

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2021
Zoom/Online Meeting

Diane Mortensen, Chair
Ronald Etskovitz, Member
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Member

Chris Daniele, Vice Chair
Koduvayur Narayana, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Diane Mortensen, Ron Etskovitz, Koduvayur Narayana and Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Members absent:

Chris Daniele

Others Present:

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

Call Meeting to Order - 6:00 PM

Ms. Mortensen called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM and noted the meeting was being recorded by WACA-TV.

Citizen's Participation

Mark Dassoni, resident, inquired as to the status of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Ms. Mortensen noted that Sergeant Burman would be discussing COVID and vaccines during his update.

Presentation of the Mary Mortensen Public Health Award to Sgt. Ed Burman, 2021 Recipient

Ms. Mortensen read the Mary Mortensen Public Health Award concept, and noted that this year's recipient is Sergeant Ed Burman. Ms. Mortensen read a statement which looked back at the past year and the many ways Sergeant Burman went above and beyond to ensure the safety of the residents and business owners, as well as providing guidance to the schools to maintain a safe environment for Ashland's students. Sergeant Burman worked throughout the pandemic to provide necessary Personal Protection Equipment for frontline workers, built internal testing capacities for staff and teachers and oversaw town-wide contact tracing efforts. Sergeant Burman monitored State trends, guidelines and protocols as they became available from the Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control. The Board recognized other members of the task force for their help and participation, as well as the Ashland Police Department for allowing Sergeant Burman to be reassigned for this important role. Ms. Mortensen showed Mr. Burman the plaque and read a Proclamation. The Board congratulated and thanked Sergeant Burman; Sgt. Burman noted it was a team effort. Town Manager, Michael Herbert echoed the sentiments and noted that the information Sgt. Burman provided, the work he organized, and the vaccine rollout, each could be a separate job, and cannot thank Sgt. Burman and his team enough.

Covid-19 Update

Sergeant Burman discussed the three chains of vaccine that are being distributed. Sgt. Burman noted that he and Candi Wilson, Elder Services Outreach Coordinator, were able to secure 100 doses of Moderna vaccine. The list of residents who had inquired about vaccine were called back and given appointments to a clinic which will be held tomorrow to distribute those doses. A clinic to distribute the second dose will be held on April 15th. Ashland has been part of a collaboration with Boylston, Holliston, Hopkinton, Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough; Northborough Health Agent, Kristin Black, sent a proposal to the State and just learned their collaboration has been approved. They will be provided a weekly supply of vaccine, clinics will be held at the Doubletree Hotel, this is still in the planning stages. Mr. Dassoni inquired about homebound residents. Sgt. Burman noted that homebound residents will be receiving a questionnaire, they are working with the State to provide vaccine to homebound residents.

Consent Agenda

- FY2021 Budget

Motion: Mr. Narayana made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. The motion was approved.

Chair's Agenda

Metrowest Tobacco Control District

Ms. Mortensen noted that Ashland had partnered with 13 other communities for a tobacco program through a State grant; the program includes a regional tobacco agent. We are the only community that has our own tobacco agent in addition to the regional agent, therefore, the charge of the Town's agent will be focused on education. Ms. Mortensen noted that the regional agent alerted us to the new State fines, which supersede our fines. The tobacco vendors in Town have been notified of the change by email. Melissa Evans, the Town's tobacco agent, will go out this weekend to review the increased fines with each vendor. The State is also encouraging additional educational programs. The grant will run through the end of April, or possibly, the end of June. Ms. Mortensen noted that having two agents is an added benefit, she will keep an eye on the grant to see if it will continue. Ms. Mortensen was happy to report that during the last round of compliance checks each tobacco vendor had passed. The Board discussed updating the Regulations to include the State fines and agreed it is best to make it clear to the vendors; they will look at the revised Regulations at the next meeting, April 6th.

Health Agent/Director position update

Ms. Mortensen noted that Mr. Daniele had participated in some interviews last week, and there are additional interviews scheduled for this week. Two candidates that have been interviewed in the first round went well and are expected to be called back for a second interview.

Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services

Ms. Mortensen explained the Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services that she has been working on for over a year with the communities of Framingham, Hudson and Holliston. There was an MAPC Grant offered to communities, however, due to different needs of the different communities, it does not seem to be working out. Ms. Mortensen noted that Ashland is now the only community left working with Framingham, and it has been discouraging; she will be meeting with Framingham next week and will update the Board at the next meeting. Ms. Mortensen noted that we have been notified of another regional grant with different deliverables; she will keep the Board apprised. This all began due to Framingham not being able to handle the influx of children's vaccine requests from other communities; we are not aware of this being an issue in Ashland at this time. Board Members thanked Ms. Mortensen for her work on this.

Medical Reserve Corps. Recruitment/Update

Ms. Mortensen announced that the Medical Reserve Corps is always looking for volunteer members, it is a good community effort at many different levels, please contact the Board of Health Office for more information.

Tobacco Regulation Violation fines/update

A draft of the Regulations with the updated fines will be made available and will be discussed and adopted at the next meeting.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meeting Dates, April 6, 2021

The next meeting will be April 6th, Dona Walsh will be on for her annual appointment; the same items will remain under the Chair's agenda. Mr. Narayana inquired as to whether the Dollar Store should be put on the agenda. Ms. Mortensen noted she has been in contact with Tom Curran; at this point he is working with Family Dollar and he will let the Board know if he needs the Board's assistance. Mr. Etskovitz offered to give a brief update on the Housing Steering Committee that he was appointed as liaison to.

The Board agreed to put Green Up Ashland Day on the next agenda; Mr. Etskovitz offered to help at the event or represent the Board if needed.

Any topics can be added to the agenda 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Mr. Etskovitz noted that the Decisions at Every Turn Meetings are on the same night as our meetings, he may try to attend for a half hour before coming to the Board of Health meeting.

Ms. Mortensen acknowledged Mary Mortensen and the award presentation earlier; she noted that Mary would have been the first in the trenches during the COVID pandemic and running clinics with Sgt. Burman; she loved to help and offer her skills as a nurse, and she did a great job.

Adjournment

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

Vote: 4-0. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6: 56 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 3/16/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Sergeant Ed Burman, Proclamation
2. Covid-19 Charts
3. State Tobacco Fines sheet
4. Tobacco Regulations
5. Inter-municipal Agreement for Nursing Services
6. YTD Budget FY2021
7. A recording of the meeting can be found on WACA-TV