

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2026**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Tucker Jenkins, Jason Erali, Gene Garland -Chair, Mia Francesconi – Town Coordinator, Tim Lively – Emergency Management/Fire Department, and Cindie Garland – BOH Clerk

Absent: FRCOG/CPHS Health Agent and Elissa Viarengo – Select Board Representative

9:00 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

REVIEW THE AGENDA

- Request to add zoom meeting discussion, Shelburne roundtable discussion, emergency response survey distribution, and EpiPen potential purchase.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES (April 08, 2026)

- Minor corrections regarding \$700 EpiPen discussion
- Susan made a motion to approve the April 8th minutes with minor corrections. Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, Tucker, Jason and Gene. The board approved the minutes unanimously.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES (April 22, 2026)

- Susan made a motion to approve the April 22th minutes with minor corrections. Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, Tucker, Jason and Gene. The board approved the minutes unanimously.

REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT UPDATE

- No update had been received from Regional Health Agents Kurt or Randy
- Cindie returned mail issues to Health Agents.
- Ongoing concerns Gene will follow up with Randy or Kurt.
 - 351 Route 8A: 15 cars counted on property
 - 324 Route 8A: Trash accumulation complaint
 - 326 Route 8A: New complaint regarding trash

NEW BUSINESS:

TOWN NURSE UPDATE (CLAIRE RABBITT, RN)

- Claire stated she attended the Resource Fair. One new resident visited the office for a blood pressure screening.
- She attended a webinar on tick-borne diseases and emerging trends in tick populations. Lyme disease continues to increase in prevalence throughout the region. In addition, Lone Star ticks, which can transmit several diseases, have been identified in the Berkshires. These ticks are smaller and more mobile than black-legged (deer) ticks. Public education regarding preventive measures, including the use of insect repellent and

other personal protective strategies, remains an important component of reducing tick-borne disease risk.

- The deadline for ordering influenza vaccine is May 17, 2026. She continues completing the Medicare Part B attestation form.

EPIPEN DISCUSSION

- The Board discussed obtaining an EpiPen for the nurse's office. Currently, the EpiPen expired last year, and Lisa White provided replacement.
- Concerns included:
 - Storage and accessibility
 - Legal and regulatory requirements
 - Availability for emergency responders
- Tim reported that ambulance services carry epinephrine and some departments now utilize nasal spray formulations. Colrain Fire Department recently acquired EpiPen after completing required state regulations and paperwork. Ambulance service use "check and inject" system rather than EpiPens due to cost
- An alternative option was considered: Nasal spray epinephrine (similar to Narcan) - cheaper option to investigate
- The Board agreed that the nurse's office should maintain emergency epinephrine, particularly during vaccination clinics.
- Tim agreed to investigate ambulance protocols and options for emergency epinephrine access.
- Existing refrigerator in EDS storage needs service check before flu season. Tim will arrange refrigerator inspection and maintenance.

BOARD OF HEALTH CLERK UPDATE

- Cindie reviewed the budget report. Approximately **\$590** remained in the budget.
- An additional **\$300** was allocated for tick testing coupons, leaving approximately **\$290** remaining.
- The Board requested reports on tick testing results and pathogen data.
- Discussion occurred regarding:
 - Sandwich boards/signage for public outreach
 - Additional tick prevention supplies, including bug wipes
 - Possible purchase of an EpiPen or nasal spray alternative.

INFLUENZA VACCINE PROGRAM

- After discussion with Lisa White from FRCOG, the board made a significant policy decision:
- Gene made a motion to approve temporarily suspend Heath's independent influenza vaccine program for fiscal year 2027. Due to low volume doesn't justify certification hassle and Medicare reimbursement process. Moved by Susan. Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, Tucker, Jason and Gene.
- FRCOG willing to provide vaccine support through home visits and senior center clinics.
- Future Consideration: The board will reassess program based on new nurse's approach and community demand.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- Gene made a motion to resume Zoom meetings (or Microsoft Teams) unless an emergency arises, recognizing the governor's extension of optional remote meeting provisions through 2027 and the time efficiency benefits for members. Moved by Susan. Tucker seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, Tucker, Jason and Gene.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

TOWN NURSE POSITION

- The Board reviewed revisions to the Town Nurse job description for FY27.
- Lower-priority duties were identified using italics to allow flexibility during evaluation of the position.
- Discussion included:
 - Home visits
 - Vaccination responsibilities
 - Emergency preparedness (MRC/EDS activities)
 - Reporting expectations
 - Coordination with the Council on Aging
- The Board emphasized collecting data during FY27 to assess workload, outreach effectiveness, and potential future expansion of hours.
- Language was revised to replace “supervise” with “advise” regarding home health care coordination.
- Compliance with town policies was added to the supervision section.
- Gene made a motion to approve the revised FY27 Town Nurse job description with discussed edits and corrections. Moved by Sheila. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, Tucker, Jason and Gene.

CPHS (COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES) UPDATE

- Susan reported CPHS budget approved with minimal increase; Meg Ryan out for surgery 4-6 weeks.
- Lone star ticks major concern; battery storage documentation needed.
- Need to update regulations to include vaping products, especially at gas stations.
- Next meeting May 28th, 2026 in person. Gene will attend.

PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD) UPDATE

- A recent joint meeting was held between Board representatives and the Berkshire Mosquito Control District to discuss shared priorities and challenges. A primary concern identified by both groups was the financial burden faced by small towns seeking to join mosquito control districts and access mosquito surveillance and mitigation services. As a result of the discussion, representatives agreed to draft a letter to the state advocating for additional funding to support participation by small municipalities. Board members noted that increased state assistance would improve access to mosquito monitoring and related public health services.
- It was also reported that future efforts may expand to include tick surveillance, particularly if barriers to participation for small towns can be addressed. Given the Town's current

expenditures for tick testing coupons, potential opportunities for expanded tick monitoring services may warrant further exploration.

- PVMCD has hired two part-time staff members to conduct mosquito surveillance activities. Seasonal mosquito activity and surveillance needs will continue to depend on weather conditions, including temperature and precipitation levels.
- Board representatives indicated they would continue to attend district meetings, including remotely, when possible, to remain informed of ongoing mosquito and vector control activities.

MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO)

- Gene stated meeting was cancelled.

BOH ACTION ITEMS

- Gene reviewed the BOH Action Report. Multiple safety and accessibility issues requiring urgent attention:
 - Sawyer Hall Ramp: Dangerous condition since November 2024, bricks falling, poses liability risk
 - Community Hall Elevator: Circuit board unrepairable, \$150,000 replacement needed
 - ADA Compliance: Multiple accessibility issues throughout town building.
 - Liability Concerns: Board expressed frustration with lack of progress on safety issues despite repeated reporting

HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Gene will submit an article for the Aug/Sep newsletter.

SHELBURNE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

- Tucker discussed a roundtable to be held on June 11 at 10:00 a.m. at the Shelburne Police Department. The event is being hosted by Shelburne and Colrain and will include representatives from Buckland, Shelburne, Colrain, and Heath.
- The purpose of the roundtable is to gather feedback regarding senior services in participating communities, including identifying existing strengths, unmet needs, and opportunities for improvement. Discussions will also include current initiatives related to elder services, proactive community outreach, and mental health co-response programs aimed at improving access to services and addressing gaps in care.
- The event will begin with a brief presentation by representatives from the Shelburne and Colrain Police Departments, followed by an informal discussion session. Representatives from Boards of Health, Councils on Aging, fire and EMS departments, police agencies, and other municipal officials have been invited to participate.
- The Board discussed attendance, with one to two representatives requested from each community. Members interested in attending were asked to RSVP as soon as possible to assist with planning and registration.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE SURVEY

- The Board discussed strategies for distributing and collecting the community emergency response survey. While several surveys were distributed at the Community Resource Fair, additional outreach methods are needed to ensure broad participation by residents.
- Various distribution options were considered, including direct mailing, posting the survey on the Town website, electronic distribution, and making paper copies available upon request. Members noted that direct mailing would likely be the most effective method, although cost remains a concern. Potential grant funding or other resources to support mailing costs will be explored.
- Additional opportunities for distribution were identified, including Council on Aging events, senior lunches, mosquito spray clinics, the library, and other community gatherings. The Board also discussed reaching homebound residents through direct outreach and assistance with completing the survey when needed.
- Members considered creating an electronic version of the survey, potentially using online tools such as Google Forms to facilitate completion and automatically populate a database. The Board agreed to explore electronic options while continuing to provide paper copies to maximize accessibility and participation.
- The Board emphasized the importance of obtaining broad community input to support emergency preparedness planning and to update existing resident information.

MEETINGS

- Special Meeting to be held June 2, 2026 @ 5:15 via Zoom.
- Next Monthly Meeting: June 17, 2026 @ 0900 via Zoom.

Gene made a motion to adjourn at 10:29 a.m. Moved by Sheila. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, Tucker, Jason and Gene. Meeting Adjourned at 10:29 a.m.