

Harvard Board of Health Meeting Minutes
Zoom Meeting
January 22, 2024
Approved: February 12, 2024

Board of Health Members present: Libby Levison; Sharon McCarthy; Christopher Mitchell

Others Attending: Alison Flynn, Board of Health Clerk; Jim Garreffo, Health Agent, Nashoba Associated Boards of Health.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Ms. McCarthy called the meeting to order at approximately 4:02 p.m. Ms. Flynn provided abbreviated remote meeting instructions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Community EMS Program discussion

Mr. Mitchell reported that the Ambulance Service, in conjunction with the Council on Aging (COA), is considering expanding their services to include the Community EMS Program run by the Commonwealth. Mr. Mitchell indicated that through the program the Ambulance Service would offer preventative services at the COA or in-home, (including wellness, blood pressure, weight, and glucose checks, medication compliance support,) extending non-emergency support. Regulations say the Community EMS Program needs approval by the BOH and Ambulance Medical Director. Mr. Mitchell stated that Harvard's involvement is in early stages but wanted to hear the BOH's initial thoughts and ensure that NABH would find it complimentary and not competing. Mr. Garreffo indicated that he does not think the program would be competing because the EMS would be able to see residents who want to be seen in their home and could be complementary in that the EMS could refer residents to the Town nursing services. Mr. Mitchell agreed to put Mr. Depsey in touch with Tamara Bedard, Community Health Manager, so they can further discuss the timing of calls to Nashoba's public health Nursing services. Mr. Mitchell indicated that they would eventually like to offer fall reduction, at-home safety, and guidance assisting children with disabilities. He stated they will first need to develop standard operating procedures and training for ambulance staff.. Mr. Mitchell indicated that Chief Sicard was very supportive of the idea at a meeting earlier in the day. Ms. McCarthy stated that the Ambulance Service has the BOH's agreement to proceed; Mr. Mitchell stated that the Ambulance Service will come to the BOH to present when the program is further along in development.

Update from the Transfer Station Committee

Mr. Mitchell reported on a Transfer Station committee meeting with Tim Kilhart. He reported that Mr. Kilhart's biggest concern is making any significant physical changes to the Transfer Station before the Town understands the implications of the monitoring of the old Landfill. He indicated that the Transfer Station Committee is looking to see if it's sustainable and it offers the residents the best option for their recyclables and waste. Mr. Mitchell stated that Mr. Kilhart was well

organized and presented in round numbers how the Transfer Station is currently self-sustaining. Mr. Mitchell indicated that there was a lot of discussion regarding the waste streams and whether it is collected in the best way; Mr. Mitchell stated that Mr. Kilhart was confident that this has been considered and in accordance with guidance he's received from MassToss. Mr. Mitchell reported that Mr. Kilhart stated that the Transfer Station Committee will continue to examine that. Ms. Levison indicated that she would like to confirm in the financials that the entry sticker revenue is still covering the operating costs, and the bags are still covering the costs for tipping and freight for solid waste. Ms. Levison stated that Mr. Kilhart reported that the households using the Transfer Station have increased by 30-40. Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Levison indicated that Harvard's solid waste has gone down from 1,200 lbs/household to 600 lbs/household. They stated that recycling has stayed roughly level with 2019 levels. Ms. Levison stated that Mr. Kilhart is very concerned that a composting program at the Transfer Station could attract animals; they have reached out to Black Earth about this concern. Ms. Levison indicated that she and other Transfer Station Committee members have visited two Transfer Stations in neighboring Towns and hope to visit one other. She further indicated that they hope to hold an information gathering forum in February. Mr. Mitchell reported that Ms. Congdon of MassDEP stated that Harvard receives the most RDP points in Central MA and the next item to reduce from the waste stream, by 20-30%, would be compostables.

Report from discussion with Jenna Montgomery re use of opioid funds (1/19/24)

Ms. McCarthy reported on her discussion with Ms. Montgomery of NABH. Ms. McCarthy indicated that she wrote, at Ms. Montgomery's advice, the company, JSI, who is contracted by DPH to run the Opioid Abatement Partnership to assist communities. Ms. McCarthy stated that she asked JSI what is done with small towns who do not have existing infrastructure to tackle the problem and whether it is legally possible to subcontract with regional resources. Ms. McCarthy indicated that she and Ms. Montgomery also discussed the current grief counseling services available with upcoming meetings scheduled for January 30th and February 13th. Ms. Montgomery also advised that they would be able to tailor grief meetings for the student population. Mr. Garreffi indicated that have funding to support the meetings through mid-March, but Ms. Montgomery is seeking grants to continue the program. Ms. Flynn indicated that she sent out a News/Announcement about the grief support groups in November and has information posted on the Mental & Behavioral Health page of the BOH website. The Board agreed to hold off on sending out another advertisement regarding the groups until mid-February when NABH should know if they will be receiving grant funds to continue. Ms. McCarthy also reported that Ms. Montgomery is becoming certified as a Mental Health Instructor to teach mental health first aid. Mr. Garreffi suggested that this may be a service they can offer to first responders once she is trained.

Report from Land Use Boards (LUB) Meeting of 1/9/24

Mr. Garreffi and Ms. Flynn reported on their attendance at the LUB Meeting including discussion regarding the possible adoption of the Specialized Stretch Code, status of the Village at Robin Lane, Montachusett Planning Commission's consideration of regionalizing some functions, updates to the Master Plan, status of the Permitting Guide, update regarding the shuttle to the Littleton MBTA station, and an update regarding Craftsman Village.

Report from DPH LBOH webinar of 1/9/24

Ms. McCarthy reported that the webinar included a discussion of the release of warming shelter guidance; she indicated that Ms. Flynn circulated the guidance, including to Ms. Natoli. She reported that the webinar also included overview on the weather pattern.

Report from DPH webinar regarding winter weather and emergency readiness (1/12/24)

Ms. Levison reported that the webinar she attended appears to have been very similar to that which Ms. McCarthy attended. She indicated that her notes from the webinar were included in the merged packet.

Clerk & Health Agent Update, including but not limited to:

- Ms. Flynn asked the BOH Members to consider payment of the invoice from Lena Aloise for her graphic design work on the BOH's mosquito and tick postcard as well as the recycling postcard. She advised that the invoice is for 10 hours at \$15 per hour. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to pay Ms. Aloise the \$150.00; Ms. Levison seconded. All were in favor by call vote.
- Ms. Flynn reported that the BOH has received a handful of stable permit applications. As the permits do not expire until the end of February, the Members agreed they would hold off on review until the second meeting in February or first meeting in March.
- Ms. Flynn advised that she and Ms. McCarthy suggest the BOH wait to consider revisions to the Private Wells regulation until amendments to the Fees regulation are complete. The Board agreed.
- The group reviewed the annual calendar. Ms. Levison asked that the BOH review in February the addresses required to test for PFA; and discuss tick/mosquito outreach in March. The BOH agreed to take the Health Foundation of Central MA grant application off the calendar; Mr. Mitchell will consider eligibility of the Ambulance Service.
- Ms. Flynn advised that she added the winter preparedness links circulated by Ms. Montgomery and DPH to the BOH webpage and asked whether the BOH would like her to send out the same as an e-alert. The group agreed that she should do so if the Town home page has not done so already.
- Mr. Garreffo updated the BOH on his conversations with the property manager for the Appleworks Building. Mr. Garreffo stated that he advised that if they are swapping out tenants for tenants with similar water uses, they will have less issue, and should come see the BOH if they are looking at tenants which will require more use. Mr. Garreffo indicated that designing a replacement system on the property across the street may be an option if one of the existing systems fails.
- Ms. Levison asked Mr. Garreffo to share the NABH submission to the Annual Town Report with the other Members.

PERMITS

Review of septic permits recently issued by the Health Agent

Mr. Garreffo reported that two permits for systems with a failed distribution box, and a permit for a replacement system for which variances were approved at a prior meeting, were issued since the last BOH meeting.

Review of completed waste hauler permit application packages

Ms. Flynn asked the Board of Health to consider the completed waste hauler application package of Republic Services, Inc. She reported that Yukon Holdings, Inc., property owner for 280 Ayer Road, which did not accept recycling services in 2023 has now signed up for recycling services with Republic Services, Inc. Ms. Levison also noted that Dunkin Donuts appears to also have

recycling services. Ms. Levison made a motion to approve the permit, with the request that Ms. Flynn send an e-mail asking Republic to include “textiles” and not just “clothing” in their educational materials regarding what items should be recycled; Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Consider amendments to the Board of Health Fees regulation

Ms. McCarthy suggested that the Fees regulation needs clarification regarding the fees for multiple dwelling units on one septic system. She indicated that the BOH’s administrative fee, required because those projects require more attention from the BOH Administrative Assistant, needs to be more clearly labeled, and the separate assessment should be collected and kept in in “593 account” to be used in the event that the BOH has to hire a consultant to consider complex septic or soil remediation issues. The BOH discussed circumstances where soil testing might be required by the BOH. They agreed it would be rare circumstances for the BOH to require such testing for a lot, but that a fee should remain in the regulation in case of such a situation. The Board also agreed that project fee assessment categories should be only for septic systems or environmental restoration. Ms. McCarthy agreed to work with Ms. Flynn outside of a meeting to further revise the regulation in preparation for a future meeting.

Further discussion re scheduling EDS Trailer clean-out

Ms. Flynn reported that she has not heard back from the Fire Chief or Ms. Natoli regarding the proposed April dates; she will follow-up.

(Mr. Garreffi exited the meeting at approximately 5:29 pm)

Review draft flow chart regarding water quality requirements

Ms. Levison indicated she will continue to work on the draft chart.

PFAS Update

Mr. Mitchell reported from his attendance at the RAB working group meeting. He indicated that work will likely not begin in Harvard until the Spring and that the consultants were appreciative of the HBOH’s offer to assist with obtaining access agreements if needed. Mr. Mitchell noted that the online repository is becoming much more organized, and they have noted to include messaging in The Harvard Press and at Harvard Public Library. Ms. Levison indicated that the last quarterly report was mailed to the Harvard Public Library. Mr. Mitchell stated that the EPA’s new action limits are still under review.

Mr. Mitchell indicated that his request of Mr. Gaffney of Safewell for PFAS data from Harvard was in anticipation of review of the addresses required to test. Ms. Levison suggested the BOH ask for clarification of the red dots on the map of results. She noted that the purple cluster near the Pond was concerning. Mr. Mitchell suggested Ms. Flynn reach out to Safewell for clarification of the red dots and ask if there are any areas of concern not already noted by the BOH; the group agreed that Ms. Flynn should also reach out to approved samplers Friot’s Water Treatment and Skillings & Sons to see if there are any other areas of concern. Ms. Levison reported that she explained to Ms. Schoepke of Safewell that the BOH has not tested the pond for PFAS because there are no standards for pond water/surface water and pond water moves.

Further consideration of reflective vest giveaway

Ms. Levison indicated that her research suggests the vests are Class 2; Mr. Mitchell agreed. Ms. Levison agreed to prepare a Letter to the Editor to be considered by The Harvard Press. The Members also agreed that Ms. Flynn should also send out an e-alert.

Further consideration of advertisement re move to Hildreth House

The Members agreed this is no longer necessary.

Continued annual review Bare Hill Pond Algal Bloom Protocol, including advisory templates

Ms. Levison indicated that she has not had the opportunity to work on the templates.

Update re installation of satellite phone bases at EDS and Public Safety Buildings

Ms. Levison indicated that she does not have an update on the satellite phone base installation.

Review Action Items

Action items were reviewed. Ms. Levison asked if Ms. Flynn would pursue fee schedules from Boxboro and Bolton. Ms. Levison indicated that she would still like to do a memo regarding synthetic turf including that it has an 8-10 year lifespan and there is no way currently to recycle it.

MINUTES

The Members considered the draft Minutes of December 30, 2023. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of December 30th as amended; Ms. Levison seconded. Ms. Levison and Mr. Mitchell were in favor; Ms. McCarthy abstained as she was not present for the meeting.

The Members considered the draft Minutes of January 8, 2024. Ms. Levison made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 8th as amended; Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

DISCUSS ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Items for the next agenda were discussed, including consideration of attendance at the MACC webinar re synthetic turf.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Levison made a motion to adjourn at 6:00 pm; Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Flynn, Clerk

Documents Referenced:

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes of 12/30/23 & 1/8/24
- Draft amendments to the Fees regulation
- S. McCarthy's notes from the DPH LBOH call of 1/9/24
- L. Levison's notes re the DPH webinar re winter weather & emergency readiness
- Invoice from L. Aloise, January 2024
- Safewell summary of results (October 2023)
- Winter Safety News/Announcement
- BOH Year-at-a-glance
- Action items from 1/8/24