

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
November 6, 2024**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Gene Garland -Chair
Others: Cindie Garland – Boards Clerk, Elissa Viarengo – Heath Select Board Representative

0900 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

REVIEW AGENDA/ADD ITEMS

- The board reviewed the agenda. Sheila requested to add Training Suggestions, WEBEOC Drill under New Business, and REPC Update under Ongoing Business.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

- Oct 16, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Sheila moved to accept the minutes with corrections as written. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, and Gene.

REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT UPDATE

Randy was unable to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. However, he did provide information regarding visits in Heath.

- Randy submitted an inspection report to the Board of Health for the property on East Main Street, Heath. The inspection is under Chapter 111 Section 122 and 127B of the Massachusetts General Laws: 105 CMR 400.000: State Sanitary Code, Chapter 1: General Administrative Procedures; and 105 CMR 410.000, State Sanitary Code, Chapter 2: Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation. He stated the inspection did not find the property to be in violation of the State Sanitary Code from the plain view. The findings did not provide sufficient evidence to request either a voluntary or administrative ordered comprehensive inspection of the property. He concluded in his report that the complaint at this time is resolved, and no further action will be taken.
- A complaint was made to FRCoG from a resident on East Main Street in Heath who has a collapsed well. The resident's intention was to keep the well for irrigation purposes. This action is not allowed in the Town of Heath's and Franklin County's private well regulations as it leaves an open channel for potential contamination of the aquifer. Randy informed the resident that if he wanted to keep the well open that would still be in compliance with the Town's regulations would be a deed restriction, so that no one would purchase the house in the future thinking they could drink from the well. The driller, Ezra Cushing, decommissioned the well. The resident is demanding that FRCoG install a new well.
- Randy confirmed that on December 11, 2024 at 0900 Maya from the Mass Attorney General's office will brief the BOH and any town members who would like to attend about the Attorney General's Neighborhood Renewal Division Initiative. The Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative uses the enforcement authority of the State Sanitary Code to turn abandoned residential properties around. Working in close partnership with cities and towns, the AG's Office seeks out delinquent property owners and encourages them to voluntarily repair their properties and make them secure.

NEW BUSINESS:

NURSE UPDATE

- During the month of October Claire administered 13 Flu vaccines. She stated the flu shots are low because folks have other options to obtain the vaccine. Franklin County provided 17 vaccine clinics and area pharmacies are also providing the service.
- An individual brought in a Sharps container (safe, disposable container for needles, syringes, lancets, razors and sharp objects. Claire gave the individual a replacement. She also made 2 home visits.
- On October 22, Claire participated in the EDS (Emergency Dispensing Site) at the Hawlemont Elementary School. She also volunteered to assist in administering vaccines (Flu and COVID) at the clinic on the same day, but the provider had enough staff members to support the event. Moreover, 78 vaccines were administered at the Hawlemont clinic on the same day.

BOARD OF HEALTH CLERK UPDATE

- Cindie reviewed the BOH monthly budget (see below).
- The board agreed to order more tick testing coupons.

FY25 MONTHLY BUDGET:

BOH ACCOUNTS	BUDGET	INCOME	EXPENSED	BALANCE
BOH Expenses	1,500		23.26	1,477
Personnel Expenses	7,488		893.20	6,595
Stipends	1,375			1,375
CARRYOVER ACCOUNTS				
BOH Revolving Fund	14,091.32			14,091.32
Septic Grant	43,862.18			43,862.18

COVID UPDATES/TEST KITS

- Gene said he put several COVID test kits at Sawyer Hall and they are gone so he will replenish them.
- There are several test kits available at the JRMC.

COMPLAINTS (EMAIL/CALLS)

- East Main Street (stated above): Police Chief McDonough spoke with the resident who the complaint was about and was told that he will be getting a dumpster to dispose of the items accumulating in his yard.
- Resident on Branch Hill Road called the BOH stating a raccoon has been eating her chickens and is concerned the animal is infected with the rabies virus. The complaint was forward to the Animal Control Officer in Heath (Aimee Jarvis).
- Heath Town Officials inquired about the removal of gravel in the area that is next to the Town property line where a septic system and leach field are located. There is concern that the digging is being done close to the outer parameter of the leach field and compromising the safety of the area. Randy stated he will visit the property, and Gene will call Tom Danek who is moving the gravel.

NALOXONE OVERDOSE EMERGENCY KITS UPDATE

- The Narcan paperwork was submitted to Maureen O'Reilly. The board is waiting to hear if another Narcan box will be added to Heath's inventory. The board agreed to install the box at the Town Garage.

EMERGENCY DISPENSING SITES (EDS) OCTOBER DRILL RECAP/WEBEOC DRILL

- Sheila stated the EDS team held a tabletop drill and updated the emergency contact list and discussed future of EDS. The team agreed to keep the EDS plan up to date. She stated the team is very active and organized, but across the state, they are not as effective. The team will continue to update the EDS brochure and manual.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT/AIR QUALITY TEST BRIEF TO THE SELECTBOARD

- Gene stated he will be briefing the Selectboard at the December 3rd meeting on the opioid settlement and air quality test equipment Heath will receive soon.

SAWYER HALL ACCESS RAMP SAFETY ISSUES

- Susan stated the handicap access ramp at Sawyer Hall is broken in various places. People who are visually impaired, have ambulatory issues, or balance issues may struggle using the ramp. Susan agreed to send Elissa pictures on the damaged ramp. Elissa will discuss the concern with the local Highway Department.

TRAINING SUGGESTIONS

- Sheila and Tim discussed training ideas for Heath residents. Maureen O'Reilly is available to provide naloxone training (opioid overdose emergency). Tim Lively could provide first aid training such as "Stop the Bleeding" or "What to do in a choking emergency?"
- Sheila and Tim suggested advertising the training event on the BOH Facebook page and in the Heath Herald. She stated her and Tim will develop a plan of action for the event.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COALITION (REPC)

- Sheila stated that her and Tim Lively attended a REPC meeting on November 5th. The REPC creates and maintains a Regional Hazardous Materials Plan pursuant to SARA Title III (also known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act), the Massachusetts State Emergency Response Commission, and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.
- The REPC's objectives are to build regional emergency plans and a database of resources, equipment and personnel that can be drawn from in an emergency.
- Sheila stated that Heath is in the HMCC (Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition) Region 1. She stated under the HMCC, there are different branches. In public health emergency preparedness coalition, Heath is in coalition 1 b, and then it drills down to Heath BOH.
- Sheila stated Massachusetts has the most decentralized system of local government in the nation with all government services provided at the municipal, not the county level. The Commonwealth has 351 towns and cities, 351 boards of health, 350 councils on aging, 351 emergency management directors. Over 200 towns that are classified as rural emergency preparedness and response planning functions are generally filled by volunteers or fire chiefs receiving an additional stipend annually. She added that FRCoG is researching innovative solutions to provide a municipal emergency response safety net that tracks and protects all disabled and older adults. Susan has a good handle on who is elderly and disabled in the town of Heath.
- Dan Nietzsche from FRCOG would be reaching out to Boards of Health as well as Emergency Preparedness folks to seek participation in updating some of the regional emergency plans/guidelines.
- The next REPC meeting is scheduled for December 3.

CPHS OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING REPORT

- Susan reported Lisa White, FRCoG/CPHS RN, performed 12 home visits in Heath this month including providing vaccines.
- Next meeting is November 21, 2024.

PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD)

- Susan reported the meeting was held on Oct 28th.
- John Briggs provided a brief overview of arbovirus surveillance data collected during the last testing week of the season, and the most recent WNV human case.
- It was reported there was a human case of West Nile virus in an 80-year-old woman who resided in Hampton County that was detected on September 11th and DPH didn't post it until the end of October. The woman was tested positive for encephalitis.
- Dr. Lovett discussed mosquitoes. There was discussion about a new mosquito variant which is like the Zika virus that is primarily spread by mosquitoes and can cause serious birth defects. The Oropouche virus is a mosquito-borne disease that has been reported in Cuba. There is concern the virus will spread to the mainland U.S.
- Susan stated there was discussion about the opt out spraying policy that is ending soon. The Mosquito Control Law, a 5-year plan, that former Governor Baker signed in 2020 that

provided transparency to the mosquito management program and requirement to provide guidance on appropriate “opt-out” plans.

- John discussed an educational brochure his team is developing for the area towns.
- There were no new updates provided on the progress of the shared space agreement between UMass and PVMCD.
- The next PVMCD meeting will be held on Nov 18th.

BOH MEMBERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The board agreed to review the taskers with Tucker at the next BOH meeting.

HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Sheila and Maureen O’Reilly (FRCoG) will add an article about the Naloxone boxes with photos.
- Sheila is hoping to add an article in the Feb/Mar issue about the workshops she discussed earlier (First Aid, Choking, Naloxone) at JRMC.

BOH ACTION REPORT

- Gene reviewed the action report. There was much discussion about the BOH stipends. Sheila stated the Heath Board of Health chair current stipend is 375 a year, and the members are 250. The average in FRCoG is 995 a year for the chair and 794 for the members. But if looking at just the CPHS towns, the CPHS towns have significantly more board of health support because of the FRCoG assistance. She added the average for just CPHS towns for the chair is 1,064, and the average for the members is 884. She suggested working with the finance committee and select board to update the stipends. The BOH agreed to add the item to the January agenda for further discussion.

Next Meeting December 11, 2024, 0900, on Zoom.

Gene motioned to adjourn at 10:44; Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, and Gene
Meeting Adjourned at 10:44.