

Ashland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2023
ZOOM Meeting

Ronald Etskovitz, Chair
Ed Burman, Vice Chair
Rajit Gupta, Health Agent/Director

David Kinsman, Clerk
John Byrnes, Member
Barbra Sekesogundu Simon, Member

Board Members Present

Ron Etskovitz, Ed Burman, David Kinsman, Jay Byrnes

Board Members Absent

Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Others Present

Rajit Gupta, Health Director
Laura Clifford, Administrative Assistant
Eric Dickinson, Engineer

Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Etskovitz called the Ashland Board of Health meeting to order at 6:04 PM and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Citizen's Participation

None.

61 Valley Road, Septic Variance Request

Eric Dickinson, engineer representing the owners of 61 Valley Road, shared the septic design plan on the screen. Mr. Dickinson explained that the home is located in a subdivision and was built in 1973; the existing system is in the front. The owners wanted to go with the FAST Geo-flow system option; Mr. Dickinson discussed the advantages, he noted that a garbage grinder with this type of system is not a good idea. Deed restrictions will need to be recorded for the I/A System as well as the garbage grinder.

Motion: Mr. Kinsman made a motion to grant a variance from Ashland Board of Health Regulations Section 303-11 to allow the subsurface sewage disposal system to be designed without a garbage disposal with the conditions that no garbage disposal be installed within the house and a deed recording be placed on the property stating no garbage disposal shall be installed in the house while the subsurface sewage disposal system is in use, for 61 Valley Road; Mr. Byrnes seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion approved.

Motion: Mr. Kinsman made a motion to grant a waiver from Title 5 Regulation Section 15.405(h)(2) to allow a reduction from 4-feet to 2-feet separation for soils with percolation rates greater than 2-minutes per inch between the bottom of the soil absorption system and the seasonal high groundwater elevation.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion approved.

Motion: Mr. Kinsman made a motion to grant a waiver from Title 5 Regulation Section 15.405(1)(i) to allow a reduction of the requirement of 12-inch separation between the inlet and outlet tees to high groundwater, provided that all boots or pipe joints are sealed with hydraulic cement or installed with watertight sleeves and the tank is proven watertight.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion approved.

RAM Clinic, 2024, Discuss Potential Location

Mr. Byrnes announced that he has received official notice from Ed Burman that Keefe Tech has agreed to host it again this year. The dates are as follows: August 9 – August 11, 2024. We will be meeting with Keefe Tech next week to discuss further. RAM has penciled us in and will have staff available on that date. Mr. Byrnes noted that this is fairly common to have back-to-back years; the process should be smoother this time around. One area we will work on is recruitment of medical professionals. Mr. Byrnes noted that as we get towards the end of November-December, we can add updates to the agendas again.

Health Director's Agenda:

- **DAET Advisory Committee Meeting, and, Fall Retreat, Ashland Middle School, November 16, 2023**

Mr. Gupta noted that he attended the DAET Advisory Committee Meeting on October 11th; they are planning to change some of the ways they are functioning, they will be updating us during the Fall Retreat on November 16th at the Middle School. Mr. Byrnes noted that he is unable to attend the Retreat as he will be traveling.
- **Restaurant Updates, Boston Paintball**

Mr. Gupta noted that we received a complaint on Boston Paintball, and found they were operating without a food permit. They have since applied for a permit, and Tom Curran conducted a reinspection. Once we receive the pest control report we will issue their permit. Mr. Gupta noted that Dairy Queen is in the process of changing ownership.
- **Arbovirus Report**

Mr. Gupta reported that there were 164 positive West Nile Virus water samples, 4 cases in the State. There were 28 positive EEE water samples, 0 cases in the State, which is very good news.
- **Housing Case: Chestnut Place Apartments, 137 Pond Street, Mill Pond Rest Home, Updates**

There are currently four ongoing housing cases at Chestnut Place Apartments. There is still roach activity in two of the units, he is working with management on this. Mr. Gupta stated that he is waiting for the Attorney General's Office for an update on 137 Pond State. There have been no updates, and no complaints received from Mill Pond Rest Home. We are waiting for a pest control report; he will update the Board when it is received.
- **Howe Street Former Landfill, 102 Howe Street, Update**

Mr. Gupta reported that we had our quarterly monitoring done on September 28th, we have started with the new company, Langdon, who is working on the report. Once we have the report, we will send it to the Board.
- **Flu/COVID Clinic Schedule/Update**

Mr. Gupta reported that we are doing strong with our clinics, we had a clinic today and administered 34 vaccines. Pine Hill Pharmacy offered Covid, Flu and RSV vaccines; we have three more clinics scheduled with them. Shingles vaccine will be offered at an upcoming clinic.
- **Disease Investigation/Cases**

Mr. Gupta reported that we received a Hepatitis B a Hepatitis C case, and a Cryptosporidiosis case. The State is working on the Hepatitis B case, and the Cryptosporidiosis case was from foreign travel.
- **Performance Standards for Local Public Health**

Mr. Gupta noted that the Board was sent the Performance Standards for Local Public Health; the state DPH has come out with standards and minimum standards for local Boards of Health, and services offered, as well as standards on staffing. Boards of Health may also be required to be credentialed.

Mr. Burman inquired as to the status of the Mill Pond Rest Home closure; Mr. Gupta stated that as of now, they are expecting to close by the end of this year; he will verify this with their management.

Mr. Kinsman inquired as to how Mr. Gupta expects Ashland to hold up in regards to the new Performance Standards; Mr. Gupta stated that he is fully credentialed; Tom Curran, Food Inspector, has his RS and Food Safety certification, and both nurses, are fully credentialed. If any Board Member would like to attend trainings, we can arrange for this; there are some funds available in our budget for this. They are setting up training hubs; Ashland's hub is out of Needham.

Consent Agenda:

- **Review and Approve Board of Health Draft Meeting Minutes, September 5, 2023**

This item was tabled as the incorrect meeting minutes date was posted on the agenda.

- **Review FY2024 YTD Budget Report**

Motion: Mr. Byrnes made a motion to approve the FY2024 Budget Report from the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Burman.

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion approved.

Discuss Future Agenda Items / meeting dates: November 7 or November 21, 2023

RAM Clinic will be on the agenda as an ongoing agenda item. November 7th is election day, but there may not be elections in Ashland.

Adjournment

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

Vote: 4-0-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

ASHLAND BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE 10/17/2023 MEETING
(All items stored in the Board of Health files unless otherwise noted)

1. Design Plan, 61 Valley Road
2. Letter to Board/Request for Variances, 61 Valley Road
3. Suggested Motions, 61 Valley Road
4. Arbovirus Report
5. FY2024 YTD Budget Reports
6. A recording of the meeting is available at WACATV.com