

Town of Heath - Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2021

I. The teleconference meeting was **called to order** at 12:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

PRESENT: Betsy Kovacs (Chair), Armand Clavette, Susan Gruen, John Palmer

ABSENT: Mary Sumner—BoH Clerk; Henry Godek

Also PRESENT: Barbara Gordon; Gene Garland, *ex officio* BoH member; Randy Crochier

II. Reviewed agenda. Betsy thanked all, especially Barbara for her work on mosquito control recommendation. She mentioned the letter to electorate by Rol Hesselbart advocating for Town to opt-out of State program. Despite our vote on Monday not to opt out, Barbara discovered a possible compromise and drafted a letter for us to consider.

III. Mosquito Control Decision. Betsy moved that we use the letter drafted by Barbara as basis of our discussion; seconded by Susan. Susan noted that people dislike the idea of aerial spraying. John agreed. Betsy considered that, should we ever rise to such an extreme level of risk that the State would want to spray, we might welcome the State's intervention, and at the State's expense, but she believes it is best to recommend a compromise solution to opt out of aerial spraying, but not ground spraying.

All BoH members were opposed to opting out, but willing to consider a compromise solution.

Ground spraying may not be as effective at reaching some mosquito habitats. Betsy proposed an amendment to add a sentence or two about above-mentioned lack of complete efficacy of ground spraying. Moved by John, seconded by Armand. On proposed amendment: John, Betsy, Susan, Armand—aye.

Gene said he continues to balance risk-benefit. He thinks that risk is low, but suspects that some people in Heath may be responding to the issue politically. He continues to believe that we should not opt out at all.

Vote to adopt letter with amendments and Gene's proposed edits: Betsy, Susan, Armand, John—aye

There will be a SB meeting on Tuesday with BoH. Betsy asked that BoH members join the SB meeting. She will present the BoH recommendation and asked that BoH experts be present to answer questions and help explain BoH recommendation.

John moved that we vacate the previous letter sent to SB in favor of that voted on today; seconded by Armand; Betsy, Susan, Armand, John—aye.

IV. Letter of Recommendation to SB and Moderator establishing guideline for holding meetings.

Betsy moved that our proposed letter be sent to SB after that of the mosquito control opt-out recommendation; seconded by John.

Barbara suggested we add "BoH members are concerned that" in first sentence of first paragraph. She added that current 60 or 65 degrees was imprecise and that we should set minimum and maximum temperature limits for holding a meeting. If we agree, Betsy will confer with Henry about what low and high temperature limits should be; seconded by Susan, who noted the difficulty of setting an exact set of limits. Gene said he suspected that State or Feds would have guidelines, but we may be near point of holding meetings inside. Betsy said that temperature limits should be for inside as well as outside. John, Betsy, Susan, Armand—aye to amendment.

On sending the letter to SB recommending safe temperature limits for the holding of town meetings: John, Betsy, Susan, Armand—aye

V. Other items:

Randy reported there is no change to situation 594 Route 8A.

Situation of 38 Bray Road? Armand called Alice Wozniak, Town Assessor, but she could not tell him more owing to privacy issues.

Randy said Gill voted to opt out of State mosquito control plan to satisfy citizens, but there is enough time to re-vote. Other towns will have district mosquito control board coming to SB meetings.

Betsy said that many people have contacted Betsy in favor of opting out. Betsy wondered about possible ways to educate townsfolk. Barbara said that it was important to note that it is not BoH's decision, but SB's.

Betsy reminded us that State has not lifted mask mandate, even though CDC has done so.

Betsy posted availability of BoH clerk position opening deadline for applying Tues, May 28. She is working with Mary on transition. Kate Peppard is a candidate for the position. We may use our BoH expense line for the new hire to be a consultant during the transition. There will likely be a need to cover the expense for additional hours of work for the Clerk position as Mary has provided hours beyond what are budgeted.

Armand moved that we adjourn at 12:40; seconded by John; Betsy, John, Armand—aye.

Respectfully submitted,

John Palmer