

Ashland Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
June 7, 2022  
ZOOM Meeting

*Ronald Etskovitz, Chair*  
*Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk*  
*Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director*

*Ed Burman, Member*  
*John Byrnes, Member*  
*Bernadette Lunkuse, Member*

**Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:**

Ron Etskovitz, Ed Burman, Jay Byrnes and Bernadette Lunkuse

**Members Absent**

Barbra Sekesogundu-Simon

**Others Present:**

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director  
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant  
Keith Robie, Ashland Fire Chief  
Susan Robie, Resident  
Diane Mortensen, Resident  
Ron Mortensen, Resident  
Lyn Moraghan, Ashland Fire Captain  
Richard Briggs, Ashland Acting Police Chief  
Audrey LaCroix, Ashland Public Schools, Head Nurse  
Michael Herbert, Town Manager  
Jennifer Ball, Assistant Town Manager  
Mark Dassoni, Resident  
KG Narayana, Resident  
Eric Dickinson, Engineer, Civilized Solutions

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

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

**Citizens Participation**

Mark Dassoni requested to reserve his participation time until after the presentation of the Mary Mortensen Award which Mr. Etskovitz allowed.

**Welcome New Board of Health Member, Ed Burman**

Mr. Etskovitz congratulated and thanked Mr. Burman and Mr. Byrnes for volunteering as Members of the Board of Health; he noted that it is appreciated by both him and the Town. Mr. Etskovitz thanked Mr. Narayana, noting that he appreciates his contributions to the Board in various capacities. Mr. Etskovitz thanked Diane Mortensen for her expertise and guidance over the years as Chair and a Member of the Board of Health; noting that she has done a lot of great work.

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mary Mortensen Public Health Award; 2022 Recipient: Ashland COVID-19 Response Team**

Mr. Etskovitz asked that Diane Mortensen present the Mary Mortensen Award to the recipients, because of the significance of the Award to her and her family.

Ms. Mortensen stated that on behalf of her family, this Award holds a lot of meaning. Mary was not only important to her family, but important to the community through her years of public service as well. Ms. Mortensen reflected on some of Mary's many achievements, including being the first female call firefighter with the Ashland Fire Department, and creating a successful bingo fundraising event for the Ashland Emergency Fund, providing assistance to many Ashland residents over the years. Mary was involved in the Board of Health for over 30 years, and worked to implement many Regulations during that time, as well as vaccinating residents at their homes and during clinics. This Award was created in Mary's honor and this year marks the fifth year of presentation of the Award.

After enduring the very difficult years of dealing with the COVID pandemic, Ms. Mortensen noted that the Board of Health agreed that this year's recipients should be the COVID-19 Response Team, consisting of the Ashland Fire Department, the Ashland Police Department, the Ashland Public Schools Nurses and the community Nurses. The COVID-19 Response Team is recognized for their dedication, commitment, and long hours; Ms. Mortensen read a Proclamation. Mr. Etskovitz showed the plaque which will be displayed at Town Hall. Mr. Etskovitz thanked all who have assisted, and thanked Ed Burman who lead the response for the Town; he thanked Nancy Cleary for her time, and Rajit Gupta for leading the charge.

Acting Police Chief Richard Briggs stated that his Department is humbled to receive such a prestigious award; Mary was all about selfless service to the Community, he noted that they are grateful to serve this Community every day and they appreciate the recognition.

Town Manager Michael Herbert remembers Mary as someone who served the Community without much fanfare; he cannot think of a more shining example of that service than the COVID Response Team, who throughout the pandemic went above and beyond their duties, also without much fanfare. Mr. Herbert thanked the Board for recognizing the COVID Response Team, and congratulated the COVID Response Team for their Award.

Mark Dassoni, resident, thanked the COVID Response Team, including Ed Burman. Mr. Dassoni shared memories of Mary, and said she was a great person.

Fire Chief Keith Robie thanked the Board on behalf of the Fire Department; he noted that Mary would not have hesitated to be part of this COVID response, she would have been right by our sides. The Fire Department is where public service began for Mary, which adds to the significance of the Award.

#### **Septic System Replacement, Variance Request, 23 Tower Road**

Eric Dickinson, Engineer for 23 Tower Road, explained that this home has a failed septic system, there is a lot of ledge and trees on the property, they did find high groundwater and the system will require a pump chamber. There is limited area in the front, so a garbage grinder is prohibited with this design; a Deed Restriction will be required.

**Motion:** Ms. Lunkuse 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 and 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, for 23 Tower Road. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 4-0. Motion approved.

**Motion:** Ms. Lunkuse motion to grant a variance from Title 5 Regulation 310 CMR 15.405(1)(h)(2) to allow a reduction from 4-feet to 3-feet separation for soils with percolation rates greater than 2-minutes per inch between the bottom of the soil absorption system and the seasonal high groundwater elevation, for 23 Tower Road. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 4-0. Motion approved.

**Motion:** Ms. Lunkuse made a motion to grant a variance from Title 5 Regulation 310 CMR 15.405(1)(h)(2) to allow a reduction of the requirement of a twelve (12) inch separation between the inlet and outlet tees to high groundwater, for 23 Tower Road. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 4-0. Motion approved.

**Consent Agenda:**

- Review and Approve Board of Health Meeting Minutes: April 19, 2022, May 3, 2022
- Review Year-to-Date Budget Reports, FY2022

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to approve the Year-to-Date budget reports. Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 4-0. Motion approved.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to approve the Board of Health meeting minutes for April 19, 2022 and May 3, 2022. Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0-1. Motion approved (Mr. Burman abstained).

**Health Director's Agenda:**

- **COVID-19, Update**  
Mr. Gupta noted that cases are on the lower side, and have dropped since last week. Mr. Gupta is not publicly posting the number of cases, because those numbers are not factual. There are many taking home tests, which are not calculated into totals reported to the State. There is a 20-dose booster clinic on Friday, there are still a few spots available. A booster clinic is being planned for ages 5-11. The vaccine for 6 months to 4 years is around the corner.
- **Childhood Vaccine Program, Update**  
Mr. Gupta announced that we have vaccinated 40 children, they are now allowed to attend school, 78 doses of various vaccines. We have started bringing in children from other towns as well.
- **Shared Services Grant, Update**  
Mr. Gupta noted that one of the nurses in the Shared Services Grant has resigned; they are looking to fill that position. Nancy Cleary resigned from her position, so we will be looking for a Public Health Nurse to fill that 5-hour per week position as well.
- **Mass in Motion Grant, Update**  
Mr. Gupta noted that, unfortunately, we did not receive the Mass in Motion grant; the State gave the grant to only a few communities; it pertains to healthy living. We will apply again next year.
- **Arbovirus Update**  
Aerial spraying took place on May 23rd-28<sup>th</sup>; it was a smaller area. Mr. Gupta noted that Central Mass Mosquito Control will conduct truck-mounted spraying of areas based on resident complaints on June 6, June 13, June 20 and June 27, 2022.
- **Housing Issues**  
We have received a couple housing cases from residents at Ashland Housing Authority; we are working with Ashland Housing to get them resolved. We also received a couple from Chestnut Place Apartments pertaining to complaints regarding trash around the dumpster; Mr. Gupta went there today and will issuing them a citation for ongoing non-compliance. Mr. Etskovitz inquired, and Mr. Gupta responded, that the restaurants are now in compliance and are being monitored.

### **Reorganization of the Board**

The Board discussed wanting to reappoint Mr. Etskovitz as Chair; there will need to be a full Board present to do this. The Board agreed to table the discussion to the next agenda.

### **Discuss July and August Meeting Dates and Agenda Topics for Future Meetings**

- Septic System Replacement, Variance Request, 29 Dean Road
- Reorganization of the Board

Mr. Etskovitz inquired about the Farmers' Market, Mr. Gupta noted there are approximately 35 vendors, only one vendor was not able to be approved, we are still working with them. There are no COVID restrictions at the Market at this point.

KG Narayana requested to make a public service announcement; he noted that International Yoga Day is June 18<sup>th</sup>, and he is organizing a yoga event in front of the gazebo at Stone Park at 8:00 AM, he invited all to attend.

Mr. Etskovitz noted that if Board Members would like to add any agenda items to reach out to Raj or Laura. The next meeting will be June 21, 2022.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Burman seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 4-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH  
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 6/7/2022 MEETING  
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Proclamation for the Mary Mortensen Award
2. Design Plan and Variance Request, 23 Tower Road
3. YTD Budget Report, YTD Revolving Fund Budget Report
4. April 19, 2022 and May 3, 2022 draft Meeting Minutes
5. A recording of the meeting is available at [WACATV.com](http://WACATV.com)