

**Town of Heath - Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2020**

**PRESENT on Conference Call:** Betsy Kovacs-Chair of Board, Armand Clavette, Henry Godek, Susan Gruen, John Palmer

**ALSO PRESENT:** Randy Crochier-FRCOG Regional Health Agent; Mary Sumner- BoH Clerk

**Absent:** Gene Garland, ex officio Board of Health member

**Presiding:** Betsy Kovacs, Chairman

Meeting was **called to order** at 4:00 pm by Betsy Kovacs.

1. Reviewed **minutes** of April 1, 2020 meeting.

Motion by Susan to accept minutes as presented, seconded by John; Kovacs-Aye, Palmer- Aye, Clavette-Aye, Gruen-Aye. Godek-Aye.

Reviewed **minutes** of April 6, 2020 meeting.

Motion by Susan to accept minutes as presented, seconded by Henry; Kovacs-Aye, Clavette-Aye, Gruen-Aye. Godek-Aye. Palmer-abstained as he was not present at meeting.

2. **Chairman's report:** Betsy reviewed the following:

- MAPHCO: noted that some of the nine local EDS's are meeting, some of them weekly, and reporting to MAPHCO which coordinates messaging which LBOH's can use for their towns. The Multi-Agency Communication Center-(MACC)- a local version of MEMA has been issuing two updates per week as well.
- Briefly noted the EDS and EMT meetings, which members of BoH had attended.
- **Green burial-** reviewed latest guidelines that place no restrictions on burials whether they are green or otherwise. Social distancing is the only recommendation. Information given to Claire Rabbitt, Chairman Burial Commission Heath.
- **Special Town Meeting** has been moved to May 14, 2020. That postpones the Town vote to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District beyond the deadline for joining this Spring. According to State regulations, Heath cannot join District without a Town vote to do so. Betsy has asked Carolyn Ness if Heath can begin testing without being in the District, in the hope that Town will join once we can vote. Carolyn is researching. Henry expressed concern that the mosquito dunks need to start in May if we are to be ahead of the season and waiting will only make this worse.

3. **Clerk Report/Budget:** No changes since last meeting.

4. **Nurse update:** Susan noted she checks in with Claire each Sunday, and all seems to be going fine. Susan continues to call shut-ins and line up services they need to keep them safe (food errands, masks). Reviewed Nurse report for March and discussed thoughts on if there will be a need to order more flu

vaccine based on current Covid-19 pandemic making more individuals request a vaccination. No need perceived yet. Will monitor as the flu season vaccination program starts.

#### 5. Updates on Covid-19 related issues:

- Susan noted that she posted signage at Post Office regarding need to wear masks and social distancing; as people are not following CDC and MA DPH recommendations. She will use stronger wording in hopes of getting point across.
- Discussed next 911-Reverse call: Betsy had sent a draft of proposed call to all for review. BoH feels two calls a week may be better as we move forward as it may be better to break apart “Public Health News” (social distancing, quarantining) from “Town Business News” (transfer station, tax bills). BoH members will review proposed wording and let Betsy know through e-mail of additions/changes. The Board members also noted that it might be more effective and more people might listen to the message, if there are two calls, to have a different voice on the Public Health reverse-911 message. Betsy will suggest to Select Board that, at least this week, given the volume of necessary information for the call, that there be two calls and that Mary be considered to record the Public Health call.

6. **Temporary occupancy trailer/campers:** Betsy noted that at the Tuesday, April 7 Select Board meeting, Jenny Hamilton, President of Mohawk Estates Association, noted she had received pushback from some members about Mohawk Estates closure of public areas. Betsy asked Board to review the draft letter she sent to all BoH members for review. This letter would be sent to all property owners except those with land only, outlining the need to self-quarantine for 14 days if traveling from out of state to stay in Heath. Randy noted adding wording to thank and reinforce ME letter to its members. Also discussed adding wording from recent 911 calls. BoH members will review draft and make edits.

#### 7. Health Agent Report:

- a) Randy has had further conversation with owner of **3 Ledge Road**. He noted that the impending deadline is giving the owner a high level of stress as she cannot connect with any of the agencies which could provide options. There have been no changes or updates but owner is concerned about the upcoming May 6<sup>th</sup> date in Order. Randy noted that all the issues with the property were there before Covid-19, nothing has changed. The ability of the owners to make progress on the issues during Covid-19 or to try to move safely to a new house is now impossible as agencies are not even answering calls during the crisis.

Susan made a motion to leave the plan as is, wait until the scheduled May 6, 2020 date listed in the current March 10, 2020 Order. Seconded by Armand.

Discussion:

- It was noted that the Order can be extended at any time.
- Noted that keeping the May 6 deadline makes sure they keep working on the parts they can work on. Randy noted most offices needed are closed or working remotely. BoH suggested getting owner to try to work with agencies by email.
- Concern that this will just keep getting pushed forward with no resolution.

- Betsy expressed concern about what Randy reported that the deadline is giving the owner undue stress in this pandemic. With Covid-19 no renting is not allowed, no motels or hotels are open, so they can't move or find a place in this extraordinary environment. Board could extend one month at a time, could extend to June to relieve any stress. Betsy also expressed the observation that many other deadlines for citizens have been extended including Town tax bills and that she believes it is not equitable to not alleviate the stress on the owner.
- Discussed keeping in place as is because it is only April 9 and as the Board is meeting weekly there is time to revisit as May 6 gets closer.

Gruen-Aye, Clavette-Aye, Henry-Aye, Palmer-Nay, Kovacs-Nay.

Randy will communicate this to the property owners.

- b) **612 Route 8A:** Mary noted she was able to find further contact information for property owner in file at Town Hall. She has called owner and left a message but has not heard back yet. Noted that it has only been two days since she was able to make call as info had to be retrieved from Town Hall. Susan noted her concern due to current Covid-19 crisis about how to reach resident in camper as we have no communication with property owner. Discussed who could physically check on resident based on Covid-19 restrictions. Local TRIAD is not going to houses.

A motion was made by Susan to give property owner 24 hours to respond to most recent call and if no response then to send a certified letter. Seconded by John.

Gruen-Aye, Palmer-Aye, Clavette-Aye, Godek-Aye, Kovacs-Aye

Mary will work on wording of letter with Randy if needed.

#### 8. **On Going or Suspended: no updates**

9. Mary noted there have been a few new **septic and Title V** applications. She will review them further next time she is in office.

10. Mary noted there have not been any Covid-19 related phone calls and mail has been mostly TOP applications.

**Next meeting date** for the BoH was set for Thursday April 16, 2020 at 4:00pm in case we need to meet. I

Motion to **adjourn** at 5:18 pm made by Susan; seconded by John. All were in favor. Kovacs-Aye; Clavette-Aye; Gruen-Aye; Palmer- Aye, Godek-Aye.

Minutes for conference call meeting written by Mary Sumner, BoH Clerk