

Buckland Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2021 6:30 p.m.
Meeting Via Zoom

JS

Agenda

- I. Open the meeting.
- II. Public comment - agenda items only.
- III. Buckland Indoor Mask Mandate - Discuss and deliberate.
 - A. Guest Presenters:
 1. Michael R. Hugo, Government Affairs, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards.
 2. Meg Ryan, BSN, RN, Regional Public Health Nurse, Franklin Regional Council of Governments.
- IV. Hearing request - Septic repair at 7 Hog Hollow Road.
- V. Review minutes September 14, 2021.
- VI. Health Agent Report - Randy Crochier or Lisa Danek Burke.
- VII. COVID, local outlook & updates:
 - A. Cases, stats, vax rates - local and regional.
 - B. Vaccination/booster updates.
- VIII. Halloween - consider/formulate recommendations.
- IX. Moonlight Magic - consider/formulate recommendations.
- X. Review/process mail and voicemail.
- XI. Any other items not reasonably anticipated by Chair 48 hours prior to meeting.
- XII. Public Comment.
- XIII. Adjourn the meeting.

Attendees - Board of Health Members Marti Taft Ferguson, Peggy Hart, and Dean Singer; Lisa Danek Burke and Randy Crochier, Health Agents; Michael Hugo; Meg Ryan; Mary Bolduc, Boards' Clerk; Herb Guyette, Barry Del Castilho, Kurt Gilmore, Michael Hoberman, Janet Sorenson, Marilyn Kelsey, Paul Bernier, Walt Owens, Doug Smith, Laurie (no last name given), Walt Owens, Marcie Smith, Christian Parenti, Ronald Kelter, Tim Bohonowicz, Faith Burrington Jones, Thomas Leue, Laura Letendre.

Meeting

- I. Open the meeting - Meeting was opened by Marti Ferguson, Chair, at 6:35 p.m.
- II. Public comment, agenda items only - Marti explained that Public Comment would be for the purpose of public input and would not be an opportunity for open dialogue. She reminded all in attendance of Buckland's Code of Civil Conduct.
 - A. Doug Smith questioned the laws by which the Board of Health operated in having a notice delivered by the police department. He asked the identity of his accuser, and to whom he should respond.
 - B. Christian Parenti expressed his concern over Doug Smith's situation, especially the police involvement. He also questioned the metrics by which the Board of Health determined to issue a mask mandate, questioning the numbers and the science.

- C. Paul Bernier stated his experience also receiving a letter delivered by the Police Chief. He questioned the authority of the BOH, enforceability of their mandate, efficacy of masks, and statistics at the time the mask mandate was issued.
- D. Michael Hoberman took issue with the word "imposition" being used regarding masking, saying he felt it was the opposite. Mr. Hoberman explained his experience teaching in a college environment, emphasizing the continued rate of COVID incidence/exposure and the absentee rate of students due to the virus. He stated his confidence in the Board of Health.
- E. Janet Sorensen compared masking with the initial response to seat belt legislation. She further stated that we wear masks to protect ourselves and others.
- F. Walt Owens stated that he felt masks are warranted and infectious disease experts agree. He thanked the Board, expressing his appreciation for their work.
- G. Marcie Smith first stated that she heard people's concerns that the pandemic is not over. However, she disagrees with police involvement and creating a culture of snitching.
- H. Barry Del Castilho stated he was privy to conversations regarding the Police Chief's involvement emphasizing that it was in response to the Governor's mandate, not one imposed by the BOH. The impetus, he explained, was for compliance.
- I. Laurie Benoit thanked the Board for the opportunity of conversation, the Board's work, and stated that she wears a mask. She noted the need especially to protect children who are not eligible for the vaccine and seniors such as herself. She again voiced her support for the Board of Health.
- J. Marilyn Kelsey questioned inconsistent COVID vaccine prices as experienced by members of her family. Are there standardized costs? She stated that though advertised as free, they were not.
- K. Tim Bohonowicz addressed MA laws of discrimination, and asked why medical exemptions were not specified on masking posters.
- III. Buckland Indoor Mask Mandate, discuss and deliberate -
 - A. Guest Presenters -
 - a) Michael R. Hugo, Government Affairs, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
 - (1) Mr. Hugo explained his background in public health, the responsibilities of his current position, and shed light on activities throughout the state in response to COVID protocols, both positive and negative. He addressed the fact that a warning had been delivered to a resident by the Police Chief, stating that the Chief was acting in a manner consistent with the MA Police Chief's Association. Board discussion with Mr. Hugo addressed when and by what criteria the masking mandate may be lifted or changed to a recommendation. He also spoke to Ms. Kelsey's concern regarding vaccination costs, and suggested she forward pertinent information to Marti.
 - b) Meg Ryan, BSN, RN, Regional Public Health Nurse, Franklin Regional Council of Governments -

- (1) Ms. Ryan gave a comprehensive overview of the COVID timeline starting with its early history, through the state of emergency, statistical data regarding case numbers, the emergence of the Delta Variant and its implications, initial masking orders, return to masking, and how to determine a trend which would justify lifting the mask mandate and/or issuing a recommendation.
- c) Following the presentations by Mr. Hugo and Ms. Ryan, Board members discussed/deliberated based on that information and current case numbers. Concern was also expressed regarding the unvaccinated population of school children due to their age, thus their vulnerability. It was also noted that less than 10% of business owners to whom masking posters were given gave any push back, thus indicating the Board was supporting the position of the other 90%. After further discussion on risk factors by which to determine lifting the mandate and options for wording, Ms. Ferguson moved to keep the Buckland mask mandate in place with the condition the Board will consider changing to a recommendation when the trend is toward a risk level of substantial per the CDC. Dean Singer seconded the motion. Vote in favor of the motion: Ferguson, yes; Hart, yes; Singer, yes.

IV. Hearing request, septic repair at 7 Hog Hollow Road -

- A. A Title V at 7 Hog Hollow Road rated the system as failed. It was suggested by Mr. Thomas Leue that instead of replacing the entire system, the current septic system be given a conditional pass, and the residence to remain a two bedroom dwelling with a deed restriction. The current leach field is <100 feet but >50 feet from the well. Ms. Laura Letendre, owner of the property, asked if that proposal would be acceptable.
- B. Health Agent Lisa Danek Burke recapped the history of the system from the original plan done in 1999/2000, its approval by the Board of Health in 2001, and a denial letter dated April 30, 2021. Ms. Danek Burke emphasized that the certificate of compliance states that there is no guarantee the system will continue to function. She also covered options still available to achieve an approved system.
- C. Randy Crochier re-stated the request at hand which is for the Board to overturn the health agent's decision regarding the failed system.
- D. Marti Ferguson moved to uphold the the decision of Health Agents Randy Crochier and Lisa Danek Burke regarding septic repair at 7 Hog Hollow Road. Dean Singer Seconded. Vote in favor of the motion: Singer, yes; Ferguson, yes; Hart, yes.

V. Review minutes September 14, 2021 - Peggy Hart moved to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Dean Singer. Vote in favor of motion: Hart, yes; Singer, yes; Ferguson, yes.

VI. Health Agent Report -

- A. An acceptance letter has been sent for the new health agent position. The chosen candidate is from academia; his background is not in public health, per se, but is heavily rooted in science.

- B. Another job offer has been made by FRCOG for a grant funded position. This candidate for the position has a laboratory background, teaching and reporting. She will conduct community health seminars, outreach, and epidemiology.
 - C. Lisa Danek Burke reported that their schedule has still been robust with 4 -5 more perc tests, 3 more systems reviewed, and about 5 Title V's conducted within the past month.
 - D. The new hire will be updated to address short term rental issues, among other topics.
- VII. COVID, local outlook and updates:
- A. Cases, stats, vaccination rates, local and regional - Marti stated that she sent the weekly report to Peggy and Dean. She sees no trend up or down with the exception that vaccination rates are up slightly.
 - B. Vaccination/booster updates - No boosters will be given at regional flu clinics after October 30. Lisa White of FRCOG has nothing definitive yet on a booster schedule.
- VIII. Halloween, consider/formulate recommendations -
- A. Shelburne did not take action at their meeting last week. Bernardston is recommending masking for children (trick or treaters) and persons handing out candy.
 - B. Shelburne is heard to not be closing Mechanic Street this year.
 - C. Following Board discussion, it was decided there was no reason to give specific recommendations. Peggy suggested a notice on town website wishing everyone a safe and happy October 31.
- IX. Moonlight Magic, consider/formulate recommendations -
- A. Peggy asked if Moonlight Magic was going to happen or are the organizers looking for guidance in the event it does occur? Marti read a communication from September 20, 2021 asking if the Board had any guidance to offer for Moonlight Magic if indeed it is scheduled.
 - B. Board discussion followed covering the dynamics of Moonlight Magic, noting that much of the event is outdoors. It was decided that there was no reason not to hold the event, with no recommendations at this time. As it gets closer, the Board of Health can make suggestions based on COVID status/statistics at that time.
- X. Review/process mail and voicemail - Peggy reported that there was not much on voicemail. The BOH was copied on Select Board activity, there were soil reports from Red Gate farm, and pumping reports from Clesson Brook Road and Cross Street.
- XI. Other items not reasonably anticipated by Chair 48 hours prior to meeting - Marti reported that an invoice had been received for MA Association dues. Board members agreed to pay it.
- XII. Public Comment -
- A. Marilyn Kelsey thanked Mr. Hugo for addressing vaccine costs. Randy suggested that Mr. Hugo be given Ms. Kelsey's contact information so he could work with her to address her concerns.

- B. Tim Bohonowicz asked what the process is following a complaint made about a business. He also questioned a health agent about a conversation with the owner of a local business.
- C. Doug Smith stated that he has sent emails to which he has received no answers, and no answers to questions he posed to the Board regarding procedure.
- D. Marcie Smith commented that she has questions but no answers. She has attended two Shelburne meetings in addition to this and is appalled by attitude toward residents and tax payers.

XIII. With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Bolduc, Boards' Clerk, November 17, 2021

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peggy Hart'.

Peggy Hart