

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2021
ZOOM Meeting

Ronald Etskovitz, Chair
Diane Mortensen, Vice Chair
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk
John Byrnes, Member
Bernadette Lunkuse, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Ron Etskovitz, Barbra Sekesogundu Simon and Jay Byrnes

Members Not Present

Bernadette Lunkuse
Diane Mortensen

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Sergeant Ed Burman, Ashland P.D.
Dona Walsh, Animal Inspector
Mark Dassoni, Resident
KG Narayana, Former BOH Member

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

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

Citizens' Participation

KG Narayana explained that he has been attending both Conservation and Planning Board meetings, watching the School projects, he noted that past Board of Health Members had agreed that having proper air circulation in the schools is important for the health of the students and staff; he hopes that the new school building plans will take this into account and dehumidification will be addressed. Mr. Narayana stated that the Board of Health may want to weigh in on this.

Mr. Dassoni hopes that the Board of Health will have some say regarding the Noise Bylaw, and the storm drainage as the new buildings are constructed.

COVID-19 Update

Sergeant Ed Burman noted that as of this morning we have 22 open cases, 11 of the cases are breakthrough cases (people who are fully vaccinated), one person is hospitalized but stable. There will be a vaccine clinic next Tuesday (August 24, 2021) from 8:00 AM – Noon. Sgt Burman coordinated this with the State DPH, it will be held at Mass Bay Community College, 270 Eliot Street, Ashland. It has been posted on the Town's website and social media, and the Framingham Source; he has also reached out to school superintendents and town administrators within the seven town collaborative. He will also work with the collaborative to plan the 8-month booster clinic.

Sgt. Burman noted that the paperwork has been sent in to the DPH so that we can run flu clinics this fall. Two weeks ago we took receipt of a brand new vaccine refrigerator/freezer for storage of vaccine.

Tomorrow night (August 18, 2021) is the School Committee Meeting with a public forum. It looks like the schools will be going with a test and stay protocol; if they are exposed to COVID they will be tested every day for 7 days while remaining in school, as long as they are asymptomatic. Sgt. Burman will be working with the schools and helping with the monitoring of cases. Mr. Etskovitz thanked Sgt. Burman for all of his work, and organizing another vaccine clinic.

Review of Regulations of the Ashland Board of Health relative to the Keeping of Animals

Mr. Byrnes reviewed the Draft Animal Regulations and had five questions/concerns he would like addressed, including the difference between a waiver and a variance. The word “variance” will be used throughout the Regulation, and on the Animal Permit Application. Mr. Byrnes referenced Section 4, regarding abutters being notified by Certified Mail, and if the neighbor, Mr. Etskovitz noted abutters are given the opportunity to voice concerns to the Board of Health, this will be further discussed and clarified. Mr. Byrnes inquired if the same application should be used for a renewal; Mr. Gupta noted that we are working on updating applications, including creating a renewal Animal Permit application. Mr. Gupta noted that once we finalize the Animal Regulations, Zoning will bring their Regulations pertaining to keeping of animals on par with the Board of Health Regulations.

Discuss Possible Board of Health Meeting/Retreat to review Goals/Objectives

Mr. Etskovitz believes the Board should meet as a group to discuss any goals or objectives we may have, possibly in September or October. We will carry this item to the next agenda when everyone is here.

Consent Agenda:

Appointment of Burial Agents (Yearly Appointment):

- Tara M. Ward
- Cindy Livingstone
- John Matarese, Jr.
- John Matarese, Sr.

Review and Approve Minutes, June 8, 2021, June 22, 2021

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to accept the consent agenda with the appointment of burial agents and approval of minutes. Ms. Sekesogundu-Simon seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0. Motion approved.

Health Director’s Agenda:

- a. **MetroWest Shared Public Health Services Grant / “Fill in the Gap” Grant**
Mr. Gupta explained there are five positions that are being filled for the Grant; a health director, an epidemiologist, a public health nurse, an inspector and one coordinator under this Grant. We will be sharing the services with eight other towns. DPH is giving \$300,000 for the next three years for these services.
- b. **Arbovirus Update**
Mr. Gupta reported there are 40 positive West Nile Virus water samples; so far in Massachusetts there hasn’t been a single human or animal case yet this year.
- c. **Beach Reports**
Mr. Gupta reported that Upper Hopkinton Beach is still closed for swimming; additional testing will be conducted tomorrow (August 18, 2021).

d. **Restaurant Plan Reviews – Mazi, Shaw’s**

Mr. Gupta explained that he received plans for Mazi for outdoor seating; he has reviewed and gave them approval today. Mr. Gupta noted he is reviewing equipment plans for Shaw’s, and should be finished up in a few days.

Mr. Etskovitz noted that he is happy to hear that there are no positive human cases after what we went through just two years ago. Mr. Gupta discussed the abandoned pools that were remedied, and other precautions and reminders that are being put out on social media to prevent mosquito bites.

Discuss Agenda Topics for Future Meetings:

- DEP Approved Innovative/alternative septic-system technology, whether to continue to require Board of Health Approval
- Board of Health Retreat/Meeting to discuss future goals and objectives
- Request Jim Adams, School Superintendent to attend meeting to update Board on School COVID protocols
- Keeping of Animal Regulations

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Sekesogundu Simon seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 8/17/2021 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. COVID-19 Confirmed and Probable Cases – Graph
2. Draft Keeping of Animal Regulations
3. June 8, 2021, June 22, 2021, Draft Meeting Minutes
4. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com