

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Wednesday, February 26th, 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: Liana Pleasant, Crystal Garrity and Tom Taffe

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

***Board Member Michael Nelson was absent from the meeting and Roll Call Votes were taken.**

Minutes:

January 22, 2025, Minutes

- The Board of Health (“BOH”) Members reviewed and approved the January 22, 2025, minutes.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the January 22nd Minutes as amended to correct the spelling of Jonathan Morin’s name. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Ames-Zamojski– aye

Director’s Report:

- Ryan Paxton (“Paxton”), Health Director, presented the January 2025 Director’s Report.
 - Paxton conducted several housing inspections that resulted in 8 Orders to Correct and multiple re-inspections.
 - Paxton reposted condemnation placards at 10-12 H St and has spoken with the property owner and they will remain in place.
 - Paxton investigated a complaint of storage of inoperable vehicles at 20 Millers Falls Rd, one vehicle was visible which the bylaw allows. Another vehicle was seen covered up but Paxton is not able to cite that.
 - Paxton investigated a complaint of smoke coming from an outdoor sauna at 140 Seventh St and did not witness any smoke. The complaint was determined to be unfounded.
 - Paxton conducted 11 bi-annual food inspections, Dreamhouse, Brick House, Food City, Scotty’s, and CeCe’s all required re-inspections, and all violations have since been corrected.
 - Paxton investigated a complaint regarding dirty floors at Family Dollar and found no violations of the food code.
 - Paxton conducted Title 5 inspections at 390 Millers Falls Rd and 27 West St, neither address has received a Certificate of Compliance yet as we are waiting for paperwork from the designer.
 - Paxton has returned proposed septic revision plans for 91 Taylor Hill Rd but has since issued a permit.
 - Paxton attended interviews for the Shared Inspector position at the Valley Health Regional Collaborative and since attending the interviews we were able to offer the position to one of the candidates.
 - Paxton attended Massachusetts Environmental Health Association’s (“MEHA”) webinar regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (“ADU’s”) and expects more guidance to come out soon. There is a major change with respect to the state law but not impactful here in the sense that we have a zoning bylaw that allowed for ADU’s. Title 5 has not been modified and we are waiting for guidance on that from the Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”).

Rachel **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 Nurse's Report.
 - Montague has 1 active Tuberculosis case.

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 December 2024 Animal/Barn Inspector Report.

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

Stoler – aye, Zamojski – Aye and Stoler – aye

Variance Request: Scotty's on the Hill:

- Review variance request from Scotty's on the Hill regarding requirements of 105 CMR 590.000
 - Liana Pleasant ("Pleasant"), the owner of Scotty's on the Hill was present at the meeting. Scotty's was cited for a violation relating to a pre-existing facility feature. There is no handwashing sink located in the employee bathroom or immediately outside, there is a handwash sink in the food prep area which is about 8-10 feet away.
 - The Board and Pleasant discussed signage posted to remind employees to wash their hands.
 - This is a two-part variance, there is also no specific designated service sink. There are four alternate sinks. They have a handwashing sink and a three-bay sink used for washing in the kitchen.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the request for the variance. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye and Zamojski – Aye

Discussion Late Fee's for Disposal System Installer's Licenses:

- Board to discuss and consider waving late fees for disposal system installer's licenses
 - Disposal system installers generally do not apply for their permit until they know they have a job to do in Montague. The BOH has had some complaints from some of the installers and wanted to bring this to the Boards attention. Paxton thinks waiving the fee may make it more feasible for more installers to be licensed in Montague and perhaps bring in more options for installers. Zamojski and Stoler agree with Paxton. The Board also discussed mobile food permits but decided that it makes sense to waive the late fee for installers only.

Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to propose an amendment to the fee schedule to waive the late fees for disposal system installers. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.**

Stoler – aye and Ames-Zamojski – Aye

Discussion: Planning for Absence(s) of Health Director and Responding to Urgent Matters:

- Director to present proposed updates to Board of Health Emergency Response Standard Operating Procedure ("SOP")
 - Paxton drafted and read an SOP that clarifies the current practices.

- Paxton and the Board discussed the 24/7 protocol for the Board of Health response when the office is closed. Paxton will update the protocol to include Paxton's information and the date. Paxton will update and distribute to all necessary parties.

*Rachel Stoler **Motioned** to accept the updated Standard Operating Procedures for responding to urgent matters in the absence of the health director. Seconded by Melanie Ames-Zamojski. **Motion passes.***

Stoler – aye and Ames-Zamojski – Aye

Discussion: Opioid Settlement Funds:

- Director to provide updates and overview of opioid settlement funds utilization process
 - Paxton presented “Opioid Settlement Funds in Montague”, a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Phoebe Walker at Franklin Regional Council of Governments (“FRCOG”). (copies available in the BOH office)
 - Montague will receive \$110,361 in funds and has received \$34,275.76 as of December 31, 2024. The board and Paxton discussed why funds were not pooled together with other communities and why Montague did not receive as much as some other communities.
 - The Montague Selectboard authorized the BOH to control the funds on February 3, 2025, and expenditure must follow the Massachusetts abatement terms. (available in the BOH office)
- Discussion of current proposals and general planning process surrounding funds
 - Paxton and the Board discuss the need for a process and Ames-Zamojski suggests that a process is discussed and created at the next BOH meeting.
 - Paxton will gather all the proposals the board has received for the next BOH meeting.
- The Brick House is to provide a presentation of their opioid settlement funds proposal
 - Tom Taffe and Crystal Garrity presented and discussed their proposal with the BOH (proposal documents available in the BOH office). Taffe explains Brick House offers a Teen Center, men's program, women's program and an LGBTQ support program.
 - The program was originally designed to be 4-6 sessions of mentoring but have found more time is often needed.
 - Brick House currently has one 30-hour-a-week mentor and would like to expand as they have a waiting list. Garrity explains she meets youth at their location and travels to wherever folks are and would like to expand in Turners Falls. Brick House currently has 20-25 youth enrolled in the program at a time but not many from Turners Falls.
 - The funding being requested would be for Turners Falls youth.

Unanticipated Disruption:

- **Remote access terminated due to public indecency incident; no participants were attending via remote connection. At 5:55 pm the Chair ordered the zoom meeting to end due to the disruption and the meeting was continued in person with Paxton finishing his presentation.**

Meeting adjourned: 6:11 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: _____

Rachel Stoler

Date: _____

3/26/25

Documents:

January Minutes;

Director's Report;

Nurse's Report;

Animal and Barn Inspector Report;

Scotty's on the Hill Request for Variance from 105 CMR 590.000;

SOP: Responding to Urgent Matters in Absence of the Director;

Emergency 24/7 Protocols for Board of Health Response;

Brick House AMP Project: Substance Misuse Prevention Mentoring handout; and

FRCOG Opioid Settlement Funds in Montague PowerPoint Presentation.

Approved by: Paul J. Miller
Date: 3/26/22