



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

Minutes May 20, 2020

6:30 PM

Board Members present via computer or telephone were Chair Sheryl Knutsen RN, Vice-Chair Gerald Topping PE and Members Anthony Alley RN, Larry Fixler RPh and Mark Rizza. 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 6:31 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

Topping – 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 Wednesday, May 20, 2020:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83872733798?pwd=SGswTFlnSVNYU0NQNTRCYm4yU3Jkdz09>

Meeting ID: 838 7273 3798

Password: 338212

Phone: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

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:

April 29, 2020

VOTE: Mr. Alley made a motion to accept the Minutes of April 29, 2020 as written. Seconded by Mr. Rizza.

Chairman Knutsen called for discussion; there was no discussion. Chairman Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Topping – abstain (was not in attendance at 4/29/20 Meeting)

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion passed in a vote of 4-0-1.

OLD BUSINESS:

COVID-19

Chairman Sheryl Knutsen has participated in COVID-19 Conference calls between MDPH and Local Public Health stakeholders. Ms. Knutsen read the following summary of these Conference Calls into the record:

For 5/20/20 TBOH meeting

Weekly Conference calls between MDPH and LPH:

5/1 *Re-opening of the State is delayed until May 18th. Coordination between CTC and LBOH continues. New funding will come to local cities & towns via the local aid process and will be administered by the TA. COVID testing needs to be ordered by a Health Care Provider. Questions were answered about facial coverings, golf course openings, pet grooming, farms, fishing piers, opening of recreational camps for children, campgrounds where people reside, testing sites and lack of access to testing, testing in nursing homes.*

5/5 *Contact tracing, MAVEN and the CTC continues to be worked on. More Details about funding to municipalities from the CARES Act was discussed. The State Re-opening Advisory Board has met and is working with multiple agencies to determine how to re-open the economy. Questions were answered about face coverings, camp grounds, essential services, graduations, golf courses, beaches, town meetings and enforcement of all the Governor's orders.*

5/8 *Clarification of the work of the Academic Volunteer Corps vs. the Contact Tracing Collaborative was given. Questions were raised about: carts, food, and bathrooms on golf courses; are masks required when preparing food?; what can essential services sell? Dr. Katie Brown explained a new policy to test the contacts of cases and the importance of using PCR testing as opposed to serology or antibody testing. Gun shops will open per order of a judge. Health agents want to see increased testing at assisted living facilities and elderly housing.*

5/12 The Governor announced a 4-stage approach to reopening which will rely on: the capacity of the medical system, adequate testing/tracing and isolation support. Enforcement issues will increase as we reopen, and DPH will work to more clearly define responsibilities of local health and state departments. Issues of the safety of inspectors were discussed. Detailed guidance about municipal funding will come out tomorrow to Town Administrators. Details about golf course opening were discussed. Public libraries are still closed. A draft of guidance about Town Meetings and the role of LBOHs is available. There was concern about elderly & vulnerable people attending Town Meeting or voting in person. The Dept. of Labor Standards will work more closely with LBOHs on enforcement. There were questions about a template letter that can be given to asymptomatic case contacts to authorize them to be tested, and problems with coordination between the CTC follow-up of cases and the LBOH.

5/18 This was a special extra meeting to discuss details of the just-released massive amount of reopening guidance. This will include Safer-at-Home guidance, the opening of manufacturing, construction, retail with curbside pickup, places of worship and firearms retailers and shooting ranges, all on May 18th. The opening of labs, offices with the restriction of <25% occupancy; car washes; hair salons, barbershops and pet grooming by appointment; and certain outdoor recreational facilities and activities, all on May 25th. There will be joint enforcement by DPH, DLS and LBOH. Complaints can come from customers or employees or anyone, and businesses will need to self-certify, with no pre-inspection required. There will be an enforcement Escalation Grid outlining a process of verbal consultation, written redirection, fines of up to \$300 and a cease & desist letter. LBOH or DLS must seek a court injunction to close a business. The help of state & local police can be requested. Questions included a request for a better definition of “unconfined outdoor spaces,” and clarification about how to use non-criminal disposition and other details about fines, continued concerns about face coverings, playgrounds, Air B&Bs, farmers’ markets, and clarification about how many people allowed in barbershops/salons.

5/19 The state reviewed may FAQs that they had received about dates and business certifications, 25% office occupancy vs building occupancy and how to calculate this; required training by employers for their employees; porta-potties at outdoor spaces, rules about Town Meetings, and pressure to open gyms. Jana Ferguson drilled down on the interpretation of guidelines for the reopening of outdoor activities, including beaches, campgrounds and recreational camps for children, including day camps and residential camps.

HEALTH AGENT REPORT:

COVID-19

- **Face Coverings:** Health Agent Wendy Hansbury informed the Board that face coverings are still mandatory in public places under the Governor’s Emergency Order and compliance has been good. Ms. Hansbury has produced signs that have been given to all local businesses with reminders about the Governor’s Order..
- **Contact Tracing:** The Contact Tracing program is in place with VNA Nurse Joan Fitzpatrick RN in charge. As of May 20, 2020, Ms. Fitzpatrick is tracking 3 cases in the Town of Topsfield.
- **Testing:** 500,000 people have been tested in the US as of May 20, 2020. Health Agents are hoping the US Government will increase the number of testing kits substantially.
- **Grant Funds:** The \$10,000 in grant funds received by the Town of Topsfield from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for COVID-19 response has been spent thus far on PPE and signage. There will be additional costs incurred for extra time required by the VNA for their involvement in COVID-19 response, so these funds will be used to cover that cost as well as future PPE purchases as the Town prepares to reopen

Town Hall to the public. Health Agent Hansbury expects that the Town will also be receiving additional funds through the Federal CARES Act for COVID-19 response.

- Phased Reopening of Businesses: The first phase of Governor Baker's four-phase approach to reopening businesses occurred this week, with golf courses allowed to have limited reopenings. The announcement was made public at 9 am by the Governor, and golf courses were reopened at 11 am on May 18, 2020. As part of the reopening process, Health Agent Wendy Hansbury and Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian invited all local businesses to join them in a ZOOM Conference Call on Thursday, May 21, 2020 to learn more about the Four Phases of reopening and the self-certification process required by the State of Massachusetts. Businesses must complete the self certification process by May 25, 2020 to reopen.
- Coordinated Response: Health Agent Hansbury reported that she has worked closely with Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian, Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown and Police Chief Neal Hovey for a coordinated response to the pandemic.

Complaints

Mr. Rizza asked how many complaints the Board of Health office has received related to COVID-19. Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that we have received two complaints:

- Complaint about an auto garage that was not requiring employees to use face coverings
- Complaint from a resident who heard music coming from a local gym and was concerned that group spin classes were being held in violation of the Governor's Order.

Health Agent Hansbury followed up on each complaint. Ms. Hansbury spoke with the garage owner in question to resolve the face covering issue and visited the gym in question where it was determined that the spin instructor was conducting a virtual spin class. There were no gym members in attendance at the gym address.

Compliance:

- Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that she has been involved in education and outreach instead of fining people for not wearing masks or face coverings. The Topsfield Board of Health does not have non-criminal disposition for this type of enforcement. Ms. Hansbury reminded the Board that she has placed a request on the 2020 Town Warrant for the Board of Health to be granted non-criminal disposition. Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that local Boards of Health have the option of contacting the Department of Labor Standards for assistance with compliance enforcement if needed.
- Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that Town tennis courts will be opening on May 20, 2020, with recreation fields and playgrounds scheduled to reopen during Phase Three.
- Information regarding beaches, pools and camps is still forthcoming from the Governor's office.
- Ms. Hansbury visited Masconomet Regional High School with the Town Administrator and Town Clerk to determine the feasibility of holding Town Meeting with social distancing.
- The Public Safety Committee has been meeting with ZOOM meetings three times a week.
- Answering a question from Member Larry Fixler about the status of COVID-19 cases at Masconomet Healthcare Facility, Ms. Hansbury informed the Board that the number of COVID-19 cases at Masconomet Healthcare Center has decreased, although there have recently been six more deaths at the facility and ten personnel have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Should a vaccine become available, the Topsfield Board of Health has experience setting up a vaccine clinic through the years of hosting Flu Vaccine Clinics as well as participating in the regional H1N1 Vaccine Clinic. Topsfield has both a Town of Topsfield EDS plan and a Tri-Town Regional EDS plan.

Summer Town Hall Hours

Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that Town Hall Summer Hours will run May 25, 2020 through Labor Day: Monday 8 am – 7 pm, Tuesday – Thursday 8 am – 4:30 pm; closed Friday. Town Hall will be opening on a limited basis to the public as soon as plexiglass shields and all safety precautions are in place, sometime in June.

Continuation of Public Hearing on Septic Regulations

Mr. Topping expressed interest in continuing the February 19, 2020 Public Hearing via ZOOM at the June, 2020 Meeting. Ms. Hansbury explained that Phase Two of the Governor's Reopening Plan will have more information on holding public hearings. At present, the Town has instructed all Boards and Commissions to halt public hearings during the Governor's COVID-19 Emergency Order due to concerns that not all members of the public have the ability to participate via technology. Ms. Hansbury will confer with Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian for guidance on this matter.

Non-criminal Disposition

Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that her request for the Board of Health to be granted Non-criminal disposition is on the 2020 Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Hansbury explained that if granted, Non-Criminal Disposition will be a mechanism to allow her to follow up on violations with a warning followed by fines, with court action as the final option if compliance is not achieved. Currently, the Board of Health has only the ability to issue a written warning followed by court action.

FY21 VNA Care Network Contract

Health Agent Hansbury informed the Board that the cost of this contract has not increased in ten years. For FY21, the VNA Care Network has increased the cost of their service to the Town by 5%. The cost will be \$9,187.50 paid monthly for 12 months. Service to the Town will remain unchanged.

VOTE: Mr. Topping made a motion to approve the FY21 VNA Care Network Contract. Seconded by Mr. Fixler. Chairman Knutsen asked for discussion; there was no discussion. Chairman Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Topping – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

Commonwealth Medicine Contract

Health Agent Hansbury explained that Commonwealth Medicine is contracted with the Town to assist with vaccine reimbursement following the flu vaccine clinics, taking a percentage of reimbursed funds as their fee. This contract is an evergreen contract, which means it automatically renews each year unless terminated by either party, so no action is required by the Board. Ms. Hansbury reminded Board Members that the funds reimbursed to the Board of Health through the Commonwealth Medicine program go into the Town's General Fund.

Recent Health Agent Activities

- 2 soil tests
- Inspection and opening of Topsfield Bakeshop at 426 Boston Street
- Septic repair on Mansion Drive

NEW BUSINESS

Masconomet Regional School District Nurses:

Chair Sheryl Knutsen informed the Board that the Masconomet Regional School District plans to eliminate the position of Director of Health Services and the Medical Secretary. Chairman Knutsen voiced concern about such an action during a pandemic, when children will be returning to school in the Fall. Ms. Knutsen wrote the following letter which she read into the record:

May 20, 2020

Michael M. Harvey, Ed.D.

*Superintendent
Masconomet Regional School District
20 Endicott Rd.
Boxford MA 01921*

Dear Dr. Harvey:

The Topsfield Board of Health is dismayed to learn that the Masconomet FY21 Budget reflects the elimination of the Health Services Department by cutting the positions of the Director of Health Services and the Medical Secretary. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic that is sweeping the globe and that has caused 88,970 confirmed cases and 6,066 deaths in Massachusetts as of today, the elimination of these two positions is ill-advised and extremely concerning to us.

Public Health is primarily concerned with the health of populations. One third of the approximately 1,700 Masconomet students live in Topsfield. These 479 teenagers are an important sub-population of the approximately 6,000 people who live in our small town. They are precious to us and their health and well-being is of great concern to us. We know that teenagers as a group have special health needs which often include mental health, substance abuse, chronic diseases, communicable diseases, vaccination requirements, and sports injuries, just to name a few. These students as a whole need a presence within the school who can advocate for them by communicating their unique and often complex health needs to teachers and school administrators, and who can participate in policy development as it relates to student health.

The Director of Health Services works year-round and interfaces with all other school departments, as well as with multiple Tri-Town Community agencies, with regard to student health needs and related policy development. This position is very important because the high school and middle school nurses are extremely busy providing direct care to students, and do not have time to attend meetings. The Medical Secretary provides valuable secretarial and record-keeping services so that the nurses can focus on face-to-face, hands-on care of students.

As the COVID pandemic is brought under control, the re-opening of school in the fall will be a large and daunting process, which will require more work from the Director of Health Services and Medical Secretary. The overall health of the students will need to be watched more closely than ever for subtle symptoms of a brand new disease, about which we are still learning. School attendance and health policies will need to constantly adapt and change according to State guidelines, "the data," and the probable multiple resurgent peaks of the pandemic. When a vaccine becomes available, it will be the nurses who need to collect and monitor the documentation, and possibly participate in administration of vaccine to students.

The Director of Health Services and Medical Secretary play an extremely important role in coordinating health services for Masconomet students during the best of times. Now we are in the midst of a pandemic which has precipitated a world-wide public health crisis. Now is not the time to cut these positions. We respectfully request that you as Superintendent advocate for the restoration of the positions of Director of Health Services and Medical Secretary.

Sincerely,

*Sheryl Knutsen RN, MSN, PHNCS-BC
Chair, Topsfield Board of Health
18 Brookside Road*

Topsfield MA 01983

Chairman Knutsen asked the Board if they would support sending this letter from the Board of Health.

VOTE: Mr. Fixler made a motion to support the letter dated May 20, 2020 written by Chairman Sheryl Knutsen to the Superintendent of Schools and the Masconomet Regional School Board. Seconded by Mr. Rizza. Chairman Knutsen asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Fixler informed the Board that as leaders in Public Health, the Board should give input on this topic. Chairman Knutsen called for a roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Topping – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

Chairman Knutsen will email the letter to Susan Winslow to be placed on Board of Health letterhead.

CORRESPONDENCE

- MAVEN Events Per Disease Report for Boxford and Topsfield 1/1/20 to 3/31/20

MOTION TO ADJOURN

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

Chairman Knutsen called for a Roll-call vote:

Knutsen – yes

Topping – yes

Alley – yes

Fixler – yes

Rizza – yes

The motion carried in a vote of 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Winslow

Recording Secretary

Items distributed:

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes of April 29, 2020
3. Synopsis of Weekly Conference Calls between MDPH and Local Boards of Health
4. FY21 VNA Contract
5. Commonwealth Medicine Evergreen Contract
6. Commonwealth Medicine Flu Vaccine Spring 2020 Payment Advice
7. Letter dated May 20, 2020 written by Chair Sheryl Knutsen
8. MAVEN Events Per Disease Report

These Minutes were reviewed and accepted at the June 17, 2020 Board of Health Meeting.

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.
