

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH MONTHLY MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes June 2, 2022**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

Members In Attendance: Gene Garland (chair), Lorraine Berger, Susan Gruen, Elissa Viarengo, Randy Crochier (FRCOG), Barbara Gordon.

Guests: Sue Lively (BOS), Kate Barrows (Library)

Absent: Randy

**I. Meeting Called to Order 9:00 AM (Gene)**

**II. COVID Collaboration Meeting**

- a. Attending: Meeting Minutes: Susan asked for clarification on 2G. Item was correct.
- b. Barbara moved to approve the minutes as written, Susan Gruen seconded. Ayes: Lorraine, Susan, Sue, Gene, Barbara Elissa.
- c. Discussion of COVID related items: mask mandate, vaccination programs.
  - i. Sue Lively noted that BOS is awaiting further directive from BOH on any changes to mask mandate.
  - ii. Susan Gruen updated: Numerous test kits have been distributed and 12 homebound people have been immunized. Test sites were closed through the weekend, so numbers are not accurate. Council on Aging has been contacted about participating in testing. No employees have come forward to get tested. PCR tests are now available in Shelburne Falls and GCC.
  - iii. Mask Mandate Discussion:
    1. Barbara Gordon noted that Heath should do what is good for Heath and not be influenced by what is happening in other communities. There are other communities (Northampton was an example) that have asked for more mask usage in public settings. CDC updates community risk once a week. Barbara asked that the group establish criteria that we feel comfortable using to determine our policy.
    2. Elissa noted that while we are high risk we should not change. Recommends that we should wait until the community risk level is low.
    3. Gene agrees with holding the mandate with all of the public events (graduations, etc) and that we should establish guidelines.
    4. Kate Barrows noted things are status quo at the library. Do hear from parents of unvaccinated children that they are more comfortable doing outdoor activities and do stay more socially distanced. Are not observing a lot of young children in the library. People are taking the masks.
    5. Sue Lively said that the BOS would appreciate guidelines for lifting the mandates as it would be helpful for people to understand what the reasoning is for maintaining a stricter policy than the surrounding communities.
    6. Gene will review guidance and will produce a template/draft by the next BOS meeting on 6/7.
  - iv. State Guidance for remote/hybrid
    1. Expires on July 15, 2022
    2. Will return to in-person meetings in July for BOH
  - v. Public Health Emergency Declaration

1. Barbara noted that this has impacts on health insurance, testing, home test kits, etc. Providers are required to provide 8 free tests per insured/per month. Federal government has promised to give a 60 day notice prior to any change. It would be good to remind residents to order their test kits (Medicare Part B or Advantage) and stockpile while they can access the benefit.
2. Susan noted that kits have an expiration date.
3. Sue Lively noted that there is no one trained to do a robocall. Will need to distribute the information on the web/flyers. Lorraine to produce text and send to Gene.

vi. All Town Meeting/BOH role

1. Good feedback for how the BOH handled the meeting and organized handing out information/masks/etc.
2. Sue Lively noted that people were glad that masks were being handed out but there were concerns about the pressure to wear the “appropriate” mask and that this is an indicator that people are getting burnt out on the push for behaviors.
  - a. Barbara noted that she received feedback that the BOH had not done enough. Many were not aware that CDC risk level had been changed to high and were upset that the meeting was still being held indoors. Believes our outreach could have been better.
  - b. Susan Gruen noted that high risk community members need to be protected.
  - c. Gene noted that public health communication is difficult and ultimately it comes down to the individual’s assessment of their own risks. We will just continue to do our best to work with the BOS and other boards to get information out.

3. Close out COVID Collaboration Meeting 9:36

**III. BOH Monthly meeting agenda reviewed 9:37 AM.**

- a. New Items: BOH representation at BOS meeting

**IV. Review/approve minutes of May 55, 2022**

- a. Barbara moved to accept. Elissa seconded. Discussion: Susan corrected the format and location of meetings in item X.7. Ayes: Gene, Susan, Lorraine, Elissa, Barbara.

**V. Chairperson’s Report (Gene)**

- A. FRCOG has asked about providing a vaccination station at the Heath Fair. Would need BOH members to assist.
- a. Barbara noted that we should check with Tim Lively to have emergency services available. Susan noted that computer input is required so that wifi will be needed.
  - b. Will people take advantage? Is it worth the logistical effort?
  - c. Barbara noted that the Hawlemont vaccination event completed 57 individuals
  - d. Sue noted that we should present this to the Ag Society
  - e. Table the discussion.
- B. Gene acknowledged Barbara Gordon’s service, support and expertise over this last year.
- C. Gene acknowledged Kate Peppard’s service to the BOH.
- D. BOH Vacancies: need people for Barbara’s vacancy and the Boards Clerk role.
- a. Can bring in a non-voting member from the community

- b. BOS is advertising for all-boards clerk – 8 hours/week, covering four boards. Will no longer be available for minutes. Cindy Garland has volunteered to type up minutes.
  - i. Sue Lively noted that the position will cover BOH, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission. All other committees (other than BOH) have been recording their own minutes. The position may be required to cover public hearings.
  - ii. Susan Gruen advocated that the clerk be available to take minutes for BOH.
  - iii. Barbara noted that the clerk handles applications, certifications, etc.

**VI. Board of Health Clerk Update (Kate)**

- a. No unusual communications this past month
- b. FY22 Budget – on-target, have asked for an invoice for tick testing reimbursement program
- c. Annual Report – Did many revisions, will post the original annual report on the website.
- d. Property Transfers, Well, Pumping, Title V Reports – still working on getting caught up
- e. Monthly report for BOS meeting – Kate called for items, will submit to BOS for mid-April meeting
- f. Discussion of Town All-Boards Clerk. BOS is planning on a 10 hour/week position to cover BOH, Planning Board and two other boards. Gene’s concern this may not be enough hours. Gene looked for feedback.
  - i. Elissa expressed concern that this is not enough time, and that scheduling meetings could be difficult.
  - ii. Gene noted that Barbara was in on most of the meeting and could respond
  - iii. Kate noted she will not be continuing in the role past June, so this will be good timing for someone to come into the role; expressed concern it will be more difficult as we move back to in-person meetings. Agreed that 10 hours may be limiting.
  - iv. Lorraine agreed that 10 hours is not enough
  - v. Susan noted that if we feel this is not enough hours we should write a letter
  - vi. Gene to draft a letter for BOS with BOH concerns/thoughts.

**VII. Nurse Report (Susan)**

- a. Susan meeting with Claire weekly
- b. Have had a number of hospitalizations
- c. Taking webinars on vaccine storage/handling
- d. Meeting with FRCOG about emergency preparedness
  - i. FRCOG asked about town readiness
  - ii. Susan noted that our Fire Department has been condemned, share EMT services with Colrain
  - iii. Want to understand what the 26 towns want FRCOG in emergency situations to produce a report
    - 1. Communications
    - 2. Aging out and burnout for volunteers

**VIII. Regional Health Agent Updates (Randy)**

- a. Randy was not available for the meeting. Open items:
  - i. FRCOG Red Binders – one update. Randy has five binders on order for
  - ii. Properties Under Review by Randy/FRCOG
    - 1. 3 Ledge Road – Randy looking to formally remove the condemnation. Move to on-going/suspended.
    - 2. 594 Route 8A – Court proceeding in July.

3. 612 Route 8A – camper on property – camper is not occupied and they complied with BOH
4. 434 Route 8A – roof repair/home condition – has a building permit, no longer under BOH jurisdiction. Randy will discuss with Jim Hawkins.
5. 7 Flag Hill Extension – Excessive trash; Randy and Kurt will visit/review. Owner often agrees/promises and does not follow up. Will meet, then send an order, then move to the courts.
6. 25 West Branch Road – Septic design & build follow up needed. Randy has made his last effort, will issue a housing violation.

#### **IX. New Business**

1. Complaint about trailer on Route 8A (fielded by Susan Gruen) – hooked up to septic system, getting water. Complaint was sent to Randy.
2. Bare Feet Policy: Susan noted that a complaint was logged a number of years ago about bare feet in the library. The BOH established a policy in May 2017. It is effective for all municipal buildings. Recently there was an issue of bare feet at Jacobs Road.
3. Clarification for calling emergency BOH Meetings: Barbara noted that there will be times that the BOH needs to meet more frequently and at short notice. Found an interpretation by KP Law published 3/11/2020 that states the definition of an “emergency” and their interpretation that it is reasonably foreseeable that BOH’s will face emergencies. In those cases the BOH may meet without 48 hour notice or agenda posting, and can meet remotely, but do still need to comply with Open Meeting Law to the extent possible. This means that Heath BOH can hold emergency meetings and could have held one prior to the ATM meeting when the risk status changed.
  - a. Susan agreed that we should establish this going forward and that we be able to hold the meeting without the chair or full board’s availability.
  - b. Gene noted that he should appoint someone to cover chair role while he is away; also noted that there may be some bylaws for BOH. Will locate those and send to the group.
4. Future Planning for ATM and Town Events. Barbara noted that the last two ATM’s have had (perceived) issues with safety/health. Believes there can be improvement in collaboration between BOS and BOH for the all-town events. Barbara advocates that the BOH could play a stronger role in planning for these meetings and advocates for clear guidelines for minimum and maximum temperatures. Suggests shifting the date into early June to help with potential temperature fluctuations. Gene will follow up with Randy to see if there are guidelines in place to help with planning large meetings.
  - a. Members agreed that this is an area that we can approve in.

#### **X. Old/Ongoing Business:**

1. LBOH (Lorraine)
  - a. Lorraine missed the most recent meeting, Gene had attended.
  - b. COVID numbers discussed, wastewater being tested (not relevant for Franklin County), Vaccination event at Heath Fair
  - c. Lorraine posted gun safety posters, have table at the fair; Elissa noted that Randy wanted to review the presentation
2. CPHS Oversight Board Meeting (Barbara): moving to in-person meetings. Barbara will attend the June meeting, Susan is the alternate. Epidemiology report indicates a continued rise in COVID transmission over the next four weeks. Reported cases believed to be 1/14<sup>th</sup> of the actual number of cases. Hospitals are stressed. Tick testing subsidies in effect and will have new

materials for distribution. Will receive report on age survey – noted that printed “town newsletters” were the most highly used format for elderly residents to get their news.

3. PVMCD (Barbara) – Opt-Out application was completed and submitted through the Select Board. Have applied to opt out of aerial spraying only. Have requested that Hilma share the response. Has sent PVMCD end of year report to Kate to be published on webpage and to place in our files. Barbara has sent through all of the information/guidance for the work she has been doing for PVMCD. Elissa tentatively volunteered for the role. Barbara can provide guidance.
  - a. Kate to update the
4. Heath Herald BOH Corner (Elissa) asked for topic suggestions. Barbara noted that gun safety was brought up.
5. MVP Meetings (Elissa) – proposed plan presented at BOS meeting. Gathering more information and moving forward.
6. BOH Facebook Updates (Elissa) – have not been regularly updating. Not seeing any traffic.
7. Dog Waste Dispenser – Kate to follow up with highway crew to install near no idling signs. Discussed or

#### **XI. Suspended/Ongoing:**

1. 4 Apache Drive
2. 20 Judd Road: update on Order to Correct
3. 21/27 West Brook trash issue
4. Mohawk Estates Porta-Potty – with Planning Board
5. Public Comment – Resident Jesse Wiegand brought forward that the Planning Board voted against the cell tower twice, AT&T sued and that the BOS has been in executive session and does not provide information to residents, creating a stressful situation for those who will be directly affected. Jesse noted that there are studies showing cell phone towers create negative health effects on residents who live in proximity to the towers. Jesse asked that the BOH look into the health risks and to potentially take action. Asked if the BOS approached the BOH about health concerns.
  - i. Gene responded that the BOS has not come to the BOH regarding this issue.
  - ii. Barbara noted that the problem is at a higher level than local level and do not permit local BOH to take action without breaking the law. Best way to effect change is to go to state level and federal level to change.
  - iii. Jesse noted that the Pittsfield BOH has issued a cease and desist for a cell phone tower located in that municipality.
  - iv. Gene noted that BOH is concerned about residents in Heath. Gene asked Jesse to send information through to the BOH email.
  - v. Susan asked that we check with Randy on feedback – do we have a stance?
  - vi. Kate Peppard stepped in to comment as a citizen that the health concerns, though stymied at the federal government, are real and pressing for the people here in Heath who will be affected by the cell phone tower. The Pittsfield BOH is stepping in at that locality because the health effects have manifested and are being experienced by residents. Kate asked that the Heath BOH help to amplify the citizens’ voices and bring this issue forward to the state and federal level.

**Motion to adjourn 11:08 by Barbara. Elissa Seconded. Ayes: Gene, Lorraine, Susan, Elissa, Barbara**

*Meeting minutes taken by Kate Peppard, BOH Clerk*

*Approved on:*