

## MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 5:00 PM

Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room and ZOOM

### Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Melanie Ames-Zamojski, Chair (in person) and Rachel Stoler (in person)

**Staff:** Ryan Paxton, Health Director for Montague and Geneva Bickford, Board of Health Clerk

**Other:** John Briggs

**Melanie Ames-Zamojski opened the meeting at 5:01 PM**

**Michael Nelson was absent, and Roll Call Votes were taken**

#### **Minutes:**

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the May 1, 2025 and May 28, 2025, minutes.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the May 1, 2025 Minutes. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski– aye*

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the May 28, 2025 Minutes. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski– aye*

#### **Director’s Report:**

- Ryan Paxton (“Paxton”), Health Director, presented the May 2025 Director’s Report.
  - 15 Unity St and 453 Millers Falls Rd are scheduled for a hearing on July 2 at 5 pm and will discuss those further then.
  - 62 E Chestnut Hill Rd has been condemned and placard as a result of the May 1 hearing. Paxton is not sure the occupant was rehomed by the property owner but he does know she was placed in some sort of residential program of some kind for a time period.
  - Nice Snack Parlor has expanded their operation and opened a residential kitchen to make pie crusts. A pre-operational inspection was done for the residential kitchen as well as the location at Nova Motorcycle. The Nova Motorcycle location does not have a 3 bay sink but there is an understanding that they cannot expand their operations without making changes. Nice Snack Parlor currently brings dishes back to the residential kitchen where she has sanitizer and a dish machine.
  - Our Lady of Peace had an anonymous complaint about one of the community meals. The complaint was unfounded and Paxton has no concerns.
  - Paxton identified an unlicensed residential kitchen operating at 43 E Chestnut Hill Rd selling cheesecake and baked goods. They have opted to cease and have closed.
  - Paxton met with the Attorney General’s Office Abandoned Properties Meeting to discuss receiverships. Paxton is working to get 96 Third St and a couple of other properties into receivership.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Director’s Report. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.***

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski– aye*

#### **Nurse Report:**

- Ryan Paxton, Health Director, presented the May 2025 Nurse’s Report.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Nurse's Report. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski– aye*

**Animal/Barn Inspector Report:**

- Ryan Paxton, Health Director, presented the May 2025 Animal/Barn Inspector Report.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the Animal/Barn Inspector's Report. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – Aye*

**Discussion: Code Enforcement Regarding Temporary Housing at Millers Falls Rod & Gun – Votes may be taken:**

- Director to update Board regarding code enforcement relating to unauthorized temporary housing at Millers Falls Rod & Gun.
- Board to discuss possible actions in response to code violations present.
  - Paxton and the Board discussed the ongoing temporary housing at the Miller's Falls Rod and Gun. A 90-day variance was granted on October 23, 2024 allowing the individual to remain in the RV. The Board has decided that while the individual is in violation the board will not do further enforcement as it could result in the individual potentially becoming homeless. Paxton will do a site visit to help reinforce the stipulations put in place on October 23, 2024.

**Discussion: Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District – Votes may be taken:**

- Continuing discussion regarding the Board of Health's recommendation to the Selectboard.
- John Briggs, Director of Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, to present to Board.
  - John Briggs joins the Board and discusses concerns some residents had regarding joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. The Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District cannot mandate any services other than surveillance. Surveillance is included in the annual fee and any additional services would have to be approved by the town. The State may try to pressure the mosquito control district to provide other services but they cannot force anything. The town always has the option to withdraw from the district if they choose to. The Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District has a mission statement, and their goal is to avoid applications through a robust surveillance program. The idea is to use the early warning system of surveillance data, get that information out to the public and try to change the behavior of your constituents to take more of a proactive approach to reducing habitat on their properties. Paxton and the Board discussed green swimming pools and options the Board would have if one was found. A Order to Correct would be issued. Paxton would not offer a solution but would advise them to clean the pool. You can cite it under the housing code. The Board of Health has the authority to correct problems on the property of the violator whenever there is not a response and while we normally would not do that as we are not going to repair someone's home but with a pool being outside and accessible the town could hire a contractor to take down the pool or even apply fly tabs to the pool. There is a small legal risk but it is pretty well supported in MGL Ch 111. Currently Montague has no surveillance in town. Membership cost is \$5,250 for one year and that cost includes surveillance, outreach, weekly reports, end of year annual reports, meeting attendance, and special occasions such as science fairs etc. Funds were placed in a special revenue account for the Board of Health. Zamojski and Stoler both feel more knowledge is better and no spraying of any chemicals will take place without approval from the town. The Board agreed to recommend joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District.

Melanie Ames-Zamojski **Motioned** to recommend having the Selectboard seek membership to the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – Aye*

**Discussion: Opioid Settlement Funds Update – Votes may be taken:**

- Project intern will present overview of opioid settlement fund planning to Board.
  - Xiaoqi Wang is a summer intern from Umass working with the Board of Health. Wang presented the board with a power point presentation regarding the Opioid Settlement Funds.
- Director request authorization to use funds to support planned focus group.
  - Wang and Paxton have been working together and Wang has prepared a draft newspaper article advertising a focus group for people who have lived experience. Paxton asks the Board to consider using some of the settlement funds to offer a stipend to participants in the focus group. Paxton has heard that often times a gift card is what will get people to participate, and Paxton would like to give a \$50 gift card and provide refreshments as a way to help draw in participants. There was discussion of maybe including town residents who maybe have a decreased sense of safety because of sharps on the ground or due to other community members intoxicated but Paxton cautions that the intention of having people with lived experience is to avoid having it be informed by folks that have a stigmatized view of substance use. Stoler and Paxton discuss further and Stoler agrees with Paxton's view point and suggests maybe the survey could be open to anybody and we could gather that sort of experience and include it as well and keep the focus group limited to those with lived experience.

Melanie Ames-Zamojski **Motioned** to convene a focus group with an eye on two and to limit the group to no more than 12 participants and allow for a stipend of a \$50 gift card for up to 12 people and refreshments. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – Aye*

Melanie Ames-Zamojski **Motioned** to develop a survey to provide information on how to invest or where to invest the opioid settlement funds by doing generalized survey inclusive of online and paper. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – Aye*

**Discussion: Rescheduling July & September Meetings – Votes may be taken:**

- Board to consider changing dates of regular July and September meetings.
  - The board agreed to change the July and September BOH Meetings to July 16, 2025 and September 17, 2025.

Melanie Ames-Zamojski **Motioned** to change the July Board of Health Meeting to July 16, 2025 and the September Board of Health Meeting to September 17, 2025.. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.**

- *Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – Aye*

**Meeting adjourned: 6:08 PM**

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to adjourn the Board of Health Meeting. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.**

*Stoler – aye, and Ames-Zamojski – aye*

Approved by: 

Date: 08/28/25

**Documents:**

May 1, 2025 Minutes;

May 28, 2025 Minutes;

Director's Report;

Nurse's Report;

Animal and Barn Inspector Report;

Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club Letter 10/28/24;

2025 Massachusetts Arbovirus Surveillance and Response Plan; and

Montague Opioid Settlement Funds Strategy Power Point Presentation;