

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
December 11, 2024**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Tucker Jenkins, Gene Garland -Chair
Others: Randy Crochier - CPHS/Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCoG)
Representative Cindie Garland – Boards Clerk, Elissa Viarengo – Heath Select Board Representative.

0900 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

REVIEW AGENDA/ADD ITEMS

- The board reviewed the agenda.

MASS ATTORNEY GENERAL’S NEIGHBORHOOD RENEWAL DIVISION BRIEF

- Maja M. Kazmierczak (Maja.Kazmierczak@mass.gov) from the Massachusetts Attorney General's Neighborhood Renewal Division gave a detailed presentation about their property receivership program. The program has been around since 1995, originated in the Boston area when the city identified a hundred properties that were abandoned.
- The program helps municipalities address abandoned or code-violation properties. They work with towns to rehabilitate properties that are health and safety hazards.
- The program has worked with 169 municipalities, handling 205 properties with 54 in active litigation. They recovered over \$583,000 in back taxes. Maya emphasized the program is free for municipalities, with the AG's office handling legal work and title searches.
- Grants are available to qualified participants. Low or no interest loans with potential for subsidy.
- The process involves and eligible and starts with the violation code the property owner is not able to address:
 - Receiving referrals from municipalities
 - Conducting site visits
 - Performing title searches
 - Sending demand letters to property owners
 - Potentially filing court petitions for receivership
- The presentation slides are available on the Town of Heath BOH website.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

- November 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Sheila moved to accept the minutes with minor corrections as written. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, and Gene.

REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT UPDATE

Randy stated:

- He is experiencing system access issues due to recent email system changes and discussed ongoing permit renewal processes.

- Carl Nelke, a longtime member of the Conway Board of Health, has announced his retirement for December 31st. He performed all the Title V requirements for Conway. The Town of Conway is changing over from a shared services community to a comprehensive town. FRCOG will be doing all their Title V requirements. Randy may need to hire another staff member.

NEW BUSINESS:

NURSE UPDATE

- Claire Rabbitt, RN, reported that in November 2024, she saw 3 people in her office and made 5 home visits. She received a call about tic removal, which the person managed independently, and exchanged a sharps box for one person. She also checked one person's blood sugar, and no one requested a flu vaccine. Recently, there have been reports of COVID cases, particularly from a gathering at a Heath resident. Claire tested negative for COVID-19 and has no symptoms but is wearing a mask as a precaution. She anticipated cases would rise after holiday gatherings but noted they are already starting.
- Susan reported on a recent super spreader event in Heath and the distribution of COVID test kits. The board discussed expired test kits and potential new orders. CareStart COVID-19 Antigen Home Test expired Nov. 23rd, 2024. There is no updated information from the FDA regarding extensions to the expiration date. Susan noted successful vaccination rates of 31% at Hawlemont School. Approximately 133 doses were administered, and 79 people attended.
- Susan mentioned the ongoing update to emergency preparedness list in Heath.

BOARD OF HEALTH CLERK UPDATE

- Cindie reviewed the BOH monthly budget (see below).

FY25 MONTHLY BUDGET:

BOH ACCOUNTS	BUDGET	INCOME	EXPENSED	BALANCE
BOH Expenses	1,500.00		673.19	826.81
Personnel Expenses	7,488.00		2,045.20	5,442.80
Stipends	1,375.00			1,375.00
CARRYOVER ACCOUNTS				
BOH Revolving Fund	14,091.32	0.00		14,091.32
Septic Grant	43,862.18	0.00		43,862.18

COMPLAINTS (EMAIL/CALLS)

- The board addressed a complaint about the conditions of a property at East Main Street. Randy stated he will send a letter to the homeowner requesting a plain view inspection.
- Elissa reported the handicap ramp safety concerns at Sawyer Hall. The Highway Department to monitor situation and address before spring.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

CPHS OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING REPORT

- Susan reported the CPHS budget was approved.
- Doug Telling is stepping down as Vice Chairperson.
- Heath will be receiving two air sensors. The board discussed installing them at the Town Garage and JRMC.
- Next meeting is January 16, 2025.

PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD)

- Susan said the meeting was cancelled.
- Susan is concerned about the lack of participation from members in Colrain and Charlemont.
- Next meeting: December 16th.

MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO)

- WEB EOC Felicia Balbi from OPEM provided training on WebEOC. Local BOH must quarterly update/verify who is the primary and secondary 24/7 contact. This is required by OPEM and the MAPHCO Planner/Coordinator (Randy Cardonell, RSI).
- Public Health is being asked more than ever before to be at the table for our expertise in Public Health during Emergency Management situations. From vaccinations to localized flooding/contamination, tick and mosquito borne illnesses, to a variety of environmental emergencies including our current critical drought status.
- The board voted to allow Williamsburg to leave MAPHCO and join a different coalition.
- Next meeting Jan 14, 2025.

HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Sheila requested input from board members.
- Sheila is hoping to add an article in the Feb/Mar issue about the workshops she discussed earlier (First Aid, Choking, Naloxone) at JRMC.

BOH MEMBERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The board agreed to review the taskers at the next BOH meeting.

Next Meeting January 08, 2025 @ 0900, on Zoom.

Gene motioned to adjourn at 10:36; Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, and Gene
Meeting Adjourned at 10:36.