

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE, MA
BOARD OF HEALTH
December 13, 2021

Meeting Called to Order: 2:00 PM

Quorum Check: Confirmed

Members Present: Linda Cocalis (LC), Richard Volpe (RV), Dr. Louis Fazen (LF)

Members Absent: None

Others Present:

Kenneth B. Lacey, Jr. (KL) Health Agent

Laura Sherris (LS) Health Department Administrative Assistant

Thomas Revane (TR) Revane Builders

Susan Shea (SS) Resident

2:00 PM – Meeting called to order

2:01 PM – New Business – Review November minutes – No issues are found with the November 15th minutes.

2:03 PM – RV motions to approve the November 15, 2021 minutes. LC 2nd; AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous.

2:05 PM – New Business – COVID19 updates – KL states that as of the morning of December 13th, there are 38 confirmed COVID19 cases in town, a decrease of 10 confirmed cases from the previous week; 5 cases are in children under the age of 12; 22 of the cases are in unvaccinated individuals; there are no current COVID19 hospitalizations among residents. KL states that while the Omicron variant has been identified in Massachusetts, Delta is still the dominant strain. KL reports that contact tracing is being somewhat reduced across the state, with the focus shifting from individual cases to group events and clusters. LF states that he would like to discuss the idea of indoor masking based on the released state data. LC states that she is not in agreement with mandatory indoor masking; RV states that the choice to mask is up to the individual and their personal comfort level; LC and RV discuss personal responsibility and preferences of residents.

2:22 PM - 48 Hillside Drive well variance – LC opens hearing for well variance request. TR is seeking a variance on the location requirements for a new well. TR states that the well at 48 Hillside Drive was unintentionally dug 11 feet from the property line instead of the town requirement of 15 feet; the state requires a 10-foot setback from the property line, thus the well does meet state standards.

2:23 PM – RV motions to accept the variance allowing the well location 11 feet from the property line. LC 2nd. AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous.

2:25 PM – Return to New Business – COVID19 updates – LF states that he would like to continue the discussion around indoor masking, specific to municipal buildings. LC and RV

discuss issues around enforcement. LF states that he believes there is no downside to masking and that it is in the best interest of employees for visitors to wear masks; he would like to require masking in town buildings.

2:30 PM – LF motions to require masking in municipal buildings for employees and visitors. RV 2nd. In favor: LF; Opposed: LC, RV; motion does not pass.

2:32 PM – New Business – Office and Business Updates – KL presents information regarding budget preparation. KL, LC, LF, and RV discuss landfill and recycling center budget allocations; the landfill survey currently being conducted will help determine future needs and budgetary requirements in coming years. KL presents a memo submitted to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen requesting ARPA funding for continued coverage of public nursing requirements. KL presents a second memo submitted to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen requesting ARPA funding to help support the public health mission in Sturbridge through procurement of a Health Department vehicle, premium pay for department employees, food and housing inspection software, an iPad Pro to support inspectional software, and tents to support outdoor events. KL, LC, LF, and RV discuss proposed monetary amounts and potential alternate sources of funding if ARPA funding is not available or sufficient.

3:30 PM – Old Business – Walker Pond well pollution updates – KL states that the Board of Health is overdue for an update from the contracted hydrogeologist; LC and KL will follow up. LC states that in addition to the well issues, there are resident complaints regarding noise from the MassPike; State Representative Smola has been involved in the matter; MassDOT will be asked to remediate the issue via a noise barrier. LC, LF, and RV discuss the need for data, and the probability of a noise study being conducted as part of the noise barrier process with MassDOT and state representatives.

3:40 PM – Old Business – South Shore Drive updates – KL states that he is waiting on an update from the consultant regarding lowering the water level further while supporting the existing beaver colony.

3:41 PM – LF raises the issue of a potential consultation regarding safety at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), aka recycling center. KL states that the engineering company conducting the landfill survey would likely be able to provide an MRF consultation; a landfill survey update is due in January and KL will ask the engineer to attend an upcoming Board of Health meeting to discuss both landfill and recycling center options.

3:48 PM – LC invites comments from resident SS.

3:58 PM – LC motions to adjourn meeting; RV 2nd; AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Sherris

Health Department Administrative Assistant