

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Wednesday, October 29th, 2025 – 5:00 PM
Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room and ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Nelson, Rachel Stoler and Melanie Ames-Zamojski

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

Other: Ada Langford, Mark Schwaber, Phoeve Walker & Raygan Pendriss (Zoom)

Melanie Ames-Zamojski opened the meeting at 5:00 PM

Minutes:

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the September 17, 2025, minutes.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the September 17, 2025 Minutes. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

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

Director’s Report:

- Ryan Paxton (“Paxton”), Health Director, presented the September 2025 Director’s Report.
 - 15 Unity St #2 is ongoing as they are still in Court.
 - 21 Franklin St has ongoing lead enforcement.
 - 453 Millers Falls Rd is still on going. The Court order allows the property owner to now live at the residence and the tenant is needs to vacate the residence in January. The tenant is now experiencing heating issues and the tenant was cited for removing the stove from the house and her reason for removal was because she purchased it.
 - Food City had a reported food borne illness, an undercooked rotisserie chicken was reported. During inspection the health inspector found that the rotisserie was not working and Food City began cooking their rotisserie chickens in the pizza oven.

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

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

Nurse Report:

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

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

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

Animal/Barn Inspector Report:

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

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

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

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

- Director to provide updates regarding opioid settlement fund to Board

- Peobe Walker (“Walker”) from Franklin Regional Council of Governments (“FRCOG”). Walker provided the board with updated handouts of the October 6, 2025 Settlement Listening Session Summary. Walker also provided the board with copies of FRCOG’s Opioid Abatement Collaborative Progress Report, a handout titled “The State of Opioid Use for the Valley Health Regional Collaborative” and a copy of the Mosaic Municipal Matching Grant. The Board, Walker and Paxton discussed several benefits to Montague joining the grant. The Municipal Matching Grant Fund Application is due 11/7/25 and Walker advises the board they must vote today to join the matching grant. Walker states everyone is getting shafted because we are in a regional school district and the one way the state has worked to make that better for rural communities is to allow regional applications to overmatch. The regional group consists of the towns/city of Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Erving, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, Northfield, Orange, Rowe and Shelburne. Walker, Paxton and the board discuss various ideas on what makes the most sense to put money towards. The Board voted to join the regional matching grant project and agreed to put forward \$15,000 towards the grant.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** that Montague join the application for the Municipal Matching Grant and that we pledge \$15,000 of our opioid settlement funds to support the amount contributed by the municipalities towards the Municipal Matching Grant. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

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

Unanticipated: Two Ghosts Vinyl Café – Votes may be taken:

- Two Ghosts Vinyl Café will be a hybrid record shop serving coffee and select mocktails. No food of any kind will be served or prepared. Ada Langford and Mark Schwaber were present from Two Ghosts Vinyl Café to request a variance on the requirement for a three-bay sink. The board, Paxton, Langford and Schwaber discussed different options and the board agreed to grant the requested variance allowing Two Ghosts Vinyl Café to purchase a dishwashing machine rather than install a three-bay sink.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to grant a variance to Two Ghosts Vinyl Café and allow them to purchase a dishwashing machine in place of a three-bay sink. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

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

Discussion: Medical Director Contract – Votes may be taken:

- Board to discuss Medical Director Contract for 2026.
 - Paxton and the Board discuss Dr. Lepore’s upcoming contract. Paxton has not discussed this with Dr. Lepore before tonight’s meeting but feels that Dr. Lepore is not used to the fullest like he should be. The board asks Paxton to follow up with the Valley Health Collaborative and there will be further discussion at the November meeting.

Discussion: Updating Well Regulations – Votes may be taken:

- Director to present review and recommendations provided by Office of Local and Regional Health technical assistance.
 - Paxton received a handful of recommendations from the Office of Local and Regional Health and they prepared a document that gives recommendations for what is not in Montague’s current well regulations that are in the state model regulation and suggestions were made on which ones should be adopted. Suggestions were made regarding updating the water quality standards and updating the sodium regulation. A recommendation was also made regarding testing at the sale of a property, simply a requirement that you test the water quality at the transfer of sale and that information be provided to the buyer. They did include PFAS as a measured contaminant but not as an enforceable contaminant. They also suggested regulating irrigation wells which

Montague does not include in the definition of private wells and fall outside the prevue of our regulations. It would simply be to know the location of them and for permitting. The board will discuss this more at a future meeting.

Unanticipated: Health Director, Ryan Paxton resigns as Health Director:

- Paxton and the board discussed his resignation. Paxton will be leaving Montague and his last day will be November 26, 2025. The board and Paxton discussed ongoing work and work that will continue after he's left. There was discussion regarding the job description, salary and posting of the open position. The board would like to do the hiring of the Health Director rather than form a full hiring committee. Paxton will discuss with the Town Administrator the hiring process and requirements. Paxton will also work to have the job opening posted in several different locations with the hopes that a well-qualified candidate will be found. The board thanks Paxton for all the work he has done and commends him on his professionalism and vision for this department.

Unanticipated: Reschedule the November Board of Health Meeting:

- The board reschedules November's meeting from November 26, 2025 to November 19, 2025 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Meeting adjourned: 6:44 PM

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

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

Approved by: *Rachel Stoler*

Date: *11/19/25*

Documents:

September 17, 2025 Minutes;
September 2025 Director's Report;
September 2025 Public Health Nurse Report;
September 2025 Animal Inspector/Barn Inspector Report;
FRCOG Opioid Settlement Listening Session Summary 10/6/25;
FRCOG Opioid Settlement Listening Session Summary Updated;
FRCOG Opioid Abatement Collaborative Progress Report;
FRCOG "The State of Opioid Use for the Valley Health Collaborative Chart;
Mosaic Municipal Matching Grant Project Budget; and
Two Ghosts Vinyl Café Advertisement.