

Ashland Board of Health  
Meeting Minutes  
June 22, 2021  
ZOOM Meeting

*Ronald Etskovitz, Chair  
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director*

*Diane Mortensen, Vice Chair  
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk  
Bernadette Lunkuse, Member*

**Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:**

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

**Others Present:**

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent Director  
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant  
Sergeant Ed Burman, Ashland P.D.  
Mark Dassoni, Resident  
Steve Mitchell, Resident, Ashland Farmers Market  
Rob Moolenbeek, Resident, Ashland Farmers' Market  
Florence Seidel, Resident, Ashland Farmers' Market

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

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

**Citizens' Participation**

Mark Dassoni, resident, thanked Sergeant Burman for his work in ensuring homebound residents were able to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

**Updates on COVID-19**

Sergeant Burman shared data pertaining to the regional vaccine clinic between Ashland and six other communities. Sgt. Burman announced that this will be the final week of the regional clinic in Northborough, he was happy to report that in the last 16 weeks, they have vaccinated 16,000 people. It was a very successful collaboration. Sgt. Burman shared a chart on the screen which showed that Ashland, a town with a population of 19,700, had a vaccine rate of over 95% for those over age 75. Sgt. Burman noted that vaccine is available for residents who cannot locate it, or need a second dose.

Sgt. Burman noted that discussions have begun regarding a drive-up flu vaccine in October.

There is currently only one active COVID case in Ashland. We have had five breakthrough cases, which is a person who has been fully vaccinated beyond the fourteen days of the second dose, and has become positive. All five breakthrough cases had multiple exposures from a household member, although had very mild symptoms.

Mr. Etskovitz inquired as to whether people will need booster shots; Sgt. Burman responded that there is a study group to check for antibodies, a booster may be needed yearly if the antibodies are not present. Mr. Etskovitz thanked Sgt. Burman for his continued good work in the Town.

**Farmers' Market Regulations pertaining to Pets at the Market, 6:10 P.M.**

Steve Mitchell noted that it was brought to their attention that pets are against the State Regulations in areas of the Farmers' Market where there is food preparation. Rob Moolenbeek noted that for many years they have promoted the Market as being a dog-friendly Market. Mr. Gupta noted that he and Tom Curran, Food Inspector, did observe a number of dogs at the Farmers' Market. Mr. Gupta recommended that any areas where food is being served and prepared, be sectioned off. Mr. Moolenbeek inquired whether the Board of Health would consider a waiver. A discussion ensued as to whether a waiver is even allowed; Mr. Gupta noted that if the separation of areas is done, a waiver would not be necessary. Mr. Gupta will check on the distance required from the food preparation area. Ms. Mortensen noted that people will respect that we are trying to keep it sanitary for them, dogs are still allowed, just not in the food purchase area. Mr. Mitchell asked that Mr. Gupta provide clarification regarding products on the ground, so that they may inform the vendors. The Farmers' Market will place ready-to-eat food vendors in one area and provide signage regarding dogs beyond a certain point.

**7 Old Central Turnpike, septic waiver requests, 6:20 P.M.**

Dan McIntyre, Engineer, shared the septic design plan on the screen and discussed the design; it is designed for three bedrooms. They are asking for waivers from the local Regulations due to the lot size and the topography of the steep lot. The waivers are for one percolation test, rather than two, the size of the leaching area size, and the trench spacing.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to approve, for 7 Old Central Turnpike, waivers from 303.7, allowing the use of one percolation tests versus two; 303.11, not to design for a garbage disposal, with a deed recording to be placed on the property stating that no garbage disposal system shall be installed while the septic system is in use; and 303.14, trench spacing to be six feet rather than the required ten feet. Ms. Sekesogundu-Simon seconded the motion.

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

**40 Cross Street, septic waiver requests, 6:30 P.M.**

Eric Dickinson, Engineer for 40 Cross Street, shared the septic design plan on the screen and discussed the plan for the 3-bedroom home. Mr. Dickinson noted that the cesspool is in failure and is backing up into the house. There is an unused well on the property that was never decommissioned, and also a well that is in use that is shared with the neighbor, which is unusual. There is also a swimming pool, and some ledge. To avoid a pump, they will utilize an alternative Elgin GSF system. They were not able to design the system for a garbage grinder. The Elgin system will be utilized, with a 2.9-foot reduction to groundwater. A Deed notice will need to be recorded, that this home is to stay a 3-bedroom, unless the system is upgraded. The Deed restriction should also note that no garbage disposal is allowed to be installed. Mr. Dickinson noted that the Elgin is DEP approved, and therefore may not require a variance from the Board of Health, possibly just approval from the Health Agent/Director. This may be something the Board may want to look at in the future.

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to grant waivers for 40 Cross Street, Ashland Board of Health Regulations 303-11, to design the septic system without a garbage disposal, 303-14, to allow spacing of 6 feet, versus 10 feet; Section 310 CMR 15.284 to allow the system to be installed 2.9-feet above groundwater, with a condition that a Deed Recording be placed on the property stating no increase to design flow and room count, and no garbage disposal shall be installed while the system is in use. Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

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

**Health Agent/Director's Agenda:**

**a. Updating of Health Department Applications**

Mr. Etskovitz discussed the talent bank forms that have been received, which will be on the Select Board agenda. Mr. Etskovitz inquired about the procedure. Ms. Mortensen noted that Members can call the candidates, or can ask questions publicly at the meeting. Mr. Gupta noted that he is looking to update our internal permit application, he will keep the Board apprised.

**b. Public Health Excellence Grant (Fill in the Gap) for shared public health services**

Mr. Gupta discussed the Public Health Excellence Grant which Ashland is a part of. There are eight towns involved in the Grant, Hudson is the lead community. The hiring should be starting soon, a Director, a Public Health Nurse and an Epidemiologist are positions that will be filled, as well as a coordinator and an inspector, this will take 2-3 months. The Public Health Nurse will mainly be for Ashland, Maynard and Millis.

**c. Additional Emergency COVID-19 Funding Received from MHOA**

Mr. Gupta reported that the Health Department received an additional \$2,500 from MHOA (Mass. Health Officers Association), in addition to approximately \$28,000 that we have received in total for COVID related expenses.

**d. Central Mass. Mosquito Control Project, Abandoned Pools**

Mr. Gupta stated that we are dealing with three abandoned pools in Town, one has already been treated by Central Mass. Mosquito Control Program, another should be treated soon.

**e. Food Establishment updates: New-Prakalya Foods**

Mr. Gupta discussed the new takeout food establishment located inside Madras Market on Pond Street. This was formerly an Indian restaurant, Dosa Temple. During COVID the owner transitioned into a market and is renting out the kitchen to Prakalya Foods. Mr. Gupta noted that we will be doing a pre-opening inspection soon, and if they pass, issuing them a Permit.

**f. Corner Spot, Farmers' Market, updates**

Mr. Gupta noted that there are many events going on at the Corner Spot, and new vendors at the Farmers' Market; Tom Curran is coming out regularly to do inspections.

**Consent Agenda:**

**a. Year-to-Date Budget Reports**

**b. Meeting Minutes, April 20, 2021, May 5, 2021**

**Motion:** Ms. Mortensen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

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

**Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings, July 6, 2021**

Ms. Mortensen reminded the Board they will be meeting next week with the Select Board to review the Talent Bank Forms, and suggested July 13<sup>th</sup> as the next regular meeting date.

Ms. Mortensen will present a draft Animal Regulation at the next meeting, the Regulations are based on the Framingham Animal Regulations. Board Members will discuss, and ask questions; the following meeting in August there will be a public discussion, at which time the Board can vote to approve the Regulations.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Ms. Sekesogundu-Simon made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Lunkuse seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH  
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 6/22/2021 MEETING  
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Confirmed and Probable Cases – Graph
2. Spreadsheet including number of Fully Vaccinated by age range
3. 2013 FDA Food Code relating to Animals
4. 7 Old Central Turnpike, Septic Application and Design Plan
5. 40 Cross Street, Septic Application and Design Plan
6. CMMCP Abandoned Pools – Information Sheet
7. YTD Budget Reports
8. April 20, 2021, Draft Meeting Minutes
9. May 5, 2021, Draft Meeting Minutes
10. A recording of the meeting is available at [WACATV.com](http://WACATV.com)