

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
March 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, Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Jay Byrnes and Bernadette Lunkuse

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Mark Dassoni, Resident
Dona Walsh, Animal Inspector
Justine Grassey, Animal Inspector

Call Meeting to Order, 6:02 P.M.

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Citizens' Participation

Mark Dassoni, resident, noted that people in his household are doing well. Mr. Dassoni discussed future potential uses at 501 Pond Street.

Mary Mortensen Annual Public Health Award, discuss nominees

Ms. Mortensen explained the concept of the Mary Mortensen Public Health Award, which is given each year in honor of Mary Mortensen, a profound member of the Board of Health who, even when she was not a member, devoted much of her time to helping out during vaccine clinics and with other public health-related initiatives; the Award is given to an Ashland resident or organization who exemplifies that same spirit of public health devotion. Mr. Etskovitz agreed that she did a lot for the community and was a major force on the Board of Health for a very long time. KG Narayana noted that Diane Mortensen deserves consideration as a nominee, as she has been a part of the Board of Health for a long time as well. Mr. Dassoni suggested that the Board of Health be nominated. Ms. Mortensen noted there are many deserving people in the community and suggested that Board Members take a couple of weeks to try to come up with a nomination of a person or organization at the next Board of Health meeting on April 6th.

Annual Nomination of Inspector of Animals, Dona Walsh

Annual Nomination of Assistant Inspector of Animals, Justine Grassey

Ms. Mortensen explained to the newer Board Members that this is something they will see each year; they will vote on the nomination of the Inspector of Animals; the nomination papers are then forwarded to the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources. Ms. Mortensen noted that Justine Grassey is also an Animal Inspector, not an Assistant Animal Inspector.

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to nominate Dona Walsh and Justine Grassey as our Animal Inspectors for one year. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. The motion was approved.

In-person Board of Health Meetings

Mr. Etskovitz noted it has been almost two years since we have had a regular, in-person meeting. Ms. Mortensen noted that the Select Board is having a hybrid meeting on Wednesday. Board Members discussed their preferences regarding meeting in-person, remote or hybrid. Some Members expressed wanting to go back to in-person meetings, some prefer remote for a while longer. Mr. Etskovitz noted that he does not see the harm in continuing virtual meetings for now; he suggested seeing how the Select Board's hybrid meetings go. Board Members agreed to have this on the next meeting agenda for discussion.

Consent Agenda:

- **Review and Approve Board of Health Meeting Minutes: March 1, 2022**
- **Review Year-to-Date Budget Reports, FY2022**

Motion: Ms. Lunkuse made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. The motion was approved.

Member, John Byrnes' agenda:

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

Mr. Byrnes updated the Board regarding his latest communication with Remote Area Medical (RAM). Mr. Byrnes noted that he had a first official phone call with RAM on March 3, 2022. They confirmed a date, and will be sending a contract. RAM agreed that trying to pull it off in August 2022 would not have been enough time. Mr. Byrnes noted that a RAM Clinic is scheduled to be held in Lynn, MA on August 26-28, 2022; he has spoken with the Lead Coordinator from Lynn who has offered to let him attend any of their organizational meetings. The Ashland/MetroWest RAM Clinic is scheduled for August 11-13, 2023 at Keefe Tech. Ms. Mortensen inquired about the insurance liability aspect. Mr. Byrnes noted that there will be some costs that will need to be explored; he will continue to keep the Board apprised of any updates.

Health Director's Agenda:

- **COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Gupta noted that the cases are definitely coming down, we currently have 9 open cases. We have a contact tracer from the State, as well as help from the MetroWest Shared Services. The Ashland Testing Site will be closing at the end of the month. The Framingham testing site will remain open; we have also received 1,800 rapid test kits that we will be offering to the community. Residents can pick them up at Town Hall. We also received 1,600 test kits to be distributed between three housing communities; Ashland Commons, Ashland Housing Authority, and Ashland House. Mr. Gupta noted that he arranged for a home visit for a resident in need of the Pfizer dose; Hopkinton Health Department came out and did this home visit.

- **Childhood Vaccine Program, Update**

Mr. Gupta explained that the Ashland Health Department has been approved by the State as a vaccine provider, and we have ordered the vaccines. Mr. Gupta thanked Mr. Etskovitz for signing the medical orders. Mr. Gupta noted that Kitty Mahoney, Framingham Public Health Nurse, has agreed to vaccinate any Ashland children in Framingham until the Ashland vaccine site is fully operational. Mr. Gupta noted that we should be receiving the vaccine soon. Board Members agreed they are glad to see this Program finally materialize after all the work that has been put into making it happen.

- **Blood Pressure Clinic Update, Ashland Community Center**
Mr. Gupta explained to the Board that the blood pressure clinic is up and running at the Community Center, they are checking residents' blood pressure after the exercise class has ended. They will soon open the clinics up to other groups in the community.
- **MetroWest Leadership Training**
Mr. Gupta noted the Metrowest Leadership Training classes are very good. The classes are once per month, there will be a total of 8 sessions.
- **Retail Food Establishment, Update**
Mr. Gupta discussed the issues that he and Tom Curran have been dealing with at Family Dollar Store and Los Cabos, both have been issued citations. If they have not been corrected by next week, he will require that they appear in front of the Board.
Ms. Mortensen noted that Los Cabos is concerning and that she would like them to have more regular inspections due to their repetitive violations.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings:

- Mary Mortensen Public Health Award – Discuss Nominations
- Sustainability Committee Presentation
- Remote Area Medical
- Green Up Ashland, May 7, 2022 (including along Marathon route)
- Marathon Day - Volunteers

Adjournment

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

Vote: 5-0. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 3/15/2022 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Animal Inspector Nomination Forms, Dona Walsh, Justine Grasse
2. COVID-19 Confirmed and Probable Cases – Charts
3. March 1, 2022, Draft Meeting Minutes
4. YTD Budget Report, YTD Revolving Fund Budget Report
5. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com