

**HEATH BOARD OF HEALTH  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 08, 2025**

Board Members Present: Sheila Litchfield, Susan Gruen, Gene Garland -Chair  
Others: Randy Crochier - CPHS/Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCoG) Representative, Cindie Garland – Boards Clerk, Madison Schofield – Greenfield Recorder.

0901 Meeting Called to Order by Gene Garland

**GREENFIELD RECORDER REPORTER**

- The board discussed the Attorney General's (AG's) Neighborhood Renewal Division presentation and program to Madison.
- The AG's office offers a program to help towns deal with properties that have many code violations when the property owner cannot fix them. This process can lead to receivership, where someone else cleans up the property. The program offers assistance and is available to any town in the Commonwealth. It goes through land court, takes time, but can help towns recover lost back taxes. It may be useful to other towns, but it's uncertain if Heath will use it.

**REVIEW AGENDA/ADD ITEMS**

- The board reviewed the agenda.
- Sheila requested to add REPC.
- Gene requested to add Town of Heath's annual report input.

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

- December 08, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Sheila moved to accept the minutes with edits to AG's Neighborhood Renewal section. Susan seconded the motion. Ayes: Susan, Sheila, and Gene.

**REGIONAL HEALTH AGENT UPDATE**

Randy stated:

- He reported on inspection of East Main Street property, noting concerns about rodent issues and safety. Rodent droppings, cluttered rooms, mobility issues for elderly resident. Potential need for intervention or assistance for the elderly resident. A 30-day re-inspection is scheduled. Susan stated she was over at the property on New Years Eve because the son had a car accident, and an elderly person was left alone for a few hours. Susan stated that she brought groceries because the individual needed food due to her medical condition. Susan noticed she wasn't using the tub, and that one room was cluttered with clothes, which raised fire safety concerns. She had trouble standing and was in a wheelchair, and I was worried about how she could escape the house if alone.
- Randy confirmed successful installation of DEP air sensors in Heath, with live monitoring capabilities now active. Live monitoring can be viewed on purpleair.com.

- He also reported Carl Nelke, a former Board of Health member in Conway, has retired as of December 31. With his retirement, Conway is now a full comprehensive member. This change slightly affects the budget and projections for fee revenue but does not cause significant issues. Nelke handled about 50 tasks a year, meaning the town may require more staff, though it does not seem necessary at this time. No new oversight board meeting is planned unless there are major changes. Insurance updates are expected in about a week, which could prompt a meeting. Contact has been made with John Briggs from the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District about attending an upcoming meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**NURSE UPDATE**

- Claire Rabbitt, RN, reported that in December 2024, majority of her home visits was to one person who later died, for a total of 10 visits. One person came to the office for flu vaccine. She began to see another person once a week for blood pressure and wellness. The Healthy Bones and Balance class continues with regular attendees. News reports states increasing cases of influenza and COVID so mask wearing at gatherings is a good idea.
- Susan stated she is updating the Emergency Preparedness List for Health.

**COVID TEST KITS**

- Discussed expired test kits from November and debated on whether to continue distributing them. Board discussed continued use as screening tools while seeking new supply. Gene will reach out to his contact at Dept. Health and Human Services to inquire about ordering more test kits.

**BOARD OF HEALTH CLERK UPDATE**

- Cindie reviewed the BOH monthly budget (see below).

**FY25 MONTHLY BUDGET:**

<b>BOH ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>EXPENSED</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
BOH Expenses	1,500.00		673.19	826.81
Personnel Expenses	7,488.00		2,621.20	4,866.80
Stipends	1,375.00			1,375.00
<b>CARRYOVER ACCOUNTS</b>				
BOH Revolving Fund	14,091.32			14,091.32
Septic Grant	43,862.18	0.00		43,862.18

## COMPLAINTS (EMAIL/CALLS)

- Gene discussed when we get complaints, we often hear them while talking to people in the community or through visits at home and phone calls. To help us manage these complaints better, we should suggest that people email the board of health or call to leave a message. This way, Cindie can log the complaints and keep a record. Having this documentation is important for taking quick action if we need to involve the health agent or have meetings about the issues. It also protects us in case of legal matters. We should remember to use the complaint log at the office and improve our efforts in documenting everything properly.

## NARCAN BOXES

- Temperature concerns affecting Narcan effectiveness in outdoor boxes. Susan discussed the implementation of temperature warning stickers and regular monitoring.
- No usage currently.

## AIR SENSOR INSTALLATION

- Purple Air sensor installed in Heath. Part of a broader regional initiative. Provides real-time air quality data. Accessible through purpleair.com.

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

- BOH board members were asked to submit to Cindie input for the annual report.
- The second week of March is the expected deadline.

## ONGOING BUSINESS:

### PIONEER VALLEY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT (PVMCD)

- Susan proposed drafting a letter to Senator Comerford regarding requesting support for towns under 5,000 population. Gene will draft the letter.
- Discussed potential grant fund to improve regional mosquito control coverage. Susan made a list of six reasons why the town of Heath should support a grant to help other towns because Charlemont and Colrain would only find out if they have mosquitoes that are infected with a patient who has a West Nile virus or Tripoli and then that puts the residents of Heath at risk.
- Susan also spoke of potential grant opportunities.

### REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (REPC)

- 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. REPC aims to improve connections between public health and emergency response. A survey about public emergency alerts was sent out for Franklin County. Tim Lively and Sheila also received it. They met to respond to the survey, hoping it would address the issues with the reverse 911 program. However, the survey focused on interest in joining a regional emergency notification system instead, which did not meet their expectations for improving local reverse 911 communications. They completed the survey together and will continue to

work on the Town of Heath's Reverse 911 program. Sheila stated she has not received a response about the regional shelter plan. Susan had expressed interest in participating as well.

- REPC meets the first Tuesday of each quarter (January, April, July, October).

#### BOH ACTION REPORT

- Determined to coordinate with Tim regarding emergency preparedness meeting before engaging Council on Aging.

#### HEATH HERALD ARTICLES

- Sheila discussed the completion of the Heath Herald article about air sensors for February-March issue.

#### BOH MEMBERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Next Meeting February 12, 2025 @ 0900, on Zoom.

Gene motioned to adjourn at 10:36; Sheila seconded the motion. Ayes: Sheila, Susan, and Gene  
Meeting Adjourned at 10:36.