

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2022
ZOOM Meeting

Ronald Etskovitz, Chair
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Clerk
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

Ed Burman, Member
John Byrnes, Member
Bernadette Lunkuse, Member

Members Present Via Zoom Meeting:

Ron Etskovitz, Barbra Sekesogundu-Simon, Ed Burman and Jay Byrnes

Members Absent

Bernadette Lunkuse

Others Present:

Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director
Laura Clifford, BOH Admin. Assistant
Mark Dasoni, Resident
Barbara Joy, Resident
Jon Fetherston, Ashland Housing Authority, Board of Commissioners
Richard Maher, Ashland Housing Authority, Board of Commissioners
Candace Avery, Ashland Housing Authority, Executive Director

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

Mr. Etskovitz called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

Citizens Participation

Mark Dasoni inquired as to any plans by the Town to address the expected high temperatures, and incidence of heat stroke, particularly for elderly residents. Mr. Gupta noted that the Community Center and Public Library will both be open for people to come to cool off; Ashland Fire Captain Moraghan will be available to handle any emergency calls.

Ashland Housing Authority, 51B Park Road, 41D Park Road, Non-Compliance on Order to Correct Letters

Mr. Gupta informed the Board that 51B Park Road has been addressed for right now. In regards to 41D Park Road, Mr. Gupta explained that Barbara Joy had contacted the Health Department Office regarding not having a stove in her unit. Mr. Gupta noted that a housing inspection was completed on May 31, 2022; an Order to Correct letter was issued citing a violation to 105 CMR 410.351, and to date, we have not received compliance from the Housing Authority.

Mr. Etskovitz outlined some of the facts from the documents and correspondence, noting there was a cooking fire in the apartment. Correspondence from Ashland Housing had noted that the oven was to be disabled until safeguards were put in place and medical documentation is received stating that the stove could be used safely.

Ms. Joy stated that she has not had a stove for nine months and that eating out has been costly. Mr. Gupta noted that it was not a requirement of the Fire Department that the oven be disabled, this was at the direction of the Housing Authority. Ms. Joy noted that she believes the fire was caused by bumping into the knob, and stated that no food was left cooking on the stove.

Candace Avery stated the action taken to disable the stove was solely based on the safety and security of all residents in the building. Ms. Avery noted that they have worked with Ms. Joy over the years, including paying costs associated with cleaning and removal of items from the porch that were causing issues. Ms. Avery stated that the oxygen tanks used and stored in the unit by the tenant could have caused a very serious fire, and until Ms. Joy can provide supporting documentation from her doctor stating that she can live and cook independently, they will not reinstall the stove. Ms. Avery noted that this has been brought to the attention of many advocates, and all are in agreement, that it is best for the safety of everyone, including Ms. Joy, that a doctor's letter be obtained. Ms. Avery noted there is a microwave oven in the unit, and she receives food delivery service from Meals on Wheels.

Ms. Joy said that her doctors have indicated that they do not want to be liable for writing a letter pertaining to her competency.

Mr. Burman noted that, in his experience, he believes a doctor would provide a note to a patient if requested. Ms. Sekesogundu-Simon noted that patients on oxygen must remain five-feet away from stoves, and the doctors may not feel comfortable issuing a letter to someone on oxygen, for her safety as well as others.

Jon Fetherston stated that, as a Commissioner for 10 years, and as a prior Board of Health Member, safety has always been a priority; he noted that they will not relent until they have been provided with a doctor's note. Mr. Fetherston offered to work with Ms. Joy and her doctor, with Ms. Joy's permission. Ms. Joy agreed.

Ashland Board of Health Fee Schedule, Minor Revisions

Mr. Gupta explained that we have encountered the need to have a Temporary Animal Permit, due to events at the Library and the Farmers' Market. This has been added to the Fee Schedule. Mr. Gupta explained that there is also a need to add a line and fee for Well Repairs.

Motion: Mr. Burman made a motion to approve the revised Fee Schedule as presented. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Member, John Byrnes, Agenda

RAM, Remote Area Medical, Update

Mr. Byrnes explained that a Remote Area Medical (RAM) Representative was supposed to come out on July 13th, but the site visit had to be rescheduled to September 1st.

Mr. Burnham reported that they will be on the September 16th meeting agenda for the Metropolitan Boston EMS Council, Board of Directors Meeting. Many major hospitals will have liaisons in attendance. This could be an opportunity to make a good volunteer push.

Consent Agenda:

Review and Approve Board of Health Meeting Minutes, June 21, 2022

Reappointment of Burial Agents (Yearly Appointment):

- Cindy Livingston, Ashland Town Clerk
- Christopher Sullivan, Ashland Assistant Town Clerk
- John Matarese, Sr.
- John Matarese, Jr.

Review End of Year Budget Report FY2022, YTD Budget Report FY2023

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to pass the consent agenda. Mr. Burman seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

Health Director's Agenda:

- **COVID-19, Update**
Mr. Gupta reported that the COVID numbers are up this week, Massachusetts saw 40% more cases last week than the week before, due to variant BA5. We are getting vaccine from Framingham Health Department and will be putting together some clinics. We still have many home testing kits available for residents.
- **Arbovirus Update**
There was one positive mosquito sample discovered in Eastern Massachusetts, there have been no human or animal cases so far this year.
- **10 Saddle Hill Lane, Well**
A well driller came into the office and stated 10 Saddle Hill Road is not producing any water; they are going through issues, but they are first required to get Conservation Commission approval; that hearing is scheduled for August 8, 2022.
- **Honey Dew Donuts, 236 Pond Street, New Ownership**
There has been a change of ownership at this Honey Dew location; there were issues here with the previous owner. The new owner has been issued a Permit.
- **Farmers' Market**
Things are going well at the Farmers' Market; there will be some animals there this weekend, including two alpacas, and four goats. We have purchased a handwash station with a grant we had received, for use at the Farmers' Market, or any other events where it may be needed.
- **Childhood Vaccine Program, Update**
The Childhood Vaccine Program is doing great. To date, we have vaccinated 61 children; of which 42 are Ashland children, 19 are Hudson children.

Reorganization of the Board (If all Members are present)

Tabled.

Discuss Meeting Dates and Agenda Topics for Future Meetings:

Mr. Gupta noted that we had received a complaint of unpermitted chickens and a rooster at a property on Prospect Street, there were also issues with the chickens going on to the neighbor's property. We had planned to have a hearing for an Animal Waiver, but the residents decided to not to keep the chickens. Mr. Etskovitz inquired as to how we ensure the chickens have been removed; Mr. Gupta noted we will follow up.

Board Members agreed to next meet on August 9th, or the 23rd, pending any urgent issues. Mr. Gupta noted there may be a need for an urgent meeting due to the Saddle Hill Road well.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Burman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 7/19/2022 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Order to Correct Letter, dated May 31, 2022
2. Email communications from Ashland Housing Authority Director
3. Revised Fee Schedule, dated July 19, 2022
4. Burial Agent Appointment Letters
5. June 21, 2022 draft Meeting Minutes
6. Year-to-Date Budget Report, FY23
7. Arbovirus Report
8. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com