic.

Resident Complaint

Chair Knutsen informed the Board that she received a COVID-19 related complaint from a resident via email late in the day on April 29, 2020 regarding a resident's experience at a local garage during a routine State Vehicle Inspection. The resident made the following allegations:

- The employee of the garage was not wearing a mask.
- The employee of the garage touched the interior of her car without wearing gloves.
- The office of the garage is so small, she was not able to social-distance.

Board Members discussed possible resolution and suggested the following:

- The complaint will be recorded in the complaint log.
- Ms. Hansbury will contact the garage in question to request if they need PPE and suggest that they voluntarily comply with social distancing and safety protocols related to protection from COVID-19.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Seconded by Mr. Fixler.

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Winslow

Recording Secretary

Items distributed:

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes of March 25, 2020
3. Wendy Hansbury Request to Board of Health dated March 31, 2020
4. Wendy Hansbury Request to Allow Health Agent to grant Local Upgrade Approvals dated April 28, 2020
5. Acts (2020) Chapter 53 An Act to Address Challenges Faced By Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19
6. VNA FY20 Third Quarter Report
7. Topsfield Sanitary Landfill Quarterly Landfill Gas Monitoring Report dated April 6, 2020

These Minutes were reviewed and accepted at the May 20,2020 Board of Health Meeting.

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| Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board 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 Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements. |
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