

# MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 – 5:15 pm  
Upstairs Meeting Room – Montague Town Hall  
Turners Falls, MA

## Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Al Cummings, Christopher Boutwell, Michael Nelson (phone)  
**Staff:** Health Clerk, Anne Stuart Public Health Nurse, Cheryl Volpe and Turners Falls Fire Chief, John Zellmann (phone)  
**Guest:** Retired Health Director, Gina McNeely (phone) and Montague Reporter, Jeff Singleton (phone)

**Meeting being recorded.**

**Al Cummings opened the meeting at 5:15 PM.**

### **Discussion: Health Department Staffing:**

Steve Ellis opened the discussion by informing the group that Health Director, Daniel Wasiuk has taken a leave from the Town of Montague and is expected to return to the Town and the position at the end of April 2020.

Given the current COVID-19 climate Steve feels that the Board of Health can't afford not to have a Director in place and has asked former Health Director, Gina McNeely if she would come back to work under a temporary appointment. This appointment would consist of a maximum of 35 hours per week at \$40.32 per hour (which was the hourly rate she retired at) for the expected duration being 6-8 weeks.

Steve Ellis said there might be budget implications due to the unexpected expense of bringing Gina McNeely on as Acting Health Director but there is a \$60,000 reserve fund that we could tap into and do a transfer later in the year if needed. Fire Chief John Zellmann mentioned that there could possibly be FEMA fund that could be donated but all expenses would need to be tracked and accounted for to be reimbursed.

*Christopher Boutwell **Motioned** to appoint Gina McNeely Acting Health Director for the Town of Montague at the pay rate of \$40.32 per hour with a maximum of 35 hours per week. The appointment would be for the duration being 6-8 weeks. Seconded by Al Cummings. **Motion passes.***

**Roll call vote:** Christopher Boutwell – aye  
Michael Nelson – aye  
Al Cummings – aye

The vote will now go to the Selectboard/Personnel Board to affirm the appointment of Gina McNeely to the position of Acting Health Director at the joint meeting to be held with the Finance Committee and Board of Health on March 30, 2020.

## **Discussion: Montague Board of Health Continuity of Operations Plan:**

Michael Nelson informed the group that the Montague Board of Health had discussed and updated and signed the Continuity of Operations Plan in March of 2019. This plan lays out the framework that establishes procedures to respond to and recover from the effect of a wide range of emergencies which may disrupt the normal Board of Health operations. The purpose of the Continuity of Operations Plan is that the essential functions of the Board will continue.

The Board of Health reviewed the Continuity of Operations Plan and there are a few changes that need to be made:

- Replacing the Selectman wording throughout the COOP document to Selectboard.
- Adding Gina McNeely as Board of Health Agent/Director with cell phone and office phone contact information
- Adding Cheryl Volpe, Public Health Nurse with cell phone and office phone contact information
- Adding Michael Sullivan, Superintendent of Great Falls Middle School & Turners Falls High School - main school phone contact information
- Adding Rick Martin, Superintendent of Franklin County Technical School cell phone and main school phone contact information

### **Questions:**

Jeff Singleton had a question regarding the chart and the Operations function which is under the Essential Functions by Incident Command Role regarding isolation. If initiation of isolation and or quarantine is needed the state statute has the authority to authorize the local Board of Health to quarantine. During this COVID-19 the initiation process starts at the state level, local municipal Boards of Health, Health Agent/Director and then to the Public Health Nurse for monitoring of the situation.

### **Discussion: COVID-19 Update:**

Various Discussions took place surrounding the COVID-19 topic.

Cheryl Volpe, Public Health Nurse said she is available on Mondays and Fridays in addition to her hours on Wednesdays. She currently is monitoring 2 individuals and the Governor has put restrictive measures in place including handwashing and social distancing to 6 feet. Cheryl stressed that PPE supplies are very limited and that all requests will go to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to order, disseminate supplies with hospitals such as BFMC and primary care physicians having priority. The testing for COVID-19 is not readily available but when it is done there is a lag time for the results and then it will hit the state reporting system MAVEN.

Steve Ellis added that there are additional orders from the Governor's office that might provide some much needed relief for businesses as well as employee assistance. There is also a proposal to delay taxes being due and the removal of fees due to the COVID-19 situation.

As a town we recognize to continue services while being proactive and protective of our employees well being. In doing so, offices are staggering their staffing, adjusting work hours where needed along with reconfiguring how business is done on a daily basis.

**Question:** Jeff Singleton what is the procedure and who do you seek out if you need the level of coordination on now to get masks, testing and beds? Michael Nelson responded DPH

recommends if you are feeling ill that you start with your primary care doctor as a first step and that going forward there will be drive thru testing sites but there is not a list as of now but it is in progress.

**Unanticipated Business:**

Michael Nelson brought to the attention of the Board of Health members the Agreement between the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Montague for the disbursement and use of emergency COVID-19 funding. As we know the FRCOG is a fiduciary entity for the community and will be disbursing from the Public Health Trust Fund \$6,510.00 of COVID-19 funds for the Town of Montague during the week of March 23, pending the receipt of funds from Department of Public Health. The funding is to be used for one of the 7 bullets outlined by Kelly Driscoll (COVID-19 Response Team – Executive Office of Health & Human Services). The agreement includes but is not limited to help fund Public Health Nurses, risk communication support and surge in staffing. The use of these funds needs to be documented and accurate and detailed records is kept on how the funding is deployed.

*Christopher Boutwell **Motioned** to authorize Michael Nelson to sign the agreement between the FRCOG and the Town of Montague for the disbursement and use of emergency COVID-19 funding Seconded by Al Cummings. **Motion passes.***

**Roll call vote:** Michael Nelson – aye  
Al Cummings – aye  
Christopher Boutwell – aye

John Zellmann noted that all employees should keep track of hours spent on or because of COVID-19 and track the use and purchases of Personal Protective Equipment as there might be potential reimbursement for overages per Carolyn Olsen.

Gina McNeely asked the Board of Health members for permission to work from home for Board of Health employees.

*Christopher Boutwell **Motioned** to approve a protocol for employees to work from home as needed. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

**Roll call vote:** Michael Nelson – aye  
Al Cummings – aye  
Christopher Boutwell – aye

*Christopher Boutwell **Motioned** to adjourn the Montague Board of Health meeting. Seconded by Michael Nelson. **Motion passes.***

Meeting adjourned: 6:03 PM

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Documents:**

- Personnel Change Status Form – New Hires (Gina McNeely)
- Continuity of Operations Plan
- Kelly Driscoll – COVID-19 Response Team Memo
- FRCOG agreement for the disbursement and use of emergency COVID-19 funding