

Board of Health Hybrid Meeting
in Person - Town Hall, 334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA
Thursday, December 1, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER: (Roll Call Vote) – Chairman Michael Lanoue opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

Present in person: Michael Lanoue, “aye.” Present via Zoom: Dr. Ruby Chang, “aye,” Peter Stanton, “aye.”

Also present: Health Agent, Rebecca Jurczyk; Health Inspector, Stephen Browning

2. MEETING MINUTES:

a. November 3, 2022 (Discussion/ Vote)

P. Stanton made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2022 meeting; R. Chang seconded. M. Lanoue asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: R. Chang, “aye,” M. Lanoue, “aye,” P. Stanton, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

3. BOARD OF HEALTH QUESTIONS/ UPDATES:

- a. Local Composting Program - R. Jurczyk stated R. Chang and S. Browning had researched the composting process/programs and local opportunities. R. Chang stated she had contacted a representative from Cambridge, MA who suggested starting a program with drop-off sites – Cambridge has municipal waste pick-up twice per week and has 50% participation in composting – the city had also received DEP funding for the program. She had also connected with a local anaerobic digester farmer and shared how he uses material completely and maximizes energy from composting. The board discussed the practicalities of food waste drop-off vs Town hauling and acknowledged it is unlikely the DPW could take this on. M. Lanoue stated there could be a drop-off point for compostable waste such as at the Transfer Station and an entity would pick it up to do composting. S. Browning reported he had contacted local haulers Roger and Casella do offer composting pick up and Barbato who does not.

4. BOARD OF HEALTH BUSINESS:

- a. Berkshire Compositing Program. Introductory discussion with Co-Owner Melissa Higgins. (Discussion). M. Higgins presented on her company’s process/objectives – she is currently picking up food waste buckets on designated days and bringing them to Stanton Home for composting. She highlighted her commitment to having local collaboration and promoting regenerative agriculture. She noted in Sheffield residents bring food waster to the transfer station and she picks it up. She also works with groceries and Guidos which has a system for evolving food usage/waste to best serve the community – and has tried working with restaurants, but it is challenging due mostly to scheduling pick-ups. M. Lanoue noted the BOH works with restaurants and perhaps could encourage composting by highlighting the benefits. R. Jurczyk stated Recycling Works does trainings, advises and rates/recognizes recycling activities which is a good approach. R. Chang asked about volume and costs – M. Higgins replied for Sheffield she charges \$40 for each commercial pick-up four times per week averaging 600lbs – she added for residential customers it is more like 20lbs per week per customer. The board discussed examples of how/where food waste could be collected or picked up, composted and soil made available. The board agreed composting contributes to the overall health of the community and a logical initial plan is to have a collection point at the transfer station, identify state funding, and promote composting via Town support and public education/outreach. M. Higgins stated she would be available to do community education.

- b. Review agreement between TriTown Health Department and Town of Great Barrington to capture existing Public Health Nursing Funds for the Shared Services Collaborative. (Discussion/ Vote) – R. Jurczyk provided an overview on the Public Health Excellence Grant and Nursing program noting the significant value/commitment of the nurses/staff and successes especially around the vaccination clinics. Regarding available funds – she clarified that \$6,700 is available/in the budget and must be funneled through the Collaborative, but can be designated to specific areas of need. It was reported that in Great Barrington the nursing program is functioning at a high level, serving critical needs and having a big impact - with a high number of COVID/flu vaccinations administered at multiple sites – but demand and cost of vaccines has increased dramatically this year. It was requested that the board consider allocating the \$6,700 to this program to cover costs incurred, but not covered by the Public Health Excellence Grant. The board discussed whether to allocate the \$6,700 to the Collaborative or to earmark the funds. P. Stanton stated a preference to discuss/prioritize a list of potential community health projects. R. Chang stated the nursing staff has done excellent work and should continue. M. Lanoue stated costs for Great Barrington residents has already been incurred and should be covered for this year, but can be reconsidered/redirected to other projects next year -and it was confirmed that a new contract has to be signed each year to initiate funding. It was confirmed that all documents, the funding request and quarterly report will be emailed to the board.

5. HEALTH DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

- a. Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative Updates – covered under other agenda items.
- b. FY24 Budget review – R. Jurczyk stated of the budget categories – salaries, contracted services, travel/training, dues/membership and supplies – contracted services is the most detailed. She outlined those items: nursing funds, \$6,700; sharps removal \$1,000; beach testing \$3,180 - totaling \$10,880 pending updates for this year. The board discussed requesting additional funds for other public health priorities – i.e., Rural Recovery Center pill drop-off/pick-up program. P. Stanton asked if part of the \$6,700 could be earmarked for other programs – and if the decision can be delayed pending further discussion. R. Jurczyk stated it would be beneficial to have a board agreed upon proposal/version of the agreement to take to TriTown soon. M. Lanoue stated the nursing request is for the full \$6,700 which is a direct cost for serving Great Barrington residents and has already been incurred. He suggested that the funds be used this year to cover those costs with no strings attached and to review/potentially earmark funds next year – he also noted some funds will come back through reimbursements and potentially directed to other public health endeavors. P. Stanton stated he would be supportive for this year, but would like more information on other projects/costs/community needs – and noted the board has influence over how funds are directed and should use the opportunity to consider a range of programs/needs. The board agreed it should be made explicit that the funds are allocated for year only and next year funds will be earmarked for other important projects. The board also requested a report on how the vaccination funds/reimbursements were used. It was noted the agreement runs January 1- December 31, 2023. R. Jurczyk agreed to send the board the final document – and the board would review, vote and sign at the next meeting.
- c. Housing Review – R. Jurczyk reported a new housing inspection on Kirk Street in November – two corrective orders were issued to the owner – one for smoke/CO2 detectors was corrected within 24 hours and progress is being made on the other for mold/mechanical issues. She noted it will likely be completed soon. She also stated the housing code has been revised especially regarding handling mold violations and she has taken a training.

6. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME: No citizens asked to speak.

7. MEDIA QUESTIONS: There were no questions from the media.

8. ADJOURNMENT: (Roll Call Vote) – P. Stanton made a motion to adjourn; R. Chang seconded. Roll call vote: R. Chang, “aye,” M. Lanoue, “aye,” P. Stanton, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk