



---

# **Town of Ashland, Office of the Board of Health**

Ashland Board of Health Meeting (Zoom Only)  
Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2026

*Ed Burman, Chair*  
*John Byrnes, Vice Chair*  
*Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director*

*David Kinsman, Clerk*  
*Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Member*  
*Maurice Krasner, Member*

## **Board Members Present**

Ed Burman, Jay Byrnes, David Kinsman, Maurice Krasner, and Barbra Sekesogundu Simon.

## **Others Present**

Rajit Gupta, Health Director  
Laura Clifford, Administrative Assistant

## **Call Meeting to Order**

Chair, Ed Burman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

## **Citizen's Participation.**

None.

## **Warren Conference Center, Board to review and approve HACCP Plan.**

Kim Sternick, General Manager of Warren Conference Center was present for the meeting. Mr. Gupta explained that Warren Conference Center, because they will be serving oysters and clams, are required to submit a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) Plan. Mr. Gupta stated that he and Tom Curran, Food Inspector, have reviewed the Plan, but because it is a variance, it requires Board of Health approval.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes motioned to approve Warren Conference Center's HACCP Plan; the motion was seconded by Mr. Krasner.

**Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved unanimously.  
Ms. Sternick thanked the Board.

## **Chestnut Place Apartments, Ongoing Sanitary Issues at the Dumpster Area / Housing Cases.**

Stacey Lovell and Elizabeth Lane of Willow Bridge / Chestnut Place Apartments, were present for this meeting.

Mr. Gupta explained that this has been an ongoing issue; the situation is worsening, Mr. Gupta expressed concern with the neighborhood, that the rodent activity at the dumpster is spreading, and management has been unresponsive to his emails. Mr. Gupta stated that he has had to issue three \$300 citations within the last month for issues at the dumpster. In addition to the dumpster area sanitation problems, two units have ongoing pest issues dating back to October and November.

Mr. Gupta stated that the management has failed to provide pest control reports, which is a legal requirement specified in the Order to Correct letter. Ms. Lovell acknowledged the pest control issues are still ongoing and difficult to control. She also mentioned they were down a maintenance staff member but are checking on the dumpster in the morning and afternoon; Mr. Kinsman suggested they check mid-day as well; Ms. Lovell agreed.

Mr. Gupta stated that the pest issue has been going on for three months; he discussed the possibility of escalating the issue by declaring a public health nuisance, which would increase the daily fines to \$1,000. Ms. Lovell stated that weekly treatments are occurring; she noted that tenants are given the option to move units, or to move out. Ms. Lovell acknowledged receiving pushback from tenants in regards to vacating the units during treatments.

The Board agreed on the following steps for management to take:

- Start sending weekly pest control reports to the Health Director.
- Send the last few weeks of reports to the Health Director the following morning.
- Acknowledge any emails from the Health Director, including citations.
- Mr. Gupta will assist by notifying residents that they must allow access for pest control.
- The management was asked to return to the next board meeting for another update.

**Introduction of Berlin Awach, Youth Coordinator for the Town of Ashland.**

Berlin Awach was introduced as the new Youth Coordinator for the Town of Ashland, her office is based at the High School. Current projects include the Positive Community Norms Working Group and the STAND campaign (where students hang up posters based on youth risk behavioral survey data). Ms. Awach is also working on re-engaging work groups and stakeholder decisions.

Mr. Byrnes introduced himself and Mr. Kinsman, who will be the new BOH liaison to Decisions at Every Turn for 2026. Board Members welcomed Ms. Awach to Ashland and said they look forward to working with her.

**Debrief of January 7, 2026 Joint Select Board / Board of Health Meeting.**

Mr. Gupta explained that a group including youth participants from the High School would be meeting to discuss NFG (Nicotine-Free Generation) with the Select Board Chair, Joe Magnani. Ms. Awach reported introducing the idea to the youth at the High School; they are passionate about promoting healthy behavior among youth; the students were asked to learn more about NFG and to survey their friends about it, and to report their feedback. Ms. Awach and the students will be meeting with Mr. Magnani on February 2nd to discuss their views.

The Board confirmed its position from the joint meeting: The Board would not regulate or take action on NFG itself, but would implement and enforce any bylaw that might come from a citizen or Select Board-pursued warrant at a Town meeting.

### **Health Director's Agenda:**

- Food Establishments: Killa Pizza (formerly Pizza Mine) Giovanni's 67 (formerly Murphy's), NY Pizza (formerly Pizza Bella), Mama's House, Connect Church.
  - Mr. Gupta reported that Killa Pizza is getting work done and will need to schedule a pre-opening inspection.
  - Giovanni's 67 was conducting work without a permit and a Stop Work order was issued.
  - New York Pizza is working to get permitted.
  - Mama's House and Connect Church permits had expired on December 31st. Mama's House has since applied and received their permit, but Connect Church's application for the year is still pending.
- OpenGov Permitting/Inspectional Software, Update.

Mr. Gupta reported that the transition to the OpenGov permitting system went well on the permitting side, but the inspectional software is not currently being used; he hopes the State software Metrix will soon be available.
- Second MRC / Stop the Bleed Training, possible date in March 2026.

Anne Fitzgerald, Public Health Nurse, held a "Stop the Bleed" training and is planning another one in March due to demand, there will be multiple trainings for MRC members including "Stop the Bleed," Narcan training, CPR, and First Aid.
- MetroWest Health Foundation Grant Received, \$25,000.

Mr. Gupta reported that the Health Department received a check for \$12,500, half of the \$25,000 grant from the MetroWest Health Foundation for our Childhood Vaccine Clinic.
- Flu Vaccine Clinic for Uninsured / Underinsured; January 14, 2026, Ashland Town Hall.

A flu clinic for underinsured or uninsured residents was held, but had no attendees.
- Housing Cases: 49 Cherry Street, 21 Main Street, #201.
  - An open housing case at 49 Cherry Street was resolved, Mr. Gupta will be doing a reinspection next week.
  - A new case at 21 Main Street, Unit 201, involves the Fire Department tagging equipment to be replaced and other issues. An Order to Correct letter was sent to Management.
- Disease Investigations; Update.

Mr. Gupta reported that disease investigation included one case of Salmonella with no findings, and three ongoing TB cases.
- PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness) Exercise, Natick, January 15, 2026.

Mr. Gupta and Nurse Anne Fitzgerald are working on an All Hazards Public Health Emergency Response Framework with the help of PHEP.

### **Consent Agenda:**

- Review and Approve FY2026 YTD Budget Reports.
- Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2025, January 7, 2026.

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes motioned to approve the consent agenda; which was seconded by Mr. Krasner.

**Vote:** 5-0-0. The motion was approved.

**Discuss Future Agenda Items.**

Mr. Byrnes would like the Kratom subject to be put back on the agenda and suggested the Board meet in-person. Mr. Byrnes will update the Board pursuant to a discussion he had with Representative Lewis regarding bills moving through the State legislature.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Mr. Byrnes motioned to adjourn the Board of Health meeting; Mr. Burman seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 5-0-0. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

**ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 1/20/2026 MEETING**  
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Warren Conference Center HAACP Plan.
2. Photos of Chestnut Place Apartments Dumpster Area
3. FY2026 Budget Documents
4. Draft Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2025, January 7, 2026