

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2021
ZOOM Meeting

Diane Mortensen, Chair
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

Ronald Etskovitz, Member
Bernadette Lunkuse, Member
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Diane Mortensen, Ron Etskovitz, Barbra Sekesogundu Simon and Bernadette Lunkuse

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Sgt. Ed Burman, Ashland Police Department
Tom Ryder, Ashland Health Agent
Erik Dickinson, Engineer, 34 High Street
Matthew Labrie, Contractor, 34 High Street
KG Narayana, Resident
Mark Dassoni, Resident

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

Ms. Mortensen called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

Citizens Participation

KG Narayana noted that due to his temporary housing circumstances he was required to resign from the Board of Health; he will be back in Ashland soon and hopes to rejoin in the future. Mr. Narayana stated that he will continue to support the Board. Board Members thanked Mr. Narayana for his years of commitment to the Board of Health, noting that he is an asset to the Town.

Introduction of new Board Member, Bernadette Lunkuse

Ms. Mortensen welcomed Bernadette Lunkuse as a new Member of the Board of Health; Ms. Mortensen explained the voting process and noted that should she have any questions, she should not hesitate to ask.

Reorganization of the Board

Ms. Mortensen noted that, as Chair, she cannot make a motion to appoint a new Chair, she has enjoyed being Chair for a couple of years, but thinks it is healthy to give other Members an opportunity. Ms. Mortensen recommended that another Board Member could nominate Ron Etskovitz as Chair, if they agree with that recommendation.

Motion: Ms. Lunkuse made a motion to nominate Ron Etskovitz as Chair; Ms. Sekesogundu Simon seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Motion: Mr. Etskovitz made a motion to nominate Diane Mortensen as Vice Chair; Ms. Sekesogundu Simon seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Motion: Mr. Etskovitz made a motion to nominate Barbra Sekesogundu Simon as Clerk of the Board; Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Updates on COVID-19

Sergeant Burman noted that today is the official opening day of the Town buildings. Last week guidelines were sent to Department Heads; they were offered an opportunity to ask questions. Vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask; while unvaccinated individuals are recommended to wear a mask. According to CDC guidelines, you do not have to quarantine if you are exposed, but the Town is asking that those who have a family member that is COVID positive, they must quarantine.

Last Friday there were no active cases in Ashland, this was the first time we have seen that since COVID first hit. However, since the weekend, there are now six active cases, four of which are teenagers. Five people have been quarantined, Sgt. Burman noted he is monitoring this closely.

Sergeant Burman explained that the COVID Vaccine Clinic is going very well, there are seven towns included in the clinic. This will continue through the end of the month and is for those 12 years of age and older.

Sergeant Burman reported that we are at 95% vaccine rate for our residents 65 years of age and older. On Saturday, over 800 kids received their second shots. Sgt. Burman noted that they currently have a surplus of doses; if anyone is interested in receiving the vaccine they may call 508-532-7900. Both Pfizer and Moderna are available. Sgt. Burman noted how efficient the seven towns are in working together; they have discussed keeping this a long-term, vested interest. Ms. Mortensen noted that she has also been working towards regionalization of nursing services and would like to be kept updated on this.

Sergeant Burman has completed all of the homebound visits by all who requested this service.

34 High Street, septic waiver requests

Eric Dickinson, engineer for the homeowner, displayed the plan for the new septic system and explained that the current system is in failure. Because the system is large, they are going with an Elgin System, which allows for a 40% reduction in size. Mr. Dickinson explained they are requesting variances from the following local variances: 303-7(a) to have only one test pit, as well as from 303-11 provisions for a garbage grinder, 303-15 related to the minimum distance between trenches, and Section 310 CMR 15-284. Mr. Dickinson discussed the Title 5 variances they are also requesting. Mr. Dickinson noted that this project is still waiting for Conservation Commission approval. The alternative systems do require a Deed Restriction to keep it as a 3-bedroom house, as well as a Deed Restriction to prohibit the installation of a garbage grinder. Tom Ryder explained for the new Members the difference between upgrades and waivers and noted this will be going before Conservation. Mr. Gupta noted that we will prepare the Deed Recordings.

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to approve the local variances for the Local Board of Health Regulations, the Title 5 Local Upgrade Approval, to not include 310 CMR 15.405, with the condition of Conservation Approval and a Deed Recording for the garbage disposal, and a Deed Recording for the Bedroom Room Restriction. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Board to discuss granting authorization to Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director, to sign off on all Board of Health issued Permits, with the exception of septic waivers and grease trap waivers

Ms. Mortensen explained that the former Health Director had been given the same authority, which helps people conduct business without the necessity of waiting for a Board Meeting. This gives permission for the Director/Agent to approve all permits with the exception of septic waivers and grease trap waivers, which must come before the Board.

Motion: Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant authorization to Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director, to sign off on all Board of Health issued permits with the exception of septic waivers and grease trap waivers. Mr. Etskovitz seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Chair's Agenda:

- **Inter-Municipal Agreement for Nursing Services**

Ms. Mortensen explained that this Grant for Inter-Municipal Services with the City of Framingham, Hudson and Holliston will expire at the end of June; unfortunately, due in part to COVID, we are unable to provide services under this Grant. Ms. Mortensen will work with Sgt. Burman to establish collaborations with the towns that we are currently working with on the COVID Clinics, for nursing services.

Medical Reserve Corps.

Ms. Mortensen would like to see the Medical Reserve Corps. grow, and be back to where it used to be, she would like to see the MRC provide meetings and trainings, either in-person or virtual.

Health Agent/Director's Agenda:

- **Central Mass. Mosquito Control, 2021 Mosquito Season, Aerial Spraying**

Mr. Gupta explained that Central Mass Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP) conducted aerial spraying of 207 acres in Ashland during the last week of May. The spraying was conducted in the 12 towns that were deemed Critical risk for EEE last year. On June 1, 7, 14, 21 and 28, CMMCP will conduct ground spraying. Residents may also call CMMCP directly to request services. CMMCP is also treating abandoned pools. We currently have one property that we are working with CMMCP to treat the abandoned pool, and for the homeowner to dismantle the pool.

- **Food Establishment updates: McDonalds, Family Dollar Store**

Mr. Gupta reported that McDonalds is under new ownership. Family Dollar Store failed a recent food inspection and was put on 72-hour notice to correct, they did comply and corrected the violations. This was a complaint-based inspection due to excessive trash around the premises.

- **Corner Spot, Farmers' Market, updates**

Mr. Gupta explained that the Farmers' Market will be starting in a couple weeks, we are preparing permits for that, and for the events at the Corner Spot. There are many new vendors.

Consent Agenda:

- **Budget, FY2021**

- **Meeting Minutes, March 16, 2021, April 6, 2021**

Ms. Mortensen explained to Ms. Lunkuse that Board Members may vote on the consent agenda, or they may wish to discuss an individual topic listed under the consent agenda; she noted that if Board Members have questions or changes to make to the minutes, they may contact Laura prior to the meeting.

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

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings, June 15, 2021

Ms. Mortensen explained that if anyone has a topic they would like to discuss at a future meeting, to let Mr. Gupta or Mr. Etskovitz know; and it can be put on an upcoming agenda.

Adjournment

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

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 6/1/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Number of Cases/Graphs
2. Septic Waiver Request Letter, 34 High Street
3. Septic Design Plan, 34 High Street
4. Memo/Recommendation by Tom Rider, 34 High Street
5. YTD Budget Report
6. Draft Meeting Minutes, March 16, 2021, April 6, 2021
7. A recording of the meeting can be found on WACA-TV