

Town of Heath - Board of Health
Meeting Minutes/Public Comment for Mosquito Control
May 25, 2021

I. The teleconference meeting was **called to order** at 6:00 p.m. by Robyn Provost; BoH meeting called to order at 6:07 by Betsy Kovacs.

Roll Call:

PRESENT: Betsy Kovacs (Chair), Armand Clavette, Henry Godek, John Palmer;

ABSENT: Susan Gruen; Mary Sumner—BoH Clerk; Gene Garland, *ex officio* BoH member; Randy Crochier

Also PRESENT: **Barbara Gordon**; Robyn Provost, Sue Lively—Members of the Select Board of the Town of Heath; Hilma Sumner—Clerk of the Town of Heath; Budge Litchfield; Pat Meghan; Margaret Freeman

II. Public Comment for Mosquito Control Spraying with Select Board:

Robyn gave a quick introduction and said the SB had a recommendation from the BoH, which she summarized: i.e., that the Town opt out of aerial spraying and stay with the State for the purposes of financial aid. Robyn asked anyone if they had a comment.

Margaret Freeman asked who has the responsibility for declaring a state of emergency. Betsy said the criteria for establishing a state of emergency rests with the State agency, which must base its decision upon information from the mosquito control district. She noted, too, that a state of emergency doesn't necessarily mean that spraying will follow.

Sue Lively thanked the BoH for its work gathering information. She noted that Deerfield has used larvicide successfully and has not had to do any spraying. Betsy said we've not had any positives in testing last year, so it's not likely that we will escalate quickly to having to spray. Sue asked if there was any benefit to staying in touch with State by opting out of aerial spraying only. Betsy responded that it gives us access to State experts in the Department of Agriculture.

Robyn asked, if the State made the decision to spray, is there an option for any individual to forego spraying, due to a medical condition, for example. Betsy responded that the State had the right to require spraying if a Public Health Emergency were declared. Henry said that the state would look at situations on a case by case basis and could possibly permit an exception.

Robyn closed the public comment portion of the meeting at 6:20 with SB vote to be held at 6:30.

The members of the BoH waited with bated breath.

Sue said she had no doubt that she wanted to say no to aerial spraying, but recognized the benefits we would receive from the State.

Robyn agreed with Sue, especially after having read the BoH recommendation. She said she would vote to support the BoH recommendation. She added that we should take advantage of and trust the board of the Mosquito Control District, which we spent time and money joining. Betsy said she wanted the SB to be sure to state the motion they would be voting on is to opt out of aerial spraying.

Brian joined at 6:37 as Robyn made the motion to opt out of aerial spraying. Brian seconded. Robyn reviewed the meeting for Brian, who is in agreement. Sue, Brian, Robyn—aye.

Betsy said she and Hilma were in the process of drafting the Town's application for opting out to the State.

Henry moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm; Armand seconded; Betsy, Henry, Armand, John—aye.

Respectfully submitted,

John Palmer, BoH member