

2023 OCT 26 AM 8:57

Freetown Board of Health

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting Held at Senior Center – 227 Chace Road and Via Zoom

Board Members present in person: Margaret French, Mary Bowen

Board Member via Zoom: None

Board Members Absent: Robert Jose

Also present in person: Keven Desmarais, Health Agent, Lori Desmarais, Public Health Nurse (arrived soon after meeting called to order), and Humberta St. Louis, Board of Health office Senior Clerk.

Other in-person attendees: Steve Tripp

Other attendees through Zoom: Tej Patel

Call to order

Board of Health Vice-Chair, Margaret French, called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Mr. Tej Patel was acknowledged (attending via Zoom).

Approve Minutes of Prior Meeting

After a brief discussion, motion was made by Mary Bowen and seconded by Margaret French to accept the August 1, 2023, meeting minutes as written.

Vote: Margaret French, yes; Mary Bowen, yes.

Motion passes.

Board of Health Agent's status report

Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, provided his status report; informed the Board that he is going on vacation soon and Dale Barrows will be covering for him; Fall food inspections starting now; Perc testing has slowed down a bit and septic systems construction ongoing; stated efforts to follow up on older failed Title 5 inspections met with some success in bringing to compliance. He also provided status on smell complaints recently received and current "messy situations", one with animals (Chace Rd) with Animal Control and ongoing court process through Building Dept. He stressed the Town's goal is not property-taking, but rather working with the owners to remedy the issues and 90% of the time things can be worked out. Also, Apex (company doing environmental oversight on Excel matter) now working on letters to send out to neighbors for access authorization to test (sample letter will be sent to Board Members for approval) and he will also be writing a letter to go along explaining the process going forward. The plan is to do sound and then air quality testing; that once the signed access forms are received, the process is expected to take a couple of days on the field to get a set of empirical data for that area to be used to formulate some regulation(s) for special permit requirements involving the designated area(s).

Public Health Nurse's status report

Public Health Nurse, Lori Desmarais, provided her status report: continuing with blood pressure clinics at COA and also at Calvary with changed times working out well; flu clinic coming up October

3rd at COA, have been reaching out to past participants and then expect to send out a Freetown Flash if additional doses are available; Dr. Lebo has signed the orders for the flu clinic; mosquitoes risk still considered low for Freetown for both West Nile and Triple E. In Massachusetts so far 96 mosquitoes have tested positive. For West Nile, 2 human cases, not in this area, one in another part of the Country and one in Middlesex County; For Triple E, 4 mosquitoes tested positive in Worcester County. Back in 2019 12 human cases Triple E (1 in Freetown that year, person passed away), 5 human cases in 2020, and then nothing in 2021 and 2022. As far as tick-borne illnesses, August numbers have come down since last report: 1 case of babesiosis and 14 lyme.

Discussion/Possible action on Expenditures Utilizing Opioid Settlement Funds

Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, stated he visited Calvary Cares twice since the last discussion and that they have done what needs to be done and they should be given funds; that they offer comprehensive services and are effective, also providing care to impacted family members. Let's "cut them a check." Two facilities in Taunton and Berkley were mentioned: Manet in Taunton (which he recently visited), a community health center providing comprehensive services works in concert with Calvary Cares directing people to Calvary Cares. Luke's Light is in Berkley also provide services, but Calvary Cares he feels provides a more comprehensive range of services, including support to family members.

Coming up on the 22nd, Calvary Cares will hold an open house that he encouraged Members attend. He also stated that he thinks people seeking help find it easier to approach a "church" rather than a rehab center, that the community wants it. Their grant funding is ending in December and Rev. Curtis is moving forward with efforts to obtain other available grants. Mary Bowen inquired what percentage of funds would he recommend be given to Calvary Cares. Keven Desmarais answered 50%, that the funds the Town has received thus far is some \$15,000.00.

Providing assistance with Narcan administration training was mentioned as a good use of some funds. Agent Keven Desmarais also spoke about "harm reduction kits" coming on the market with the aim to test if a drug is "clean" thereby preventing other diseases from being spread, that this may be worthwhile to implement. Margaret French indicated they would revisit this issue next month.

Discussion, and vote on whether to accept River Hawk Environmental's bid for Post-closure Environmental Monitoring at Howland Road Landfill

Some discussion took place. Mary Bowen asked which company was doing this monitoring before. Keven Desmarais stated Woodard & Curran was the company prior to River Hawk Environmental. He further stated River Hawk Environmental was the only firm that replied to this year's request for bids and also stated he is enthusiastically endorsing this bid. This went out to bid a couple of years ago and River Hawk was a bit cheaper.

Motion was made by Mary Bowen to approve River Hawk Environmental's bid for Post-Closure Environmental Monitoring services at Howland Road Landfill, seconded by Margaret French.

Vote: Margaret French, yes; Mary Bowen, yes.

Motion passes.

Margaret French made request that Deb Pettey, Town Administrator, be notified.

Discussion on following: Food establishment needing to have servsafe-certified person on site during all hours of operation.

Margaret French inquired if Town does not already have this requirement. Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, provided information on the State food code and local regulations and his past experience and findings. State requires one person be servsafe certified and a responsible person be on site. Lately there have been high turnover rates for both managers and front-line employees and he doubts that people are getting trained, as he encountered more recently. He mentioned nearby municipalities who have implemented regulations similar to his proposed regulation. Ideally, he would have one person who is servsafe-certified at all times in stores that are serving food, but would at least like [Board] to consider that while making food should have a servsafe-certified person on site. One particular recent issue encountered at Neon when he was there making a meal purchase was some expired items still on the shelf and some cookies being sold without a label/list of ingredients, where employees on site were not servsafe certified, thought a "small store" need not comply with certain regulations and were unable to resolve the issue and regional managers were not responding in a timely manner with a possible outcome to a consumer could be anaphylaxis. He also mentioned a similar minor issue also occurred at Circle K where also the staff on site were not able to resolve the issue and the regional manager was not responding. He suggested he write up a proposed regulation for the Board's consideration to bring to public hearing.

(Some discussion also took place that Neon is charging sales tax on food when they should not – Keven Desmarais indicated he would look into the matter and report back, although this not being a Board of Health issue).

Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, addressed Mr. Tej Patel, general manager at Junior's Convenience Store (attending via Zoom). Mr. Patel stated he was attending for this particular topic. Health Agent Keven Desmarais indicated that Junior's does have a servsafe-certified person on site while cooking the food but perhaps not at all times food is being served. Asked for his opinion, Mr. Patel indicated he believes all managers should be servsafe certified. Mr. Patel further stated that with so much turnover on part-time employees, not just his establishment but all around, that it would be very hard to have everyone servsafe certified. Further discussion on this issue was encouraged by both.

Discussion on following: For the purpose of a Title 5 inspection, if relying on soil log information prior to adoption of Title 5, an observation hole may be required by Board of Health to determine groundwater elevation.

Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, gave an overview on the process of Title 5 inspections (Title 5 Regulations implemented in 1995-1996), including the detection of water and determination of the seasonal highwater table, that information available prior to the adoption of Title 5 is not at always sufficient and/or reliable. When this is the case with a system undergoing a Title 5 inspection and an inspector has not dug an observation hole (which some already do so), then he would like a regulation be in place so that the Board of Health when reviewing a Title 5 Inspection Form (report) may call for this being done with a soil evaluator present, if not enough data is available or data is not reliable; that he has had discussions with other Towns, engineers, inspectors and installers and all concur this is a reasonable requirement and cost to comply not excessive.

Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, suggested he would draft some wording on this for further discussion.

Appointments of Gabrielle Almeida and Shallyn Rodriguez (inspectors with Southcoast Public Health Collaborative) as agents for the Town of Freetown Board of Health

Some questions were posed as to when they would be acting on behalf of Freetown BOH. Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, indicated that these positions will not be paid by the Town, that they are paid by the collaborative, and would come in when needed and requested. He stated, we have to appoint them so they can act officially in our stead, like our Tobacco inspector that runs out of a grant program out of New Bedford. We simply would need to make a motion to appoint Gabrielle Almeida and Shallyn Rodriguez health inspectors for the Town of Freetown

Motion so made by Mary Bowen, seconded by Margaret French to appoint.

Vote: Mary Bowen, yes; Margaret French, yes.

Motion passes.

Agent Keven Desmarais further suggested that a simple motion be made that if a signed document is required, they vote to give authority to Chair Robert Jose to sign it instead of waiting until the next meeting to get that done.

Motion so made by Mary Bowen, seconded by Margaret French.

Vote: Mary Bowen, yes; Margaret French, yes.

Motion passes.

Any other business which may properly come before the Board

Margaret French inquired if there was any other business. Health Agent, Keven Desmarais, again stated his going on vacation the coming week and that service will be spotty where he will be in Bar Harbor, Maine. He will check messages in the evening and will return calls then.

Margaret French inquired of Mr. Tripp if he had anything to address. Mr. Tripp indicated no, that he was all set. The issue of the trash barrels at Porter Pasture was brought up and it was stated that it is currently closed for the season.

Keven Desmarais invited the Board Members to come in and possibly go on inspections or percs and that he would reach out if any Member would be interested.

Meeting Adjourned

Margaret French inquired if there were any further questions or concerns. There being none, motion was made by Mary Bowen, seconded by Margaret French to close the meeting.

Vote: Mary Bowen, yes; Margaret French, yes.

Motion passes.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Documents/Exhibits at Meeting:

- Meeting Notice/Agenda.
- Minutes of Meeting of August 1, 2023
- Bid of River Hawk Environmental.
- Appointments of Gabrielle Almeida & Shallyn Rodriguez motion sample

This is a True Record by me,

Attest:



Humberta St. Louis, Senior Clerk