

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2024**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Gene Garland -Chair, Elissa Viarengo (Select Board Representative), Cindie Garland - BoH Clerk, Randy Crochier -Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCoG) representative and Jasmine Ward – Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) representative.

0901 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

REVIEW AGENDA

- Susan requested to add the discussion of the Nurses position description to the Board of Health agenda.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

- February 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Sheila moved to accept the minutes with corrections as written. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, and Gene.

REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT

- FRCoG Maureen O'Reilly has been working through The Institute for Wilderness Medicine to arrange for community CPR and First Aid classes. These classes will be subsidized by a grant that provide low-cost opportunities for people to take either or both classes. Of note, there will be a larger subsidy for people that take both classes. These trainings will include Narcan education and distribution.
- Kurt Schellenberg witnessing PERC test or Title 5 inspections almost every day. Randy and his team are working with the FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Department to plan and hold a table-top exercise related to Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and PHEP communications. Randy stated it maybe a June event.
- FRCoG understands that the Shelburne Planning Board is working towards possible zoning regulations related to Mobile Food Units. Randy reached out to ask for a copy of these proposed regulations. The FRCOG planning department is considering using DLTA (District Local Technical Assistance) on model bylaws as the mobile food industry has exploded in the past few years.
- Local Septic Regulations and Tobacco Regulations. Randy stated that Heath currently has no tobacco retailers, and none in the foreseeable future. It will be up to the local BOH to choose if they would like to do this as part of a regional effort. For the hearing(s): The Board will need to schedule a date and time for the hearing. Randy suggested to hold the meeting during the May meeting date. The time should be what works best for the Board. He suggests the Board votes their minutes and then open the hearing. Randy suggested a hearing time of 9:10 am for the first hearing and 10 minutes later for the second hearing. The BOH agreed on the times. On the day of the hearing(s), Randy stated he will bring a written protocol for how to conduct the hearing, including the motion(s) to open the hearing and the motion(s) to close the hearing. He will also bring sample motions for an

approval of the local regulation(s). FRCoG will post the hearing information in the local newspapers.

- Randy stated he is on a statewide committee that is tasked with reviewing different on-line permitting systems and inspection software. It is a 100-million-dollar project and free to the towns. Users will be able to view public complaints live with the Massachusetts Department Public Health. The system integrates with Maven, the disease surveillance and outbreak management system.

NEW BUSINESS:

NURSE UPDATES

- Nurses report: During the month of February the town Nurse, Claire Rabbitt, RN, met with eight residents, providing one home visit and dispersed several COVID test kits. Influenza cases and vaccines are reported through the COLOR program (a complete immunization management reporting system) during the clinic visits so there is no need to duplicate the effort in the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS). The Healthy Bones and Body class is well participated at the Jacob Road Municipal Center (JRMC).
- Susan stated Influenza is on the rise in Heath and she is continuing to distribute COVID test kits to residents.
- Susan asked for the status of the Selectboards approval of the Nurse's job description. Elissa stated the board reviewed the job description at the board meeting on March 19, 2024. The concern is the description appears to be for more than an eight-hour position. The description describes what the nurse position could do, and not what the nurse position is required to do. The selectboard would like to compare the job description with other Nurse positions in the area and possible input from FRCoG. Elissa stated she will keep track of this document and the progress. Susan asked Elissa if she knew any other town that had a town Nurse position. Elissa stated no. Sheila stated that Rowe is the other town that has a Town Nurse, and the description is similar. She continued that the Nurse position is a much needed and viable service. The Heath Nurse position description was expanded to capture other possibilities that could better serve the residents of Heath. The Heath BOH members stated they have over 100+ years of Public Health experience and added their frustration to the lack of movement and priority from the selectboard. The BOH had previously approved the Nurses' position at a prior meeting. Sheila stated that it will be difficult to find any other town in Franklin County with the similar description. She stated if we get a FRCoG nurse (CPHS), they will not be able to provide the level of service as Claire Rabbit currently provides especially to an aging population. Elissa stated there is no timeline to vote on the Nurse description/position and she will continue to update the BOH on the status. Moreover, she stated this delay in decision is not a delay tactic and the selectboard values the work that Claire does and the importance of the position. Gene followed up with the need of a timeline from the selectboard and reinstated that the Nurse position description must be approved as soon as possible. The action item will remain on the BOH agenda until the task is complete.

TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY PERMITTING (TOP)

- Gene stated the guidelines need to be updated for Heath’s BOH-TOP program. FRCoG stated for the Temporary Occupancy Permit, they have that permit type in their system and would be able to take over that program on Heath BOH behalf without much groundwork. Randy suggested to discuss the matter at a future date before or during the BOH April meeting. Gene will schedule a meeting with Randy next week to discussion the program. Moreover, Gene scheduled a meeting with Doug Mason (Heath Planning Board – Chair) for March 25th to discuss Heath’s Zoning bylaws in relation to temporary occupancy and Mohawk Estates. Gene scheduled a meeting with the representative of Massachusetts Department of Public Heath for Franklin County (March 25th). The board agreed the TOP program needs to be revamped and a member from Mohawk Estates should be on the board. Cindie will inquire about a few candidates. Gene will re-draft the letter with the TOP application fee to explain the why. Moreover, the fee is import if there is an emergency clean-up.

SEPTIC LOAN PROGRAM

- Gene stated he will continue to reach out to Brian McHugh, Director of Community Development, Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) about the Septic Loan program for Heath. Cindie stated she spoke to Hilma Sumner, Heath Town Coordinator, regarding the 2013 application that was sent from FCRHRA. Hilma was not familiar with application.

BUDGET

(as of February 24, 2024)

BOH ACCOUNTS	BUDGET	EXPENSED	BALANCE
BOH Expenses	1,500.00	594.50	905.50
Personnel Expenses	8,685.00	1,339.52	7,313.48
Stipends	1,375.00		1,375.00
CARRYOVER ACCOUNTS			
BOH Revolving Fund	11,524.12		11,524.12
Septic Grant	43,840.31		43,840.31

ONGOING BUSINESS:

COVID UPDATES

- Susan applied and received 90 test kits and has 20 remain in her inventory. As of March 1, CDC updates 1) Over age 65 and high-risk individuals are encouraged to get the

COVID booster. 2) Individuals who test positive, are improving, without a fever, can come out of isolation. State of Massachusetts Department of Health encouraged individuals to wear a mask and continue their daily activities. However, 2 to 3 days prior of being tested positive for COVID, individuals are still contagious. The area schools are reporting respiratory illnesses and influenza cases. Sheila and Lisa White (FRCoG) were able to disperse 20 COVID tests at the Food Pantry event in Charlemont. Susan said if the inventory is below 10 she will order more. Sheila stated that COVID numbers are currently down.

CPHS OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING REPORT

- Sheila spoke of the public hearing that the BOH will have May 8. Revision to the septic and tobacco regulations, endorsed by the CPHS oversight board in March, will be discussed during the hearing. Randy is asking all the towns to revote on the regulations.
- Next CPHS meeting March 28th at 5:00 pm (Zoom).

REVERSE 911 Update

- Sheila is working with Nick Licata at CPHS to help 911 team to look at different options (systems).

HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Susan submitted an article for the April/May newsletter (*What is all the buzz about in Heath?*) and Maureen O'Reilly from FRCoG submitted an article about ticks. Sheila is working with the Editor, Nancy Thane, to ensure there is no duplication of topics with the BOH, Town Nurse, and FRCoG articles. May 5th is the submission deadline for the June/July newsletter. If anyone has any subjects (s) please let Sheila know as soon as possible.

PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD) Updates

- Susan stated the PVMCD explored the idea of disposal of old tires on old farms. Update from John at PVMCD, the tire disposal event is currently on hold. He continued stating that Patty Casey from Vermont Department of Agriculture has a tire slicer that cost \$55,000. First 1,000 tires were disposed in the town of Barre. Randy stated that FRCoG may be able to find grants that can assist with the tire disposal.
- Susan noticed several culverts in Heath that are plugged or partial plugged from mud and grass. She suggested a message to be sent to the Select Board about the importance of cleaning out the culverts which become breathing grounds for mosquitoes. Elissa stated she can convey the message to the Town Coordinator.

FRCOG/CPHS ROUND TABLE

- Several towns are installing Narcan dispensary kits. Susan asked if one could be put at Sawyer Hall because it is open 24/7. Randy stated FRCoG would like to know who is stocking the boxes before issuing them. Each town has different departments coordinating the effort. Randy said the boxes can be at Sawyer Hall and outside of Jacobs

Road Municipal Center (JRMC). Gene stated we will add this topic to the April BOH meeting Agenda.

MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO) Update

- Randy resigned from the steering committee. He stated MAPHCO and Responsive Systems Inc. are working together to coordinate Emergency Dispensing Sites (EDS) plans with local towns. MAPHCO's towns are divided into EDS regional planning groups, in which multiple communities work together to plan for public health emergency response for their collective residents. Susan asked Randy about the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards that was held at the Delaney House in Holyoke. 2024 Session Theme – Public Health Law Topics for Boards of Health and Health Departments – it provides legal updates bi-annually. A common topic is that an elected board can set fees not an appointed board.

ADJOURN:

Next Meeting April 10, 2024, 0900

Gene moved to adjourn at 1013; Susan seconded. Ayes: Sheila and Gene
Meeting Adjourned 1013.