

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH HEARING & MEETING

Wednesday, May 28th, 2025 – 5:00 PM

Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room and ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Nelson and Rachel Stoler

Staff: Ryan Paxton, Health Director for Montague and Geneva Bickford, Board of Health Clerk, Brittany Tuttle, Montague Public Health Nurse (Zoom)

Other: James Renaud, Theresa Renaud, Diane Thompson, Andy Jobst, Jane Alessandra (Zoom), Sally (Zoom)

Michael Nelson opened the Meeting at 5:00 PM

Michael Nelson opened the Hearing at 5:01 PM

At 5:06 PM Michael Nelson paused the hearing and moved agenda items around to do the re-organization of the Board of Health as this is the first meeting since the election.

Hearing: Enforcement of Sanitary Code at 15 Unity St #2 – Votes may be taken:

- Board to hold hearing to discuss sanitary code enforcement at 15 Unity St #2. Occupants and property owners will be allowed time to speak to the Board.
 - 15 Unity St is a 3 unit building owned by James & Theresa Renaud. An anonymous complaint was originally received on October 21, 2024 for 15 Unity St, Unit 2. That initial anonymous complaint has resulted in several inspections, re-inspections and Orders to Correct (“OTC”). OTC’s were issued on October 24, 2024, November 18, 2024, January 29, 2025 (OTC’s issued to Units 1 and 3 that have since been resolved), March 20, 2025, April 8, 2025 and May 14, 2025. The property owners James and Theresa Renaud (“Renaud”) discuss with the Board issues they have been experiencing with the occupants in Unit 2. The occupants have not paid rent since November 2024 and did not come to them before complaining to the board of health. The Renauds and the board discussed the indianmeal moths that have been found in Unit 2. The occupants were hard to reach when trying to schedule the exterminator and once an exterminator was able to enter they were very argumentative and combative with the exterminator. The Renauds discuss with the board the moisture in the basement, Paxton does informs the board and the property owner that he observed the occupant from unit 2, on May 14, 2025, filling the basement window well up with water using a garden hose to demonstrate to Paxton the moisture and water entering the basement. Paxton did advise the occupant to shut off the water and remove the hose but the occupant refused. The occupants, Diane Thompson and Andy Jobst (“occupants”) advise the board that there are several issues with the unit that have never been addressed. The moths are still a problem, there are cracks all over the building, moisture in the basement and water leaking in through the window wells. The occupants advise the board that when Renaud comes to do repair work he never tells them what he will be working on which then causes chaos for them as they have to begin clearing space or the area that he will be working on that day. The occupants advise the board that they have repeatedly asked the property owners to fix issues but the work is never done properly. The occupants also discussed with the board a bee problem they had. One of the refuses to use the basement due to the bee’s, spiders and moisture. At one point there was an issue with homeless people entering the property and the owner originally put a secure lock on the building to prevent others from entering but has since taken the secure lock off. The occupants approach the board at the table and provide the members with paperwork from various exterminating companies. Both parties have filed in housing court and an emergency hearing is scheduled for Friday, May 30th. The occupants are only able to allow the property owner or any repairmen in Mondays and Tuesdays. The board advises both parties that they need to communicate with each other to schedule time for repairs to be made and have agreed to extend the deadline for all items on the May 14th OTC to June 16, 2025.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to extend all correction deadlines to June 16, 2025 for all items listed on the May 14, 2025 Order to Correct. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye, and Nelson

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to close the hearing at 5:41 pm. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye, and Nelson

Announce 2025 Board of Health Election Results

- Board to announce the election of Rachel Stoler to the Board for the term of June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2028.
 - Michael Nelson announced the re-election of Rachel Stoler to the Montague Board of Health

Reorganization of Board of Health – Votes may be taken:

- Board to discuss and vote on annual organization of Board of Health
 - Michael Nelson and Rachel Stoler discuss re-organization of the Board and agree that Melanie Ames-Zamojski will remain chairperson.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** that Melanie Ames-Zamojski continue as Chairperson, Michael Nelson will continue as Vice Chairperson and Rachel Stoler will continue as Clerk. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye and Nelson - aye

Minutes – Votes may be taken:

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the April 23, 2025 minutes.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the April 23, 2025 Minutes. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye, and Nelson – aye

Director’s Report – Votes may be taken:

- Ryan Paxton (“Paxton”), Health Director, presented the April 2025 Director’s Report.
 - 15 Bridge St #1 was a complaint related to cross metering and has since been resolved. Tenant moved and follow up was not able to happen.
 - 37 E Main St, Paxton filed a criminal complaint regarding failure to comply with the lead law but that has since been resolved.

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

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Nurse Report – Votes may be taken:

- Brittany Tuttle, Public Health Nurse, presented the April 2025 Nurse’s Report.
 - Tuttle and the board discuss the one active TB case she is working with and monitoring.

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

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Animal/Barn Inspector Report: – Votes may be taken:

- Ryan Paxton, Health Director, presented the April 2025 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

Discussion: Public Health Nurse Contract for Fiscal Year 2026 – Votes may be taken:

- Review and consider for renewal contract for public health nurse services with Brittany Tuttle, RN for the fiscal year 2026.
 - Brittany Tuttle ("Tuttle") is present. Paxton provided a draft contract to Tuttle and the Board. Tuttle does not have any changes to her contract. Tuttle is hoping to do more mosquito and tick tabling this summer and engage more with the community. Tuttle will be helping Paxton inspect the camps this summer and will be reviewing the campers medical records to be sure everything is in order. Tuttle will be in to sign the contract and Bickford will make arrangements with Zamojski.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the draft contract for the Public Health Nurse. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Discussion: Policy for receiving Food Permit Applications past 14-Day Deadline – Votes may be taken:

- Board to discuss and consider creating a policy for permit applications received within 14 days of planned operations.
 - The Board discussed with Paxton and Bickford the challenges of permitting food vendors when they are applying after the 14-day deadline. Paxton lets the Board know there have been a handful of vendors coming in after the 14-day deadline to apply and there have been issues with the required supporting documents as well as scheduling pre-operational inspections as required. The Board implemented a \$50 late fee on all vendors applying after the 14-day deadline and NO permit will be issued if the vendor is applying 5 days before operation.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to establish that completed applications as well as payment must be in 14 days in advance of the event or a late fee of \$50 will be levied up to 5 business days in advance of an event. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

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

- Board to consider possible recommendations to Montague Selectboard regarding seeking membership in the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District.
 - Last year the Selectboard asked the Board of Health for a recommendation on joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District and the recommendation provided at the time was to wait and see if pending legislation was passed. That legislation was not passed and now it is time to reconsider and provide the Selectboard with a recommendation. Just under \$10,000 was allocated for this in 2021 and is still available. Services that were offered in the past were primarily surveillance but do offer some level of insecticide chemicals to treat standing water. It is believed they do not do any ariel spraying. Jane Alessandra ("Alessandra") and Sally are in attendance tonight via zoom and discuss their concerns with the Board. The Board and Paxton discussed having John Briggs return to provide another presentation and answer questions from the community before the Board makes a recommendation.

Alessandra and Sally advise the Board that the meeting was not posted with a “clickable” link making it more difficult to enter the meeting and asks that it be corrected for future meetings. Paxton and Bickford are aware of this issue and will correct it for all future meetings and had already spoken with Alessandra regarding the link. Alessandra explains to the board her opinions. Alessandra believes there are both pros and cons to joining. Alessandra believes it is good to know you have a problem and where that problem is but is concerned because she feels the state is pro chemical. Alessandra comes from Gloucester where it was voted down for years and once it was passed and now they have trucks that drive down the road doing “courtesy spraying” so people’s Fourth of July celebrations are not ruined and is concerned if the surveillance is allowed then it will turn into courtesy spraying. Alessandra has spoken with Briggs a few times and she states he feels he has autonomy, but the law does not say that. Alessandra feels that is the way Briggs is working but that is not the law. Paxton states the Board of Health has very broad authority to prohibit or regulate things that have an effect on environmental health in their community and suggests the Board could pass a regulation prohibiting certain activities in town and that perhaps could be a safeguard against unwanted services from the mosquito district. Paxton reminds everyone the Selectboard is asking for a simple recommendation on whether the town should join the mosquito district or not. Sally would like to see safeguards in place, she has an organic garden and is somewhat versed in the health risks of pesticides and is not comfortable that there may be a convenience offered to people who choose to have their yards sprayed. Paxton will reach out to Briggs and ask him to attend the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 6:32 PM

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

Stoler – aye and Nelson – aye

Approved by: *Rachel Stoler*

Date: *6/18/25*

Documents:

April 23, 2025 Minutes;
Director’s Report;
Nurse’s Report;
Animal and Barn Inspector Report;