

Ashland Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
February 15, 2022  
ZOOM Meeting

*Ronald Etskovitz, Chair*  
*Diane Mortensen, Vice Chair*  
*Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director*

*Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk*  
*John Byrnes, Member*  
*Bernadette Lunkuse, Member*

**Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:**

Ron Etskovitz, Diane Mortensen and Jay Byrnes

**Members Not Present**

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon  
Bernadette Lunkuse

**Others Present:**

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director  
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant  
Sergeant Ed Burman, Ashland P.D.  
Mark Dassoni, Resident  
Seth Lajoie, Civil Engineer  
Paul Saulnier, Civil Engineer

**Call Meeting to Order, 6:00 P.M.**

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

**Citizens' Participation**

Mark Dassoni, resident, hopes that people can get outside, to help bring down COVID numbers.

**COVID-19 Update**

Sergeant Burman noted that COVID numbers are down, however, we do still need to add 20-30% to include people testing positive through home testing kits. School nurses are getting this information from parents who call into the schools to report their child absent. Sgt. Burman reported that, as of last week, there were 27 open cases; he will update the Board on this week's numbers tomorrow. Sgt. Burman noted that they have been using the Code Red system to notify people who have tested positive through the State, informing individuals of protocols to follow including isolation and quarantine guidance. Sgt. Burman informed the Board that the State testing site at the MBTA Station is planning to continue to run through the end of March. Sgt. Burman announced there will be a Moderna Vaccine Clinic tomorrow at Town Hall from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM, there will be extra doses available, anyone looking for a vaccine can show up at Town Hall tomorrow morning. Two home visits will be conducted tomorrow also.

**Septic Variance Request, 192 Myrtle Street**

Seth Lajoie, Project Engineer for the Owner of 192 Myrtle Street, noted this was a very limited lot and required quite a few variances. They are contending with wetlands to the rear of the property, and a water line in the front. There are two local upgrade approval variances, one is to allow the system to

be closer than 20-feet from a cellar wall, as well as an offset distance of ten-feet. Mr. Lajoie noted they are also requesting a 3-foot groundwater separation to allow them to utilize the existing plumbing in the house. There are four variances to the Ashland Regulations: one deep observation test hole rather than three; to use standard Title 5 sizing; a system length of 25-feet versus the required 100-feet; as well as the use of a leaching bed system.

Mr. Byrnes asked for clarification regarding the variance pertaining to Title 5 sizing to 150%. Mr. Lajoie explained that Ashland Regulations require that systems be designed for the use of a garbage grinder, creating an additional 50% in sizing of the system. Mr. Lajoie noted that garbage grinders are a bad idea for any septic system, and are usually disallowed.

Ms. Mortensen inquired as to the vent location, which showed it was only five feet to the street; Mr. Lajoie noted he had to show it is included in the plan, and that the location will most likely be moved to the end of the system.

Mr. Etskovitz inquired if the new system will be installed in the same location as the existing system; Mr. Lajoie explained that the old system is much smaller and takes up much less space than new Title 5 systems. The old system will be pumped and they will fill the excavated area with clean fill.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.405(1)(b) to allow the installation of the sewage disposal system with an offset distance from a cellar wall of 10-feet versus the required 20-feet. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.405(1)(h) to allow the sewage disposal system to be installed with a 3-foot offset to groundwater versus the required 4-foot offset. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health regulations 303-7(a) to allow the subsurface sewage disposal system to be designed utilizing one deep hole versus the required three deep hole test pits. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulations Section 303-11 to allow the subsurface sewage disposal system to be designed without a garbage disposal with the conditions that no garbage disposal be installed within the house, a deed recording be placed on the property stating no garbage disposal shall be installed in the house while the subsurface sewage disposal system is in use, and a septic tank effluent filter shall be installed. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

***The Board agreed to re-take this vote to remove the requirement of the installation of a septic tank effluent filter.***

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulations Section 303-11 to allow the subsurface sewage disposal system to be designed without a garbage disposal with the conditions that no garbage disposal be installed within the house, a deed recording be placed on the property stating no garbage disposal shall be installed in the house while the subsurface sewage disposal system is in use. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulations Section 303-11(a) to allow for a system length of 25-feet versus the required 100-feet. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulations Section 303-11(d) to allow for the installation of a leaching bed. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

#### **Septic Variance Request, 49 Valley Road**

Paul Saulnier, Civil Engineer for 49 Valley Road, explained that this is a 3-bedroom home with a failed system. The proposed septic system has no increase in flow; the plan states that a garbage grinder will not be allowed. They are proposing the use of an innovative/alternative system; an Elgin in-drain system installed with a trench system. Mr. Saulnier is requesting the following variances: a 6-foot distance between trenches versus 10-feet; to allow the system to be installed 2-feet above seasonal high groundwater; to allow a reduction in the required 12-inch separation of inlet and outlet tees; and, to allow the system to be designed on the basis of a sieve analysis versus a percolation test, due to the presence of groundwater during the soil evaluation. Mr. Saulnier explained that groundwater was 36 inches above grade, due to unseasonable rain which occurred at many sites.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.284 to allow the soil absorption system to be installed 2 feet above the seasonal high groundwater.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CMR 15.405(1)(i) to allow a reduction of the requirement of a twelve (12) inch separation between the inlet and outlet tees to high groundwater.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant a variance from 310 CRM 15.405(i) to allow the Soil Absorption System to be designed on the basis of a sieve analysis versus a percolation test due to the presence of groundwater during the soil evaluation.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulation 303-14 to allow Eljen GSF B43 modules in a trench configuration to be spaced 6-feet (wall to wall) versus the required 10-feet.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

#### **Member, John Byrnes' agenda:**

##### **Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinic**

Mr. Byrnes reported to the Board that last week he and Sergeant Burman met with Jon Evans, Superintendent of Keefe Tech Regional Technical High School. Mr. Burns explained that Mr. Evans was very receptive to the plan for RAM coming and allowing the use of their space; they toured the school and believe this could be a fit. Mr. Byrnes noted that he also spoke with the Facilities Director for Keefe Tech who provided him with a floor plan and some dimensions to ensure the necessary equipment would fit into the space; the gym is also a possibility. Mr. Byrnes explained that he was informed by RAM that there should be two venue options available for them to tour; he believes Keefe Tech would be the best option for a number of reasons. Mr. Byrnes is waiting for RAM to contact him

to set up a first phone call. Keefe Tech officials noted that, if the clinic is held here, the best time would be the last two weeks of August, either of this year, or next, this August may be cutting it close. Mr. Byrnes updated Ms. Mortensen on the background and purpose of Remote Area Medical (RAM).

**Consent Agenda:**

**Review and Approve Meeting Minutes: February 1, 2022**

**Review Year-to-Date Budget Reports, FY2022**

The Board agreed to wait for the remaining Members to be present at the meeting to approve the minutes.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with just the Year to Date Budget Reports. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Health Director's Agenda:**

**Board of Health Grants, Update**

Mr. Gupta reported that we have received 5 of the 6 grants so far, including an FDA grant for \$5,000 for food-based trainings and equipment. Mr. Gupta reported that the Health Director for Hudson is moving to a position in the private sector, she runs the collaboration, so this may be challenging.

**Childhood Vaccine Program**

Mr. Gupta thanked Mr. Etskovitz for signing off on the doctors' orders for the childhood vaccines. Mr. Gupta explained that DPH is coming Friday for a walk-through at Town Hall as a requirement for hosting a childhood vaccine program for the 8 communities in the collaboration. Mr. Gupta noted that if everything goes well, we should get the childhood vaccines soon. Ms. Mortensen inquired as to when this change occurred; she noted that when she was involved with the grant, she had been informed that the State wanted to hire epidemiologists. Mr. Gupta noted that through the grant they have two epidemiologists, but a public health nurse was also hired. Ms. Mortensen requested more information, as she had worked on this program for a long time previously and was unaware of the change.

**Restaurant Updates**

Mr. Gupta reported that during the last inspection at the Residence at Valley Farms there were a number of food safety violations; Mr. Gupta noted that he and Tom Curran have been working with the Management and it seems to be straightened out now.

A situation occurred last week at Mill Pond Rest Home, there was no hot water. They have since rectified the situation.

**MetroWest Leadership Training**

Mr. Gupta noted that he is attending Leadership Training through the MetroWest Health Foundation; this foundation is also responsible for a \$50,000 grant to the Town. Mr. Gupta noted that he has attended two of the sessions so far. Mr. Etskovitz is glad that we are receiving so many grants, they are helpful for the Town.

Sgt. Burman explained that when they reached out to DPH they asked what to do to make the childhood vaccine program happen. First they were required to submit two months of refrigerator temperature logs. Sgt. Burman filled out paperwork noting that Hopkinton would be our backup storage facility, and we are Hopkinton's backup. DPH scheduled a time to come out to tour Town Hall, which will be this Friday; the nurse from the collaborative will be there too. If everything is approved, we can then go into the MIIS system and order the vaccines from the State.

**Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings: Decisions at Every Turn, update.**

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mortensen seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH  
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 2/15/2022 MEETING  
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Confirmed and Probable Cases – Charts
2. Septic Plans, Variance Request, 192 Myrtle Street
3. Septic Plans, Variance Request, 49 Valley Road
4. February 1, 2022, Draft Meeting Minutes
5. YTD Budget Report, YTD Revolving Budget Report
6. A recording of the meeting is available at [WACATV.com](http://WACATV.com)