

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES
Nov 12, 2025**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Tucker Jenkins, Gene Garland -Chair, Elissa Viarengo – Select Board Representative and Cindie Garland – Boards Clerk
Absent: Jason Erali and Randy Crochier – CPHS Representative

0901 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

REVIEW AGENDA/ADD ITEMS

- The board reviewed the agenda. Vaccine Clinic was added to the agenda.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

- Oct 08, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Sheila moved to accept the minutes with minor edits. Gene seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, Tucker and Gene. The board approved the minutes unanimously.

REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT UPDATE

- Randy Crochier was unable to attend.
- No update provided.

NEW BUSINESS:

NURSE UPDATE (Claire Rabbitt, RN)

- Claire did not provide a nurse's report.
- Susan provided an update on home visits. Lisa White (FRCOG) conducted 11 home visits to Heath residents for COVID vaccinations. Flu vaccines were also offered during these visits.

BOARD OF HEALTH CLERK UPDATE

- Cindie stated no updated expense report provide by the Town Accountant.

AGE & DEMENTIA FRIENDLY WORKSHOP

- Gene stated more than forty community members who gathered at the Greenfield Public Library for LifePath's Age & Dementia Friendly Regional Showcase, celebrating local progress and planning next steps for creating supportive communities across Franklin County and the North Quabbin. Funded by the Point32 Health Foundation and the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds, the initiative has moved from planning to active implementation, with current projects displayed on an interactive regional map. Panelists from various sectors—including housing, education, conservation, libraries, and senior centers—shared practical strategies that advance Age and Dementia Friendly principles, highlighting collaborative efforts to improve policies, systems, and environments that support people of all ages and abilities.

- Gene connected with Lyra Johnson-Fuller and Ann Emmet from the Council of Aging to explore Board of Health collaboration opportunities. He volunteered to join the LifePath council, which meets quarterly and is expanding membership.
- Gene discussed information about a housing rehabilitation program through the Franklin County Regional Housing Development Authority. The program covers electrical, structural repairs, and septic repair or replacement. Potential to utilize existing septic fund. Attempting to contact Bridget Phillips at the Housing Authority to explore fund integration possibilities.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

CPHS (COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES) UPDATE

- The Board discussed how meeting agendas are posted and unanimously adopted the regional/district posting method under 940 CMR 20.03(3).
- Updates were shared on mosquito-control training opportunities and tobacco inspection options for non-district towns.
- Public health nursing clinics are running smoothly with the new vendor. Staff reviewed the annual PHE grant requirement letter and emphasized that PHE funds cannot replace local funding. Reports were provided on the opioid settlement project and a MOSAIC grant proposal, which was unanimously approved.
- Naloxone cabinet installation is progressing, though better signage is needed. Loss of quorum postponed a vote on the Mosquito-borne Illness Response Improvement Plan.
- Health Agents are working on 2025 permit renewals and planning required spring workshops for camp directors. The December meeting will require a quorum to vote on the annual budget.
- Susan will attend the meeting in December.
- The annual dinner was canceled, leading to an emergency meeting with outcomes still pending.

PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD) UPDATE

- Susan stated the state provided funding for a new EV truck to replace the old vehicle.
- She met with Kelly O'Reilly and Natalie Blaze's staff regarding funding support for towns under 1,500 population.
- Discussed the vulnerability created by neighboring towns (Colrain, Hawley, Charlemont) not joining the program.
- Received commitment to review funding requests during December budget hearings. Need to submit letters for budget hearing consideration to Governor Healy and Executive Office of Administration and Finance. Current cost remains at \$5,000; potential reduction to \$2,000-\$2,500 could encourage neighboring towns to join.

MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO)

- Gene stated MAPHCO received detailed updates on operational procedure changes and new operating principles. The organization is positioning itself as an emergency planning and response tool for municipal emergency management teams.

- Management contract award status remains unclear. FRCOG conducted the coordination of the Request for Proposal process, but the bids received were significantly higher than the amount budgeted by MAPHCO.
- Megan Tudryn made a motion to keep the current Coalition budget unchanged and not award a Coordination Contract. Instead, she proposed requesting that FRCOG assign an employee to complete the remaining scope of work for FY26. All members present voted in favor of the original motion.
- Next meeting is Nov 18th.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Sheila stated the recent meeting had good representation including Lyra from the senior center. The team discussed finalizing job descriptions for volunteer roles at shelters and warming centers. Tim Lively is compiling guidance materials into a comprehensive manual. Goal to submit complete guidance book to Nathan Morrell (MEMA coordinator) before the end of the year. Manual will be stored in Jacobs Road Building storage closet with emergency equipment.
- Clarified that police chief cannot conduct CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) checks due to liability issues. Must go through the state system and register for an account. Should be no cost to town for volunteer/employee checks. Annual renewal required.
- Flu Clinic: Monday, November 17th, 4:00-6:00 PM at Hawlemont (setup at 3:30 PM).
- Floodplain Management Workshop at FRCOG offices with Tim and Sheila attending.
- Susan is updating the Emergency Preparedness List.

BOH ACTION ITEMS

- Sawyer Hall Ramp Damage: Issues were discussed. Drainage problems creating safety hazard. Loose gravel accumulation in drainage area. Potholes on both sides of drainage grate. Grass growing in wheelchair ramp spacing. Loose railings compromising stability.
- Town Response: Acknowledged as part of larger drainage problem. Included in municipal building access evaluation plan. No quick fix available; requires comprehensive drainage solution. Tyson (Heath Highway Dept Supervisor) monitoring area to keep gravel cleared.
- Stipend Review: Select Board will review all town stipends before town meeting, pending town coordinator transition completion.
- Barefoot Policy: Research confirmed no legal or scientific basis for BoH to impose barefoot restrictions in public buildings. Alternative approaches include local ordinances or building policies based on safety/liability concerns.

HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Deadline for article to be submitted for the Feb/Mar newsletter is Jan 5, 2026.

Next Meeting: Dec 10, 2025 @ 0900 via Zoom.

Gene made a motion to adjourn at 9:42 a.m. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, Tucker and Gene. Meeting Adjourned at 9:42 a.m.