

Town of Heath - Board of Health (BoH)
Special Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2020

1. The Zoom meeting was **called to order** at 4:01 pm.

Roll Call: **PRESENT:** Betsy Kovacs, Susan Gruen, Henry Godek, John Palmer, Armand Clavette.

ALSO PRESENT: Mary Sumner—BoH Clerk; Randy Crochier—FRCOG Health Director, and Barbara Gordon.

ABSENT: Gene Garland-Ex Eficio BoH member

2. **Reviewed agenda.** Added reviewing a request for beaver permit.

3. Reviewed **minutes** of November 4, 2020 meeting; motion by Henry to accept minutes as amended; seconded by John; Kovacs-Aye, Palmer- Aye, Clavette-Aye, Gruen-Aye, Godek-Aye.

4. **Old Business:**

Chairman's Update: Betsy reported recent update that the Mass State budget was just passed and includes funds for training and standardizing qualifications for members of boards of health. This is part of the SAPHE program.

Nurse Update: Susan noted she had spoken with the Town Nurse and there are no changes. Susan expressed concern over the continued lack of internet access at Community Hall where the Town Nurse works.

3 Ledge Road update: Betsy reported that the attorney advised the BoH that dealing with the barn located on the 3 Ledge property (but not included in the Condemnation Order) should be handled by the Building Inspector. Jim Hawkins visited the property and deemed it unsafe. Randy said that the Select Board is now responsible for followup of the barn. Betsy asked that Mary send a copy of the Building Inspector's letter to all BoH members.

Susan asked about exterminating any vermin in the barn before demolition. Betsy noted that a few years ago the BoH had added extermination as a condition of demolition to all demolition permits issued. Demolition of the barn will not happen immediately, so there will be time to address this concern.

Betsy also noted Richard Thayer had again contacted the BoH clerk for a copy of a recording of the Condemnation Hearing. Mary clarified that she responded to his first email, but it appears he did not see it. She has responded to the request a second time through email letting him know that the Hearing was not recorded.

Betsy informed the Board that the Town Coordinator mentioned during a Select Board meeting that a recent bill from the attorney's office is very high due to Planning Board and BoH work. Town Coordinator has asked the attorney for a break-down of the bill.

BoH recommendations to SB re reopening Town Buildings: Betsy reported that this BoH special meeting was called to respond to the SB request for recommendations on re-opening Town buildings for the SB meeting on November 24. At the November 17 Select Board (SB) meeting there was a request by several community members to open the Community Hall for internet use. Betsy reviewed the mini agenda she had sent out to BoH members just prior to this meeting to help guide us as we discuss this matter today. (Attached to minutes)

Betsy began by reviewing the current uses of the all Town Buildings.

Susan noted the documents Pam Porter of the School Building Use Committee, had sent detailing systems in place for the use of the 18 Jacobs Road Building and noted she thought they were very thorough and we could build on those to guide us in opening the Community Hall.

Betsy, John and Susan disclosed that at the suggestion of the Chairman of the SB, Robyn Provost, to avoid any possible appearance of a conflict of interest, they filed and submitted conflict of interest forms to the SB. The three BoH members had signed the citizens request to reopen the Community Hall.

Betsy noted that the BoH members goal is to give recommendations on the public health and safety aspects of reopening Town buildings only.

In reviewing the current uses of the Community Hall, Susan noted non-essential workers entering the Community Hall.

Betsy asked Randy to please clarify the definition of an “essential worker/employee”. Randy noted that prior to COVID-19 essential workers were referred to in events like snow storms to give guidance as to who should travel on roads. But with Covid the term has taken on new definitions. However, it is no longer being used as a category. The SB should, instead, make a list of any employee, which includes appointed and elected town employees, board and committee, task force members, who are permitted to enter buildings.

Betsy noted Hilma has researched the status of reopening town buildings in neighboring towns. The list was sent to BoH members.

Henry noted that several months ago, at the request of the SB, the BoH provided information on the re-opening and use of buildings Henry noted in his opinion the BoH members should reaffirm that any reopening be based on the Governor’s orders and guidances, and must meet those requirements. It is the role of the SB and not the BoH to apply those regulations.

Henry moved that the BoH respond to the SB stating it is our recommendation that they follow the State regulations on reopening buildings and reopen buildings as long as they have a compliance program that meets all State regulations. Seconded by Armand.

Discussion about what it is SB is asking from BoH and if this motion will only lead to the SB coming back to the BoH asking us how to comply. Betsy reviewed the email from SB Chair. As BoH members had not received this prior to the meeting, they took time to read it. (Attached to minutes).

Discussion continued including how to ensure compliance and safety. Susan noted using SBUC’s plan for 18 Jacobs Road and adding all Town buildings to that plan by name: Sawyer Hall, 18 Jacobs Road and Community Hall.

Henry again noted his concern for micro-managing the work of the SB. He offered an amendment to his motion on the floor to add: and if the SB feels it needs assistance in specific situations, the BoH will be glad to assist. Amendment seconded by Armand.

Betsy suggested that based on the motion, if it passes, BoH should advise the SB to err on the side of caution since cases are increasing locally and state-wide, that all Town buildings would need to comply with all orders and directives for entry, egress, space, number of people per footage, bathrooms, sanitizing and the BoH would be glad to consider assisting the SB as requested.

Barbara Gordon joined the meeting at 5:00 pm.

The BoH members voted unanimously to accept the amendment. The BoH members voted unanimously to accept the amended motion. Kovacs-Aye, Palmer- Aye, Clavette-Aye, Gruen-Aye, Godek-Aye.

Betsy will draft a response to the SB and send to all BoH members for review.

No public comment.

Beaver permit: Mary asked for BoH approval for a beaver permit for Mohawk Estates to trap beavers for dam work. Randy noted that the permit can be applied for through FRCOG and he will review and approve. Mary will work with Randy on this.

Betsy thanked everyone for their work and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Susan made a motion to adjourn at 5:06 pm; seconded by John. Kovacs-Aye, Palmer- Aye, Clavette-Aye, Gruen-Aye, Godek-Aye.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Minutes for conference call meeting written by Mary Sumner

Attachments: Mini Agenda

Request from Select Board for BoH opinion and the chart of other towns reopening statuses

Mini Agenda attachment:

On Friday, November 20, 2020, Betsy Kovacs <betsy@bkovacs.net> wrote:

All,

Here is how I propose to work on today's main agenda item:

1. Goal: advice and recommendations to Sel Board about opening Town buildings – to whom, when, for what purposes?
2. Review current status of buildings
 - a. Revisions needed?
 - b. "Essential employees" still operative?
3. Randy – advise what is "legal" under orders and advisories, and required
4. Proposed openings for who, when and for what purposes?
5. What metrics to use for future openings?

Thanks all,
b

Attachment: request from Select Board for BoH opinion and the chart of other towns reopening statuses