

Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
Ashland Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland, MA
Selectmen's Meeting Room

Jon Fetherston, Chairman
Diane Mortensen, Vice Chairperson
Mark Oram, Agent/Director

Chris Daniele, Clerk
Ronald Etskovitz, Member
Koduvayur Narayana, Member

Members Present:

Jon Fetherston, Diane Mortensen, Chris Daniele, Ronald Etskovitz, Koduvayur Narayana

Others Present:

Mark Oram, Health Agent/Director
Laura Clifford, Administrative Secretary
Mark Dassoni, Resident
Michael and Karen Gurnick, Medical Reserve Corps.
Samuel Wong, Framingham Board of Health Director
Ed Hart, Resident

Call to Order

Mr. Fetherston called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and announced that the meeting was being broadcast live on WACA-TV.

Citizen's Participation

Mark Dassoni, resident, wished Mr. Fetherston well as he resigns from the Board, and noted he is glad that Ms. Mortensen is being nominated for the Nyanza Advisory Committee.

Recognition of Jon Fetherston for his tenure serving on the Board of Health

Mr. Oram read a statement highlighting Jon Fetherston's many accomplishments and years of dedication to the Ashland Board of Health; he noted that in addition to working on issues such as opioid reduction, tobacco initiatives, vaccination/immunization clinics and Green Up Ashland, Mr. Fetherston has provided around the clock, on-call coverage, responding to many serious issues over the years. Mr. Oram commended Mr. Fetherston's attributes as a public health official and thanked Mr. Fetherston on behalf of the Board. Mr. Oram presented Mr. Fetherston with a clock/plaque. Mr. Fetherston said he has enjoyed his time serving the Town; Mr. Oram noted he also appreciates Mr. Fetherston's support during a difficult time.

Medical Reserve Corps functions and activities, Mike Gurnick, Chairman of Ashland MRC

Michael Gurnick thanked the Board for inviting him to the meeting; he distributed the most recent brochure from the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Mr. Gurnick explained that the MRC is a national program, formerly under the Office of the Surgeon General and currently under Health and Human Services (Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response); MRC is responsible for planning and emergency management support across the country. Mr. Gurnick stated there is no public funding, a region has been organized under Region 4a; Ashland is one of 131 towns in this Region. Mr. Gurnick noted there are approximately 30-40 Members, we are working closely with the southern sub-district coordinator to assist

in areas such as badging and CORI checks. Mr. Gurnick noted that he hopes to see membership increase, that we need a greater presence. Mr. Oram thanked Mr. Gurnick for his 14 years of volunteering for the Medical Reserve Corps.

Sam Wong, Framingham Health Director, review of tobacco regulations

Sam Wong, Framingham Health Director, thanked the Ashland Board of Health for taking the lead to restrict menthol and mint tobacco flavors. Framingham took from this example and also passed new tobacco regulations restricting menthol and mint flavors; additionally, the Framingham Tobacco Regulations will restrict smoke accessories to be sold at adult-only tobacco stores or a licensed marijuana retailer. There are currently no age restrictions on smoke accessories or equipment. Framingham will have six retail stores located off of Route 9. Mr. Fetherston is concerned with marijuana vaping, and especially edibles, and worries that legalization will increase accessibility to youth. Mr. Wong explained that Framingham adopted local regulations to ensure that any foods infused with cannabis must follow the food code guidelines, which are more stringent. There are two manufacturers coming in to Framingham who will be overseen by the Board of Health and will need to be licensed each year. Ms. Mortensen discussed the penalties imposed by the schools for students who are caught vaping on school property, and noted that Ashland's policy of in-house suspension and nicotine education seems to be a good approach. Mr. Wong agreed that it can be a challenge to get parents to attend workshops; particularly the parents they are trying to reach. Mr. Fetherston noted that Ashland and Framingham, as neighbors, need to band together; Members agreed to reach out to surrounding towns regarding the Tobacco Regulations.

Ed Hart, updates to previous discussion at April 2, 2019 Board of Health meeting on pesticides

Mr. Hart noted that during his last appearance at the April 2, 2019 Board of Health meeting, there were two citations which he wanted to correct for the record. Mr. Hart had referenced 40 C.F.R. 152.25, the correct citation should have been 40 C.F.R. 152.170. Mr. Hart noted a misstated conversion factor; instead of one teaspoon of a restricted pesticide, the true amount is less than ¼ teaspoon.

Mr. Hart noted there is a bill before the Mass. Legislature titled H791 which would eliminate glyphosate from use on outdoor grounds of schools and childcare programs, the bill is currently at the House and is supported by Representative Jack Lewis. H792 is also being introduced, this is all inclusive and would ban glyphosate within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Mr. Hart encouraged the Board to send a letter to request Senator Karen Spilka to support these bills. Mr. Hart encouraged people to be more responsible and kinder to the planet and nature.

Mr. Hart noted that 94 communities have signed or sent a letter to the Governor regarding the health effects of natural gas; he noted that methane gas leaks and fracking effect climate change; he believes Eversource should be using their time to research solar or renewable energy sources. The Board discussed having the petitioner, Stephen Jones, attend a future Board of Health meeting to discuss; Members agreed to continue the conversation and consider whether to sign the letter. Board Members thanked Mr. Hart for his time and sharing his expertise.

Members' Report, Update, Decisions at Every Turn Meeting, April 9, 2019

Ms. Mortensen and Mr. Etskovitz discussed the Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) meeting they attended; they noted it was a great meeting and topics covered were: devices in the restrooms to detect vaping activity, enforcement in the school, and social norms. Ms. Mortensen and Mr. Etskovitz agreed DAET is a good group and they do great work.

Appointment of Diane Mortensen to the Nyanza Advisory Committee

Mr. Fetherston noted that the EPA is attending the Nyanza Advisory Committee Meeting on Thursday, even if there is not a quorum, EPA will present and it will be televised. Ms. Mortensen noted she is planning to attend.

Motion: Mr. Narayana made a motion to appoint Diane Mortensen to the Nyanza Advisory Committee as a Member from the Board of Health. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion approved.

Health Agent's Report

Budget FY19/FY20 updates

Mr. Oram noted the 2020 budget has been approved for next year, there were only minor changes; there was a transfer to the nursing budget.

Update on summer internship program with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Caeli Teagan will be the Board of Health summer intern, she is in the Master's Program at the BU School of Public Health.

Update on St. Cecelia's carnival event, scheduled for June 20-23, 2019

Mr. Oram noted he has met with the Building Department and representative from the Church regarding the carnival; they will probably block off the street and they have notified the neighbors. They will also need to obtain food permits from the Board of Health.

Review of Minutes, April 17, 2019

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to approve the minutes of April 17, 2019. Mr. Fetherston seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0-2 (Mr. Daniele and Mr. Narayana abstained as they were not present for this meeting). Motion approved.

Discuss Future Agenda Topics and Meeting Dates

The Board proposed the next meeting date as May 28th or June 4th.

- Letter to Senator Spilka re supporting legislation when it gets to the Senate (HR791; HR792)
- Health Effects of Natural Gas
- Status update on Farmer's Ram Market

Mr. Narayana made a public announcement and invited all residents and others to attend Showcase India on May 19th; it is being planned by the Town of Ashland and The Ashland Indian Club and will showcase the 14 states of India and food from different regions. The event will be held at the Ashland High School from 3:00 – 5:00 PM.

Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Daniel seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 5/7/2019 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Medical Reserves Corp. brochure
2. City of Framingham Board of Health Tobacco Regulations, Effective 1-1-2020
3. FY19 YTD Budget
4. Draft Meeting Minutes – 4/17/2019