

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2021
Zoom/Online Meeting

Diane Mortensen, Chair
Ronald Etskovitz, Member

Chris Daniele, Vice Chair
Koduvayur Narayana, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Diane Mortensen, Chris Daniele, Ron Etskovitz and Koduvayur Narayana

Others Present:

Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Secretary
Sergeant Ed Burman, Ashland Police Department
Jennifer Ball, Assistant Town Manager
Mark Dassoni, Resident

Call Meeting to Order - 6:00 PM

Ms. Mortensen called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM and noted the meeting was being recorded by WACA-TV.

Citizen's Participation

Mark Dassoni wished everyone a Happy New Year and is looking forward to a happy, healthy 2021. Mr. Dassoni commended the Meals on Wheels Program and appreciates the Town looking out for each other.

Board of Health, Vacancy

Assistant Town Manager, Jennifer Ball, updated the Board regarding the Health Agent/Director position. Ms. Ball noted that we have had a few interviews and will be reposting the listing on the Mass. Municipal Association job openings webpage. We have been utilizing Steve Ward for any housing code issues and other Board of Health issues. We also have Tom Curran handling all of the Food inspections; Title 5 and Septic are being covered by Tom Ryder, and Ed Burman handling COVID.

Ms. Mortensen discussed the joint appointment with the Select Board to appoint a new member to fill the vacancy on the Board of Health. Mr. Narayana noted that according to the Charter, the vacancy should be filled if there is more than 100 days left in the position. The Board agreed they would like to fill the vacant position until the seat is up in May. Ms. Mortensen will let the Select Board know the Board of Health's intention, and will forward any Talent Bank Forms to the Board of Health Members as they are received. Ms. Mortensen will set up a joint meeting with the Select Board to appoint the new Member.

Updates on COVID-19

Sergeant Burman introduced Akuti Salvi to the Board, she is working as an intern from Worcester State University with a major in Public Health. She will be in Town Hall a couple days per week.

Walgreens was at Waterview Lodge today vaccinating employees and patients. Sgt. Burman noted he was impressed at how organized they were, there were five vaccinators; patients will get their

second dose January 20th. Mill Pond Rest Home is scheduled for January 27th with CVS, he is waiting to learn the date for the Residence at Valley Farms.

Sgt. Burman reported that the High School is in full remote learning at this time due to a community spread, the other schools remain open. As of today, 237 Town employees have been tested since purchasing the Abbot testing machine, it has been very beneficial.

Police and Fire are scheduled for their vaccines next week, since we did not meet the DPH criteria of having 200 first responders, we partnered with four other towns. The Westborough Board of Health Director filed the initial paperwork, the vaccine will be delivered to Westborough.

Sgt. Burman noted that we still do not have the information regarding the roll out to the general public. Sgt. Burman noted that we are ready to go with the drive-up sites set up; we are trying to determine if the State is going to allocate funding to pay nurses. Mr. Narayana inquired as to the number of residents who will request vaccines, compared to the number of staff needed, whether it will be adequate. The State should project the numbers of how many we should anticipate, but we have not received guidance from the State. Sgt. Burman noted that it will most likely be available at CVS, Walgreens and doctors' offices, as well as a through the local Boards of Health. Sgt. Burman received the vaccine last week. The Board thanked Sgt. Burman for his work.

Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services

Ms. Mortensen noted that we are still waiting for Town Counsel's final review on the IMA for Nursing Services and hopes that within a couple of weeks we can get the Agreement approved by the Select Board.

Future Tobacco Compliance Checks

Due to the last round of compliance checks being less than adequate, Mr. Narayana had requested there be additional compliance checks conducted, Board Members agreed this was a good idea. Mr. Daniele reminded the public that they always need to be prepared to show an ID, we may want to put this as a note in the Local Town Pages. Mr. Narayana noted that he has requested substance abuse data from Sgt. Burman.

Cell Tower Discussion

The Board has received requests from multiple residents to discuss the Cell Towers; Ms. Mortensen noted the Board cannot regulate Cell Tower installation. Ms. Mortensen spoke to Cecelia Doucette who will lead the charge regarding how to use devices. Mr. Narayana suggested she contact the MAHB (Mass. Association of Health Boards).

Member Ron Etskovitz' Agenda

a) Housing Production Plan Steering Committee Update

Mr. Etskovitz explained that the Housing Production Plan Steering Committee was formed to create a proactive way to comply with State Statute Chapter 40B, which is a way to include affordable housing by the standards of the Statute. Mr. Etskovitz noted that you can actually earn up to \$100,000 and still have a portion of your housing costs subsidized by the State. The Committee follows the Bylaw, and meets every five years to ensure compliance with Chapter 40B, which states that 10% of a community's housing must be available to low and moderate income families. Ms. Ball noted there are strategies a town can take to try and reach 10%, and many communities struggle. The Steering Committee will make a pathway forward to reach our 10%, she hopes they will have some good strategies.

Consent Agenda

a) Budget, FY2021

Ms. Mortensen noted that “Consent Agenda” will be on upcoming meeting agendas as a way to either vote as presented, or it can just be for information purposes, as on this agenda.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meeting Dates, January 19, 2021

DAET, Board of Health Agent Position, Board of Health vacancy.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Narayana made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Daniele seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

The Board adjourned at 7:10 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 1/5/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Covid-19 Charts
2. Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services
3. YTD Budget FY2021
4. A recording of the meeting can be found on WACA-TV