

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Wednesday, August 27th, 2025 – 5:00 PM

ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

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

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

Other: Margaret Piwonka, Sheri, Luke Goodridge, Xiaoqu Wang, Joe Dilk

***The Board of Health August 27, 2025 meeting was amended to be held via Zoom only as town hall had no running water due to an unexpected water main break on 8/27/25.**

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

Discussion: Title 5 Complaint received regarding 2 Burek Drive – Votes may be taken:

- Board to discuss options for responding to a complaint received on July 28, 2025, regarding the septic system located at 2 Burek Drive.
 - The Board and Ryan Paxton, (“Paxton”) discussed a complaint received on July 28, 2025 from Kathleen (“Burek”) and John Burek who reside at 4 Burek Drive. Indicating they believe the leach field located on 2 Burek Drive has run off that has gone into the brook that borders the Leh Lot and the Cronen Lot off of Taylor Hill Road and believe a Title 5 should be required of the owner(s) of 2 Burek Drive. A similar complaint was received in April and Michael Theroux, the Greenfield Health Director, inspected the property at that time and determined that there was no need to require a Title 5. Attorney Luke Goodridge (“Goodridge”) is present and represents David J. Leh and the Leh Family Trust, the owners of 2 Burek Drive. Goodridge discusses with the board the ongoing legal issues with the commonly owned property and the retaliatory complaints against his clients. Goodridge explains there is no evidence of any system failure and there is no basis to believe that a Title 5 should be required. Goodridge advises the board that a judgement was entered by the court and per that order the property is to be split, however, that cannot be done until Special Town Meeting to address the issue with the road. Goodridge also discusses with the board the fact that these complaints continue to come in and are unfounded and appear to be harassment as Kathleen Burek is the animal inspector and an employee for the board of health. The board ultimately decided to do nothing with this complaint unless evidence is provided by Burek. Ames-Zamojski indicates this matter may require a meeting in Executive Session in the future.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to NOT recommend further action unless the complainant provides evidence that demonstrates why there needs to be an inspection. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

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

Unanticipated Discussion: Windy Hollow Vet Clinic, 2 Fosters Road, Well Variance Request:

- Margaret Piwonka (“Piwonka”) and Joe Dilk (“Dilk”) are present via zoom to request a well variance for 2 Fosters Rd. Paxton explains the sodium levels are high at 2 Fosters Road and the Montague regulation passed in 1980 requires sodium levels not to exceed 20 mg per liter and 2 Fosters Road is testing at 36.9 mg per liter. Piwonka and Dilk discuss the increased levels with the board. Piwonka discusses documents from the EPA she found that recommends reducing sodium levels to between 30-60 mg per liter. Dilk advises the board that the levels are miniscule and would not pose a health risk. Paxton feels Dilk and Piwonka’s arguments are accurate and Paxton does not believe there would be a health risk. Paxton asks the board to consider a retest at some point to be sure the levels are going down as there have been other properties that tested in excess and were required to treat the problem. The board did discuss with Piwonka the single-family residence on the property and Piwonka advises that the house is not hooked up to water at this time and it is intended to primarily be a business. The board agrees to grant the variance but

requires that they retest the well again in 12 months to check the sodium levels. Ames-Zamojski asks that an agenda item be added regarding updating the well regulations.

Michael Nelson **Motioned** to grant a variance for 2 Fosters Rd from the town regulation of 20 mgs per liter to allow for this slightly higher rate of sodium with a requirement to retest the water in 12 months. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.**

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

Minutes:

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the June 18, 2025, minutes.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the June 18, 2025 Minutes. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.**

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

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the July 2, 2025, minutes.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the July 2, 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 June 2025 Director’s Report.

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

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

- Ryan Paxton (“Paxton”), Health Director, presented the July 2025 Director’s Report.

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 June 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

- Ryan Paxton, Health Director, presented the July 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 June 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

- Ryan Paxton, Health Director, presented the July 2025 Animal/Barn Inspector Report.
 - Paxton explained there was a report of deceased chickens on 7/28/25, a call was received regarding deceased birds and possible bird flu. The reporter did contact the State and the birds tested negative for bird flu, it is believed they died from botulism.

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

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

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

- Intern Xiaoqi Wang to present summer internship project findings and results to the Board
 - Xiaoqi presented her final presentation “Community-Centered, Data-Driven Opioid Fund Allocation in Small Town Montague”. The board and Paxton thanked Xiaoqi for her work on this project.

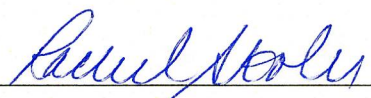
Discussion: Changes in State Funding for Emergency Shelters – Votes may be taken:

- Board to discuss potential planning and impacts associated with forecasted reductions in emergency shelters.
 - Paxton has been involved in the Western Mass Network to Endless Homelessness and after discussion it is assumed there will be less sheltering resources this winter. Paxton discusses with the board the budget line for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters and Services which provides emergency housing assistance for families in need. Going back to FY23 there have been serious increases in the need for emergency shelters for families. In FY23 it was funded at \$220,000,000 per year from the state and the actual spending was significantly higher than that. In FY24 the State budgeted \$325,000,000 but ended up spending nearly \$643,000,000 and likewise, FY25 the state budgeted about \$326,000,000 but spent nearly \$752,000,000. For FY26 it is expected the state will decrease the funding and only budgeted \$276,000,000. Paxton believes that is a clear indication that we will see less shelter resources this winter at a time when the need for shelters is growing. Paxton is not sure there is something for the board of health since Montague does not have any shelters. Montague does have some level of unhoused people and families but does not know what this will look like in real life. It is believed there are about 10-30 unhoused people during peak times in Montague, however, it is very transient by nature because we don't have resources that people would need to rely on. Montague does have a good amount of food pantries but does not have the other resources the unhoused people would need. Stoler discusses possibly considering setting up some sort of emergency shelter in Montague when it is needed. At this time Montague does not have any resources to provide 24/7 resources to unhoused people. Paxton will discuss with the town administration and hopefully get some input from the Selectboard about possibly pursuing it further.

Meeting adjourned: 6:28 PM

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

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

Approved by: 

Date: 9/17/25

Documents:

June 18, 2025 Minutes;

July 2, 2025 Minutes;

June Directors Report;

July Directors Report;

June Nurse Report;

July Nurse Report;

June Animal Inspector Report;

July Animal Inspector Report;

2 Burek Drive Complaint;

Xiaoqi Wang "Community-Centered, Data-Driven Opioid Fund Allocation in Small Town Montague"