

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Wednesday, February 21st, 2024 – 5:00 PM
Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room and Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Board: Rachel Stoler and Michael Nelson

Staff: Ryan Paxton – Director of Public Health

Other: Timothy Lepore, MD – Medical Director, Town of Montague, John Briggs, Director of Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, various members of the public

Michael Nelson opened the meeting at 5:01 PM

Michael Nelson, as acting chair, elected to hold a moment of silence for the late Anne Stuart, former Administrative Assistant to the Montague Board of Health.

Minutes:

January 17th, 2024, Minutes

- The BOH Members reviewed the minutes.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the January Minutes as presented. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – Aye and Nelson – Aye

Director's Report:

- Director, Ryan Paxton, presented the January 2024 Director's Report to the Board
- Discussed ongoing code enforcement at 96 and 106 Third St as a part of the ongoing housing court case Eric Marks v. Alycar Investments, LLC & Daniel Carthon.
- Discussed two complaints regarding Food City and their subsequent investigation.
- Discussed completion of 2023 bi-annual food inspections
- The Director provided a summary of the ongoing septic system and well installations.
- The Director provided the Board with an update regarding weekly Covid-19 alert levels.
- The Director provided the Board with an update regarding ongoing code enforcement at 19 Sherman Drive and Parcel #19-0-85.
- The Director provided an update to the Board regarding all three properties referred to the Attorney General's Office's Neighborhood Renewal Division: 10 Unity Street, 12 Federal Street, and 10 Unity Street.
- Discussed the fire that occurred at 7 G Street. The Director reported that there was ongoing code enforcement at the property prior to the fire, but at this time all three families have been relocated.
- The Director provided the Board with an update regarding hiring a Board of Health Administrative Assistant. It was stated that a candidate has been identified and an offer will be made in the near future.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Director's Report. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Nurse Report:

- January 2024 Nurse’s Report presented by Director Ryan Paxton.
- Director Ryan Paxton stated that he recently asked Public Health Nurse, Brittany Tuttle, to reach out to the Brickhouse for collaboration.
- The Director stated that nurse office hours have not received any additional attendance from the initial visit reported previously to the Board.
- Rachel Stoler stated that there is a foot clinic at the Senior Center and suggested that the Public Health Nurse hold office hours during it.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Nurse’s Report. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Animal/Barn Inspector Report:

- Director, Ryan Paxton, presented the January 2024 Animal & Barn Inspector Report

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Animal/Barn Inspector’s Report. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye.

Michael Nelson, as Acting Chair, elected to move the discussion of the “Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District” to the end of the agenda to allow for additional members of the public to arrive in time for that discussion.

Discussion: Regulations Prohibiting Smoking in Membership Associations

- Director, Ryan Paxton, presented specific language in the current Montague Board of Health regulation, “Prohibiting Smoking in Membership Associations,” regarding the prohibition of smoking in enclosed areas and the definition of enclosed areas.
- The Director stated that he believes there are presently one or more membership associations that are in violation of the regulation, specifically with respect to smoking areas being enclosed.
- Michael Nelson stated that he visited one of the membership associations and he observed a smoking area that he believes to be in violation of the regulation. Nelson stated that an educational approach would be desirable.
- The Director stated that he will visit each membership association and work with them to ensure that their smoking areas are in collaboration with the regulation.

Unanticipated Topics:

Unsigned Documents

- Director, Ryan Paxton, informed the Board that two documents were missing physical signatures:
 - Amended Montague Well Regulations were missing Michael Nelson’s signature. They were amended during the December 20, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

- Medical Director contract agreement was missing both Rachel Stoler and Michael Nelsons' signatures respectively. The contract was voted on and approved during the January 17, 2024, Board of Health meeting.

Discussion: Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District

- Director, Ryan Paxton, provided a brief history of the topic going back to 2021, when article 25 of the May 21, 2021, Annual Town Meeting was approved, giving the Selectboard the authority to petition to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. Paxton summarized relevant information regarding proposed legislation as well as the currently defunct municipal opt-out process for state conducted aerial spraying of pesticides.
- Paxton presented a letter addressed to the Board of Health that was submitted by Montague resident, Paul Lipke. The letter presented 4 recommendations to the Board of Health.
- Paxton stated that the Town and the Board of Health are currently limited to educational campaigns with respect to mosquito control but also that regular activities conducted by the Department of Public Works contribute to the overall management of mosquito populations.
- John Briggs, Director of the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, presented a summary of the services currently available through the district. Briggs highlighted the importance of arbovirus surveillance. Briggs discussed the pilot program for the application of BTI (*Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis*) for the control of West Nile Virus vectors. Briggs stated adulticides would not be used and are not something that is planned by the district.
- Montague resident, Sally Pick, asked Briggs for some clarification regarding BTI.
 - Briggs described current practices for the district's BTI pilot treatment program.
 - Pick asked a follow-up question regarding surveillance. Briggs stated that the diseases of focus are Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus.
- Montague resident, Ariel Elan, commented that the proposed legislation would largely change the governance of mosquito control districts. Elan stated that the proposed legislation would address the concern that presently, mosquito control districts could perform mosquito control activities that are not desired by the member town.
 - Elan additionally discussed her concerns regarding the history of establishing mosquito control districts and what motivations may have driven the formation of these districts.
- Medical Director, Timothy Lepore, MD, commented that the historic prevalence of malaria in the United States was often the reason for mosquito control interventions. He stated that West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and tick-borne viruses were not large considerations for mosquito intervention during that time.
- Montague Resident, Jane Alessandra, stated that she agrees with the letter presented on behalf of Paul Lipke. Alessandra further spoke in favor of delaying decisions related to the district until the proposed legislation is decided upon.
 - Alessandra stated she is in favor of the Town, voicing their support for the proposed legislation.
 - Alessandra stated that she would desire the Town to have further discussion about what interventions would be taken if arbovirus was discovered in Montague. Alessandra further stated that education is the most effective treatment option.

- Alessandra stated that larvicides have negative side effects, including impacting biodiversity negatively.
- Alessandra stated she does not want the Town to ever utilize adulticides or airborne larvicides.
- Pick commented that she is in favor of the Board of Health writing a letter of support for both proposed bills to our state legislators.

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to direct Ryan Paxton, Director of Public Health, to put together a letter to Senator Commerford in support of S. 445 and H. 845 encouraging their passing. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye.

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to direct Ryan Paxton to prepare an interim mosquito management plan, while awaiting the results of the proposed legislation (S.445 & H.845), using past practices; specifically targeting water and education to the public. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion Passes.***

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye.

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to direct Ryan Paxton to begin discussions with the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District to see what additional services would be beneficial to overlap with our existing services and to further discuss what information would be available through surveillance and what we do in response to that information. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion Passes.***

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye.

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to direct Ryan Paxton to notify the Selectboard that the Board of Health is investigating how the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District may fit in with the plans of the Board of Health for mosquito control in our community and recommend that the Selectboard take no further action until they hear further from the Board of Health. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion Passes.***

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye.

Meeting adjourned: 5:58PM

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to adjourn the Board of Health Meeting. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye.

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Documents:

January 2024 Minutes

January 2024 Director’s Report

January 2024 Nurse’s Report

January 2024 Animal and Barn Inspector Report

Regulation “Smoking Prohibited in Membership Associations”

Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District FAQ

Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District Brochure

Massachusetts House Bill H.845

Massachusetts Senate Bill S.445

ATM 5/22/21 Article 25

Letter to the Board of Health regarding the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District from Montague Resident, Paul Lipke