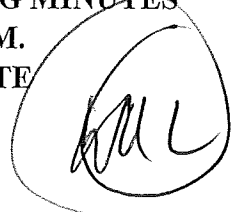


BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 8, 2021, 5:30P.M.

LOCATION: REMOTE



PRESENT:

Acting Chairperson Renee D'Argento, Member Stephen Themelis, Health Agent Kalene Gendron, Interim Assistant Trish DeLorey, Residents: Margie LaFleur, Philip Durno and Pat Harrington

Acting Chairperson Renee D'Argento opened the meeting at 5:30p.m. She announced that the meeting was remote participation only; meeting is being cablecast live and recorded by Pepperell Community Media.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Acting Chairperson D'Argento presented to the Board the meeting minutes of April 27, 2021. On a motion made by Stephen Themelis; seconded by Renee D'Argento, it was voted all in favor to approve the meeting minutes of April 27, 2021 as amended.

ACTION ITEMS:

Tobacco Regulations – Discussion on next steps to follow

Discussion ensued among Board Members on how to proceed. Renee D'Argento referenced two sample regulations and a checklist of policy decisions as well as an email from D.J. Wilson regarding towns that have implemented a ban on e-cigarettes. It was noted that there has not been a FDA compliance failure since 2015 in the town of Pepperell. The Board agreed that they were not in a position to vote on any local tobacco or vaping product regulations at this time. However, Renee D'Argento informed the Board that she would be inclined to eventually implement a tobacco and vaping product regulation within the town to deter the younger people from smoking and vaping. Stephen Themelis suggested that the Board set up a time to have a working session; to review and discuss on how best to benefit the Town of Pepperell. All agreed this should take place after the Board becomes a full member Board.

Health Agent recommended that Board review a few examples of other town's tobacco and vaping regulations and reference their fee structures and also consider the size of the town. Kalene noted that she will be able to provide the Board a list of towns to research.

Margie LaFleur questioned the cost to the town if they were to join the Tobacco Control Alliance; and how will the Board keep up with various new products coming onto the market. The Health Agent replied that amending the local regulations would not be difficult and that the Alliance is all grant funded so the only cost to the Town would be in personnel enforcement when doing compliance inspections. She also noted that the Board should consider the revenue stream for permitting and violation fees noting currently there are four retailers who sell tobacco and vaping products in town. The Board members agreed that more research is necessary.

PFAS – BOH’s Role in Public Education

Acting Chairperson Renee D’Argento informed the Board that the PFAS Forum last week was well attended and the DPW, Select Board and MassDEP did very well educating the public and answering many questions. Ms. D’Argento shared that the latest PFAS test results for the month of May were 14ppt; which is good news as it appears the numbers are heading in the right direction. She hopes that when the Bemis Road Well comes on line that more water blending will occur bringing the PFAS numbers down even lower.

Discussion ensued regarding the educational aspect of PFAS. Ms. D’Argento noted that the Select Board will be creating a PFAS Task Force who will be looking at various options on how to treat this PFAS issue. Ms. D’Argento also commented that the Newsflash section on our town website provides a lot of valuable information. However, she raised the question on what the Board of Health’s role should be in regard to the private wells and PFAS testing.

Health Agent noted that the Board of Health is a secondary support system for the DPW as MassDEP governs the public water supply. Discussion then continued on the subject of the state of Massachusetts offering reduced cost funding for private well testing; as the PFAS testing cost is currently ranging above four hundred dollars. Health Agent Gendron noted that at this time the State is not offering the Town of Pepperell any reduce cost for testing. She will continue to send more detailed information on PFAS to the Board as it becomes available.

Accessory Apartments – Follow-up Discussion

Health Agent Gendron explained that Title V regulations have stipulations on how she reviews proposals when homeowners want to increase the size of their living space in their homes. She informed the Board that she uses these regulations to navigate how she will review the plan against their current septic system. Commonly, when there is a new Board she presents the question relative to how to review these septic plans. Some members will view this additional living space as other than a single family. In that case, Title V says if you have other than a single family there is a stipulation with your septic tank; hence there are different ways to proceed. Historically, the PBOH has had her use straight Title V regulations to approach these proposals. Ms. Gendron requested clarification from the Board in the event there is a home with a separate garage and living space. She questioned the Board on how that dwelling is to be determined; should it be considered other than a single family or is it considered just additional rooms. And, as long as the homeowners are within their septic capacity would that be satisfactory to this Board.

Discussion ensued. Both Renee D’Argento and Stephen Themelis agreed that the Building Inspector and Zoning Officer determines the type of dwelling and moving forward Ms. Gendron should continue reviewing the plans and address the septic designs according to how these two offices classify the property.

117 Nashua Road – Request Variance

Board members reviewed a letter from Kevin Ritchie, P.E. from Civil Solutions, Inc. regarding a Sewage Disposal System Upgrade Design at 117 Nashua Road. Mr. Ritchie noted in his letter that due to unforeseen circumstances encountered during the construction of the new system, the system required 3.5 feet of cover material over the leaching field. Due to this extra six inches of cover material, the design now requires the Board's approval of the plan. Discussion ensued and Health Agent Gendron recommended approval of this plan. Stephen Themelis made a motion to approve the 3.5 feet of cover material over a leaching field rather than the requisite of 3 feet at 117 Nashua Road; motion was seconded by Renee D'Argento and voted all in favor.

Preliminary Summary Report on Pepperell Private Well Water Investigation

Stephen Themelis informed the Board that he is a professional certified Geologist. He has worked as a Geologist in the fields of Hydrogeology, Petroleum and Coal. Specifically to this topic (irrigation wells) he has participated in monitoring contaminated aquifers in New England and New Jersey and as a Geologist over the past decades has developed a very good understanding of the nature of groundwater aquifers and surficial geology.

Therefore, when we talk specifically about the Town of Pepperell and the question is presented on how many aquifers are in the town; Mr. Themelis commented that many people do not understand that there are more than one aquifer in the town; in fact, we have multiple aquifers in the Town of Pepperell.

Mr. Themelis explained that recently he did further research to back-up information on this topic. He contacted a Hydrogeologist at USGS in Northboro, MA. In a discussion with him, Stephen asked the question if there was any documentation or evidence to support that irrigation wells were detrimental to our public water supply wells and if there were any connection between the two. This Hydrogeologist concluded that he did not know of any supporting documentation confirming this theory.

Mr. Themelis also contacted a State Geologist who has worked in Massachusetts for the past twenty years and had a discussion with him on the topic of bedrock wells versus stratified drift wells in which he indicated our municipal wells are located in glacial stratified drift sand deposits. The State Geologist confirmed that there are no studies that he knew of that showed any inter-connection between private bedrock wells and municipal wells. The State Geologist noted that if there were any bedrock wells in the vicinity of municipal wells, that the municipal wells were probably the ones to draw groundwater away from the bedrock wells as the municipal wells pump at a much higher rate of volume in the sediment than private wells in bedrock thereby intercepting the groundwater flow source. General conclusion was that there is no known factual evidence that shows connectivity between the private wells and our municipal wells.

Discussion ensued and Mr. Themelis answered many questions. He said that he was also in contact with Skillings and Sons who noted that most private wells in Pepperell are 300 to 400 feet deep bedrock wells that yield a volume of less than 5gpm.

These private wells are mostly drinking water wells with approximately twelve percent being used for irrigation purposes only. Municipal wells are very different and are approximately 60 feet deep and produce a high volume of 750-1,000 gpm. Mr. Themelis stated that the bedrock wells and municipal wells are in completely separate aquifers. There are three municipal well fields in the Town of Pepperell, i.e. Bemis, Jersey and Nashua; all of these fields are in separate aquifers. It was concluded that there are no known Geologic studies showing any inter-connection between private wells and municipal wells in this region.

Mr. Themelis commented that the Board may also want to reconsider the possible litigation disputes that may arise if moratorium restrictions were put in place that prohibit property owners from installing irrigation wells especially without scientific proof that it could hamper our public water supply.

Stephen Themelis reported that after his research he met with Pat Harrington of the Board of Public Works and Ken Kalinowski, the Town Engineer/DPW Director. He informed them of his research and it was the consensus of the group to no longer request a moratorium on irrigation wells. Mr. Themelis shared that this meeting lead to many broader topics of discussion such as future water supply demands and public education on water conservation as well as the many challenges the Water Division faces in the Town of Pepperell seeking future groundwater aquifer sources.

Pat Harrington and all attendees thanked Mr. Themelis for his time and research. Pat Harrington on behalf of the Board of Public Works formerly withdrew his previous request to the Board of Health for a moratorium on private irrigation well water use. Mr. Themelis shared that he is currently viewing some detailed digital surficial geologic maps from NMCOG relative to the Town of Pepperell. He looks forward to doing a presentation in the near future to the Board of Public Works, the DPW and all those interested in this subject.

BOH Vacancy – Discussion with Applicants

Acting Chairperson Renee D'Argento announced that there were two applicants that submitted interest in filling the open vacancy on the Board of Health. Margie LaFleur submitted a request to be re-appointed to the Board to complete Phil Durno's term who had recently resigned. There was also a second Applicant who expressed interest as well. This Applicant spoke with Ms. D'Argento prior to meeting as she had several questions on the responsibilities and the level of commitment involved. Ms. D'Argento gave a brief summary of the Applicant's qualifications, background and interest. Stephen Themelis noted that he left a message for the Applicant but never received a call back. It was unclear if the Applicant was still interested as she was not in attendance.

Stephen Themelis recommended that Margie LaFleur be re-appointed to the Board of Health. He noted Ms. LaFleur's experience, qualifications and accomplishments and expressed strongly

that she would again be a great asset to the Board of Health. Acting Chairperson D'Argento agreed and welcomed Ms. LaFleur back to the Board. Ms. D'Argento noted that she will contact the Town Administrator to request that Margie LaFleur's re-appointment be put on the next Select Board's Meeting Agenda. Margie LaFleur thanked the Board for their recommendation to the Select Board. Ms. LaFleur shared her appreciation and enthusiasm on becoming a Board Member again.

HEALTH AGENT COMMENTS:

COVID-19 Updates:

Health Agent Kalene Gendron informed the Board that Governor Baker is expected to rescind the State of Emergency status on June 15th. Covid-19 calls into the Board of Health Office have significantly decreased. She reminded all those who are not yet vaccinated that there is still an advisory to wear face masks when in public.

MATTERS THAT MAY BE RAISED THAT THE CHAIR DID NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATE

Tighe & Bond – Landfill Post-Closure Engineering Services:

Renee D'Argento questioned why the past two Tighe & Bond Invoices for the Landfill Monitoring were delayed in the payment process. Trish DeLorey explained that she contacted the Tighe & Bond's Accounting Department and corrected the email address they had on file. Moving forward she is confident all invoices will be received and paid in a timely manner.

Discussion ensued on who receives and reviews the results of Tighe & Bond's engineering services relative to the landfill monitoring and should these results be posted on our town website. Ms. Gendron confirmed that she receives an electronic version of the report. Stephen Themelis recommended getting the Town Administrator's approval before posting the landfill monitoring results on our website.

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) – Grant Recipient:

Health Agent Gendron reported that the NABH office is in receipt of a grant for approximately two hundred thousand dollars to increase staffing. This will entail a full time Health Agent, a full time Public Health Educator and a part time Food Inspector. As part of the grant procedure, the State is looking for an endorsement from the Pepperell Board of Health Office confirming their cooperation with NABH as they navigate this process. The signature from the Acting Chairperson will be required to demonstrate support from all members. Discussion ensued and several questions were asked on the projected timeframe of this grant and what the expectations were of these new positions and the role they will serve. Questions were asked why a Social Worker position was not included in this grant. Ms. Gendron recommended to the Board that they bring up the Social Worker position to the NABH Office at its next quarterly Executive Board Meeting. Discussion continued on where to obtain data that supports the need for a full time Social Worker position. The Board concluded that further discussions and research was

needed on how to educate the public on social services currently available. The Board agreed that their goals were to meet with the Police and the Council on Aging Office to obtain data to promote the need for a full time Social Worker position.

Mosquito Spraying Opt Out Application:

Renee D'Argento informed the Board that the Mosquito Opt Out Application was sent to the State the day before the deadline. She also created a Mosquito Educational Brochure and will review and finalize it with the Town Administrator. This brochure will be posted on the town website. During Town Meeting, it will be displayed and copies will be handed out to attendees.

FUTURE MEETING:

The next Board of Health Meeting is scheduled to be in person at the Town Hall, in Conference Room A on June 15th, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion made by Stephen Themelis; seconded by Renee D'Argento, the Board adjourned the meeting at 6:56p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Trish DeLorey, Interim Assistant to the Board of Health